

GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF DENTISTRY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PhD QUALIFYING/ TRANSFER EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

PhD Qualifying Examination: The Graduate Department of Dentistry regulations specify that students who enter the PhD program directly must pass a qualifying examination earliest after 12 months and within 24 months of starting a PhD program. Students in a combined Ph.D./specialty program may have a different timeline. Please contact the Graduate Office in this case.

MSc-to-PhD Transfer Examinations are completed by M.Sc. students who wish to enter the PhD program without first finishing their MSc degree. They are intended to allow exceptional students to transfer and thus accelerate completion of the PhD degree. The student must pass the transfer examination earliest after 12 months and within 24 months of starting a MSc program.

Examination Requirements

For the PhD Qualifying Examination:

- Preparation of a literature review and a PhD research proposal.
- Approval of the supervisor and Advisory Committee, with unanimous agreement that the student may proceed with the qualifying examination.
- Student must be in Good Academic Standing

For the MSc-to-PhD Transfer Examination:

- Achievement of research productivity and scholarship (i.e. scientific presentations, published abstracts and manuscripts).
- Preparation of a PhD research proposal and literature review.
- Approval of the supervisor and Advisory Committee, with unanimous agreement that the student may proceed with the transfer examination.
- Supervisor must agree to fund year 5 of the PhD
- Student must be in Good Academic Standing

Required Examination Documents

For the PhD Qualifying Examination:

The following required documentation must be submitted to the Graduate office a minimum of eight (8) working weeks prior to the proposed PhD Qualifying Oral Examination:

- A copy of all Advisory Committee Report forms submitted to date.
- Updated student CV.
- PhD Thesis Proposal abstract (no more than 350 words; in conformity to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) standard).
- Signed PhD Qualifying Examination Booking Request form.

The following required documentation must be submitted to the Graduate office a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the proposed Qualifying Oral Examination:

- Literature Review (approximately 10 to 15 pages, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font (CIHR formatting rules apply. See : <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29300.html>) .
- PhD Research Proposal (approximately 10 to 15 pages, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font (CIHR formatting rules apply).

The supervisor and Advisory Committee are responsible for guiding the student about proposal content and research completion.

For the MSc-to-PhD Transfer Examination:

The following required documentation must be submitted to the Graduate office a minimum of eight (8) weeks prior to the proposed Transfer Oral Examination:

- A copy of all Advisory Committee Report forms submitted to date.
- Updated student CV.
- PhD Thesis Proposal Abstract (no more than 350 words; in conformity to the SGS standard).
- Signed PhD Transfer Examination Booking Request form.

The following required documentation must be submitted to the Graduate office a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the proposed Transfer Oral Examination:

- PhD Research Proposal (minimum 10 pages, maximum 15 pages, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font (CIHR formatting rules apply)).
- Literature Review (minimum 10 pages, maximum 15 pages, single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font (CIHR formatting rules apply)).

The supervisor and Advisory Committee are responsible for guiding the student about proposal content and research completion.

The Examination Committee

The purpose of the examination committee is to provide an objective analysis of the candidate's research proposal and background knowledge by faculty members of good standing, who are familiar with the standards of scholarship required by the SGS.

The Examination Committee is composed of:

- *Exam Chair* (will be appointed by Graduate Office; non-voting).
- *Supervisor(s)*.
- At least 1 *Advisory Committee Member* (you can invite a maximum of 3 members of the advisory committee).
- *One Internal Examiner*, i.e., a Dentistry SGS Member who has full graduate faculty membership with Dentistry and expertise in the field BUT not affiliated with the student's research project.
- *One External Examiner*, who has full graduate faculty membership with a graduate unit external to Dentistry and expertise in the field BUT neither affiliated with the student's research project nor collaborating with the supervisor in the past 6 years. The external examiner may be external to the University of Toronto but must have the equivalent graduate faculty membership at their home institution.

The supervisor and student may contact the External Examiner ONLY to ascertain willingness and availability to attend the examination OR to test Zoom/Skype (if the external is not able to attend the exam in person). DO NOT discuss proposal content with the external examiner.

Ph.D. Qualifying and M.Sc.-to-Ph.D. Transfer Examination Procedures:

At the examination, the chairperson:

- ensures that those appointed to the Examination Committee, or a quorum, are present.
- before the candidate enters, confirms that each member of the Examination Committee has sufficient knowledge of the research proposal and literature review to form a judgement as to its acceptability and hence that there will be no abstentions in voting on grounds of ignorance of the proposal content;
- invites the candidate to summarize the research proposal orally in 20 minutes;
- invites each member of the Committee, in turns of approximately equal duration, to ask questions;
- when there are no further questions, the candidate is again asked to leave the room;
- the Chair calls for discussion of the examination;
- the Chair calls for a vote of 'pass' or 'no pass'.

Although the examination will concentrate on the proposal, the Examination Committee is charged with the task of ensuring that the candidate is able to answer a breadth of questions to demonstrate a broad knowledge of relevant sciences. The objective of the questioning will be to examine the candidate's

knowledge of the rationale, aims, hypotheses, methods, statistical analysis, anticipated outcomes, and interpretation of expected findings AND to examine the candidate's breadth of fundamental knowledge expected of a doctoral-stream MSc or PhD student for this stage of the educational program.

Grading of the PhD Qualifying and MSc-to-PhD Transfer Examination:

Both the literature review and written proposal and the student's response to questions will be used to determine the outcome of the examination. The examination will be graded 'pass' or 'no pass'.

On the first examination, if there is more than one negative vote (or abstention), the examination is adjourned (no pass). On a reconvened examination, more than one negative vote (or abstention) constitutes a failure. The Chair does not vote.

The Chair of the examination committee will assure that the student, the supervisor, and the Graduate Department are notified in writing of the grade and the committee's comments. These will be inserted in the student's file.

In the event of a 'no pass' grade, it is the discretion of the committee to invite the candidate to be re-examined. In this case, the student will be allowed no more than 3 months in which to be re-examined. If the cause for the 'no pass' includes a deficient written proposal, a new proposal must be generated for the re-examination.

MSc-to-PhD Transfer Examination:

Where a student does not pass the transfer examination or re-examination (if applicable), entry into the PhD program will not be permitted. The student may continue in the MSc program.

PhD Qualifying Examination:

Where a student does not pass the qualifying examination or re-examination (if applicable), the student may request a program withdrawal or the Graduate Department of Dentistry will recommend termination to SGS.