

## Kinesiology Qualifying Examination Process



SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDENT AFFAIRS  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

### **Overview of Qualifying Examinations:**

Doctoral students must successfully pass a Qualifying Examination, which attests to their readiness to advance to candidacy as determined by their Qualifying Examination Committee. There are two components of the examination: (a) a written component, and (b) an oral component. The written component of the examination may take different forms depending on the discretion of the Faculty Advisor and the Qualifying Examination Committee, with input from the student (e.g. take home exams, closed exams, grant proposals, review papers, etc.). The written component of the examination is to be followed by an oral defense before the entire Qualifying Examination Committee. Students must be given the opportunity to complete both components of the examination, and in most circumstances, these should occur within two weeks of each other. The following criteria apply regardless of the format the written component of the examination takes:

- 1) Appropriate knowledge of the field or fields of study for that student (breadth and depth is defined by the student's Qualifying Examination Committee)
- 2) Ability to integrate information from various disciplines
- 3) Ability to critically evaluate the literature in terms of both substance and methodology
- 4) Ability to solve problems creatively
- 5) Ability to articulate the significance of the chosen area of inquiry

While the Qualifying Examination Committee has broad discretion as to the form the examination takes, it is expected to rigorously adhere to the following standards:

- 1) The examination (projects, assignments, papers, etc.) will be graded by all members of the Qualifying Examination Committee.
- 2) All students will orally defend the written component of their examination before the entire Qualifying Examination Committee.
- 3) The Qualifying Examination Committee has three potential evaluation options that include pass, fail, or conditional pass. Conditional Pass may be used when the Committee members believe that one or more elements of the examination were not adequate to earn a Pass, but the sense of the Committee is that this may be remedied with additional work (e.g., re-writing a portion of the exam, reading and reviewing additional books or papers to address deficiencies in knowledge, or other actions the Committee feels are in the best interests of the student).
- 4) Students who have been deemed to have failed the examination will be given one more chance to pass it. Students who fail to pass the examination on the second attempt will not continue in the Doctoral program.
- 5) It is expected that most students will complete the Qualifying Examination near the end of their second year in the Doctoral program.

### **Role of Faculty Advisor in Qualifying Examinations:**

Faculty Advisors must take an active role in helping their students choose appropriate Qualifying Examination Committee members. Faculty Advisors must assist the Committee members in structuring the expectations for student performance and by ensuring adequate contact between Committee members and their students. Further, Faculty Advisors should help students by ensuring that they are aware of these expectations. As students prepare for their Qualifying Examinations, Faculty Advisors should help guarantee that the content (e.g. reading lists prepared by the student) represents neither too narrow nor too broad of a focus.

### **Composition of Qualifying Examination Committee:**

The composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee includes two faculty members from Kinesiology and one Cognate Faculty member from another unit at the University of Michigan unit. *Note New Rule:* The composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee must be approved prior to the beginning of the Qualifying Examination. Once the process of the examination is engaged, no alteration of the Committee will be allowed except in cases where a member of the Committee is no longer able to serve (e.g. extended illness, death, or separation from the University of Michigan).

### **New Requirement: Ensurer of Fairness and Equity (EFE)**

To ensure the fairness and equity in the Qualifying Examination process and in the assessment of all students, a member of the Qualifying Examination Committee will be designated to serve as the Ensurer of Fairness and Equity (EFE), and approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate and Faculty Affairs (ADGFA). The EFE must be a tenured member of the Qualifying Examination Committee with voting/evaluation rights, but may not be the Faculty Advisor. The EFE must be a Kinesiology Faculty or the Cognate Faculty. The EFE must review the written exam question(s) (assessments, activities, etc.) prior to the examination, ensure that the written response is in accordance with the examination question(s), and attend the oral component of the examination. In addition to fulfilling the regular roles and responsibilities required of Qualifying Examination Committee members, the EFE will also ensure that: (a) the requirements (criteria and standards) of the examination are being met, and (b) the examination process is fair and correct.

