

## **Division of Public Policy (PPOL)**

### **PhD Qualifying Exam (PQE) Guidelines**

The main purpose of the Qualifying exam is to assess the student's understanding of the foundational public policy literature, as well as assess a Ph.D. student has achieved mastery of core public policy content, as related to strand and specialization, and to gauge students' readiness for future doctoral study.

#### **Conduct Ph.D. Qualifying Exam**

The qualifying exam will be conducted over 2.5 days, including a written exam (1.5 days), written dissertation proposal and oral defence.

(i) **Written Exam:**

The written exam is divided into three parts consists of a comprehensive writing to assess the student: (i) fundamental knowledge in public policy (3 hours), (ii) research methodology (3 hours), and their (ii) speciality (3hours). The written exam will take place over two consecutive days (6 hours on Day 1, 3 hours on Day 2).

(ii) **Dissertation Proposal:**

Students will prepare a dissertation proposal in consultation with their advisor(s). The dissertation proposal will be focused on the student's research questions, hypothesis(es), methodology, and research design. It should be approximately 6- 8,000 (max) words, including references, tables, and figures. The proposal prepared by the student has to be well written, original (clear what it will add to academic scholarship), appropriately referenced, and constitute a realistic research plan for a PhD dissertation. The proposal should be submitted to the PQE committee two weeks before the oral defence.

(iii) **Oral defence:**

An oral defence of your dissertation proposal will take place after two weeks of your proposal submission date. The PQE committee will participate in the oral defence.

#### **Timing of the Qualifying Exam**

The PQE should be conducted in January in the second year of the Ph.D. program. The student is required to submit the form "Request to Schedule a PhD Qualifying Examination" (as attached) to PPOL office before end of November and obtain the Division Head's approval.

The written exam will take place six weeks after submission of the completed "Request to Schedule a PhD Qualifying Examination". The dissertation proposal should be submitted to the PQE committee at least two weeks before the oral defence. The PQE should be completed before commencement of the Spring term.

### **The PhD Qualifying Exam (PQE) Committee**

The PQE Committee must be formed and approved by the Head of the Department at least six (6) weeks before the date of the qualifying examination.

The PQE committee shall consist of at least three faculty members, including:

1. Supervisor(s);
2. Faculty member(s) in the Division of Public Policy; and
3. One external faculty member (preferably from local university)

### **Qualifying Exam Result**

- Pass
- Fail

If a student fails the written exam and/or the oral defence, he/she will have an opportunity to retake the written exam or revise their proposal for the oral defence. The second attempt will be arranged in March.

### **Failure to pass the qualifying exam**

If the student does not pass the exam on their second attempt, upon PQE Committee decision, he/she will be dismissed from the PhD Program or may transfer to the MPhil program.

# Request to Schedule a PhD Qualifying Examination

## Student Information

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Study: \_\_\_\_\_ Study mode\*: Full-time/ Part-time

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Qualifying Examination Information

Proposal topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested written examination date: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Oral defence date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Examination Committee (including supervisor(s))

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(if applicable)*

Members (For written exam):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(External Examiner – Preferably from local University)*

Members (For oral defence):

*(if different from the written exam)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(External Examiner – Preferable from local University)*

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## Department Head approval

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Prof. Xun WU)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Disclaimer: I hereby declare that this proposal is my own original work and has not been submitted before to any institution for assessment purposes.**

**Division use only:**

Confirmed:

Written exam date: \_\_\_\_\_ Oral exam date: \_\_\_\_\_