Ph.D. Old Candidacy Regulations

2. Single-Authored Scientific Paper

PhD students have to submit a single-authored scientific paper when scheduling their candidacy exam. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate to the committee that the student has the required writing, background, and technical skills to contribute to her/his area of research.

In the following, "the paper" means the scientific paper that the student submits when scheduling the candidacy exam.

The topic of the paper must be approved by the supervisory committee and should be related to Ph.D. research topic. This approval should usually be sought before the paper is written but a supervisory committee is able to approve a topic retroactively (i.e. after the paper was written). Retroactive approval allows a student to make a deadline for submission to a conference without worrying about getting the topic approved. It carries a risk as the supervisory committee might not approve the topic and another paper might have to be written by the student. Thus, the student and supervisor should try to get the paper topic approved before the paper is written and retroactive approval should be an exception.

The paper can be a survey paper, a scientific review, a new methodology, a theoretical paper, a practical implementation paper, a system architecture paper or a case study or other empirical work. The supervisory committee is able to approve topics outside of these categories if appropriate for the student's research, i.e. the supervisory committee has a wide discretion in determining the paper topic provided that it is in the best interest of the student.

The candidate must have written the paper while enrolled in the PhD program. While the work described in the paper can be based on a collaboration between the student and the supervisor(s), the paper must be single-authored. As the paper is supposed to be an example of the candidate's research as well as writing skills, no other person is allowed to have copy-edited or commented on the paper that is submitted for the exam. Computer spell and grammar checking is allowed (in fact, encouraged).

The student can submit the paper to peer-review before it is being used as part of the candidacy requirement. The student can collaborate with others before submitting the paper to peer review - but the version submitted when scheduling the candidacy exam must be the draft version that was solely written by the candidate. This particularly allows a student to write a first draft of a paper that is then revised by the supervisor before being submitted to peer review.

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3. Reading List

The reading list should give a student the basic background required for conducting her/his research. The reading list is prepared by the student’s supervisor in collaboration with the supervisory committee, and given to the student at least two months before the oral candidacy exam. The reading list limits the scope of questions in the candidacy exam.

4. Research Proposal

A research proposal, approved by the student’s supervisory committee, must be submitted when the oral candidacy exam is scheduled. The research proposal will contain an abstract, a literature survey (including an analysis of the literature), an overview of the proposed research, a plan for completing the proposed research, and references. This proposal will provide the focus for questions related to the candidate's thesis topic in the Faculty Candidacy Exam.

5. Faculty Candidacy Examination

This examination is an oral exam intended to assess both the candidate's preparation in subjects relevant to the general field of research, and his/her research potential. All departmental requirements (courses, single-authored scientific paper and proposal) must be completed before the Faculty Candidacy Examination is scheduled. All material submitted when scheduling the exam will be circulated to the examiners and will serve as a basis for questioning at the candidacy oral exam. The Faculty Candidacy Examination must be taken no more than 28 months after initial registration for a candidate with a completed MSc, or within 36 months for a candidate with a Bachelor's degree or who transfers to a doctoral program before completing an MSc.

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Oral candidacy exam needs to be scheduled at least one month before the exam date.

When the candidacy exam is scheduled (i.e. when the FGS notice of candidacy exam is submitted), the student/supervisor need to submit the following:

- The official FGS form
- A departmental form that confirms single authorship of the paper as well as approval by the supervisory committee of paper topic and content
- The reading list
- The research proposal
- The single-authored scientific paper
- A copy-edited version of the paper (optional)

The candidate and the supervisor need to sign a departmental candidacy form. With the signature, the candidate confirms in writing that the paper was written by herself/himself alone. The supervisor confirms in writing that to her/his best knowledge the paper is a single-authored paper in the sense of this guideline here as well as that the topic and content of the exam was approved by the supervisory committee.