

Preliminary Qualifying Examination for Candidacy in Ph.D. Program
Department of Microbiology, Oregon State University

Note: the exam should be taken at about the end of the second year of study

Written Proposal:

- The topic of the proposal must be approved by the thesis committee and may be on anything **except** the student's thesis project.
- Thesis committee must approve of the topic with no more than 1 dissenting vote.
- Student must write an 8-12 page or less proposal (single-spaced, not including references) on the approved topic. The proposal must include the following sections: 1. Specific Aims; 2. Background and Significance; 3. Research Design and Methods; 4. Literature Cited.
- The proposal should be submitted to the thesis committee not more than 4 weeks after the committee has approved the topic.
- The individual committee members must review the proposal and determine if the written proposal is acceptable for an oral exam defense. This review should take place within 1 week of submission.
- In the event revisions are required, the student will have 4 weeks to modify and re-submit the proposal to the thesis committee for a second decision.
- The student must schedule the oral exam within one week of the decision to accept the proposal.

Oral Examination:

The oral exam consists of two parts:

- 1) A defense of the written proposal.
 - 2) Open questions related to the coursework completed and research being conducted.
- The oral exam must last a minimum of two hours.
 - The defense of the proposal should include a presentation of the proposal by the student, followed by questions from the committee members that are answered by the student.
 - At least half of the exam must be devoted to open questions.
 - The open questions may include anything related to science or the training of the student that the committee members deem relevant.
 - The decision to pass is made according to the rules of the graduate school, which gives the committee the options to pass, not to pass and to terminate the student's work, not to pass and to allow a re-examination, or to recess and re-convene within two weeks.

Thesis outline:

In addition to the requirements described above, the student must prepare and submit to the thesis committee an outline of his/her thesis project. This outline must be sufficiently detailed to enable the thesis committee to evaluate the progress of the student on a yearly basis. The thesis outline must be submitted to the thesis committee no later than the end of the second term of work in the thesis lab.

Thesis Committee Meetings:

The student is required to meet with his/her thesis committee on a yearly basis. The objective of this meeting is to evaluate the student's progress. The Graduate Affairs Committee will supply a form for this evaluation, which must be completed, signed and returned to the Graduate Affairs Committee.