### **New Qualifying Examination Process:**

1. Faculty Advisors must complete the *Qualifying Examination Committee Approval Form* (see Appendix A), which includes the designation of the EFE – the individual to ensure fairness and equity in the Qualifying Examination using the criteria noted above. The Faculty Advisor must submit the form to the Kinesiology Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs for approval by the ADGFA at least 10 weeks prior to the beginning of the examination. The ADGFA must approve the Qualifying Examination Committee, including the EFE designee prior to the start of the examination.
2. The ADGFA will also meet with the EFE to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the designee.
3. All members of the Qualifying Examination Committee must meet with the student collectively at least eight weeks prior to the beginning of the exam to discuss the format, nature/content, preparation materials/resources, and expectations of the exam. All members of the Committee must attend the Qualifying Examination meeting with the student. In rare instances (i.e., unavoidable schedule conflicts, special situations, extenuating circumstances, etc.). Committee members may participate in the meeting via telephone or video/computer/technology conferencing measures. In some instances individual follow-up meetings between the student and Committee members may be necessary. Once the examination dates, format(s), content, criteria, preparation materials, etc. have been determined, a completed and signed *Qualifying Examination Meeting Form* (see Appendix B), must be submitted to the Kinesiology Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs. This form must be submitted no later than one week after the Qualifying Examination Meeting(s).
4. No later than two weeks after the Qualifying Examination Meeting, the Faculty Advisor must ensure that the student is aware of the examination expectations and help guarantee that the content (e.g. reading lists prepared by the student) represents neither too narrow nor too broad of a focus (as stated in the Kinesiology Graduate Bulletin). If the student does not receive the finalized content expectations within this time frame, he or she must notify the EFE immediately. Additionally, the EFE must be notified immediately of any occurrences, conditions, or special

circumstances experienced by the student or Committee members that require (or may require) a change or modification to the proposed exam. Any changes in the original Qualifying Examination must also be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean.

5. All examination questions, activities, or assessments must be submitted to the EFE at least one week prior to the beginning of the exam. The EFE will review the questions and consult/confer with the Faculty Advisor to determine/ensure that the questions assess the five required examination criteria (as outlined in the Kinesiology Graduate Bulletin and at the outset of this document). In case of dissenting views on whether the questions/assessments meet the criteria, the ADGFA, the Graduate Committee, and/or Dean may be consulted.
6. Within two weeks of completing the written component of the examination (i.e., questions, activities, assessments, etc.), the student must complete the oral component of the exam before the entire Qualifying Examination Committee (which includes the EFE). Only under extenuating circumstances will Committee members be allowed to participate in the oral examination via telephone or video/computer/technology conferencing. The Faculty Advisor must be present in person for the oral examination.
7. The Qualifying Examination Committee (including the EFE) will evaluate the student's collective written and oral performance on the examination as *Pass*, *Fail*, or *Conditional Pass* (as outlined in the Kinesiology Graduate Bulletin). The Faculty Advisor must submit the *Qualifying Examination Committee Evaluation Form* (see Appendix C) and the student's response to the written examination to the Kinesiology Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs no later than one week after the oral examination.
8. The Faculty Advisor must inform the student of the results of the Qualifying Exam no later than one week after the oral examination.
9. Students who have been deemed to have failed the examination on the initial attempt will be given one more chance to pass it. Students who fail to pass the examination on the second attempt will not be allowed to continue in the Doctoral program.
10. In the case of an initial examination evaluation of Conditional Pass, once it has been determined that the conditions either have been met or have not been met, the Qualifying Examination Committee must complete the *Qualifying Examination Conditional Evaluation Form* (see Appendix D). Depending on the nature of the conditions, the Qualifying Examination Committee may be required to meet in person to re-assess the student's performance, or the assessment may take place via electronic submissions and reviews. The EFE should be present at the meeting(s) if applicable and/or copied on electronic re-submissions. The *Qualifying Examination Conditional Evaluation Form* along with the revised written exam (if applicable) must be submitted to the Kinesiology Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs no later than one week after the final decision (regarding the assessment/evaluation of the conditions) has been rendered.
11. The EFE will also evaluate the overall Qualifying Examination process via the *Qualifying Examination Ensurer of Fairness and Equity (EFE) Evaluation Form* (see Appendix E). The EFE must share the nature of the evaluation with the Faculty Advisor at the conclusion of the evaluation process, and must submit the evaluation form to the Associate Dean for Graduate and Faculty Affairs no later than one week after the final evaluation has been determined.
12. The Kinesiology Graduate Committee may be consulted for resolutions in cases where there are dissenting perspectives between the Faculty Advisor, Qualifying Examination Committee, and/or EFE regarding whether: (a) the examination met the Kinesiology requirements (criteria and standards), and/or (b) the examination process was fair. The Dean of Kinesiology may also be consulted as needed to resolve dissenting perspectives of the examination.