

Bioengineering Qualifying Examination: Advisor Guidelines

You are receiving this document because one or more PhD students in your laboratory will take the Bioengineering qualifying examination this year.

The objective of the qualifying exam is to assess whether the student is well-suited for the doctoral program. It is not an evaluation of the student's progress on a specific thesis project and, in fact, no preliminary data are required or expected for the qualifying exam. The general topic of the qualifier will be submitted by the advisor to the Graduate Examinations Committee (GEC) and it may be related or unrelated to the student's specific thesis project; however, the student is not allowed to consult anyone in the preparation of the written report or the oral presentation.

1. Please consult the provided set of student instructions to familiarize yourself with the process and the evaluation sheet for the evaluation criteria: emphasis will be placed on biosciences/engineering expertise, formulation of hypothesis, and design of experiments to validate hypothesis. No preliminary data are expected from the student.
2. The advisor and student should agree upon a two-week window during which the written document for the qualifier will be prepared. The student will not be allowed more than two weeks to work on the written document, but should be allowed to devote his/her time during these two weeks to prepare this document. The student will need to submit the two-week window to the GEC through an online form by May 04, 2012.
3. ***The advisor will be required to confirm the timeframe, submit a topic for the exam, rank three concentration areas relevant to the proposed topic, and provide committee recommendations through an online form (<http://www.be.seas.upenn.edu/current-students/doctoral/web-forms/quals-form-advisor.php>) by May 04, 2012.*** Note that the topic is confidential and will only be revealed to the student on the specified starting date, once the logistics for the written and oral presentations are in place. The topic should be broadly defined within the general area of the student's PhD thesis and should be amenable to engineering or quantitative analysis; however, it should not be a specific hypothesis, as this is one of the charges for the student.

While preparing the qualifier (both written and oral components), the student is not to consult the advisor, peers, or anyone else. No scientific help is allowed. Kate Venit, the GEC chair, and the Bioengineering Graduate Group chair will provide administrative guidance, if necessary.

Please complete the Evaluation of Written Exam form (the student should attach this as a cover page to the written proposal) and bring it with you to the oral exam.

If you have any questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

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Chair, Graduate Examinations Committee

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Chair, Bioengineering Graduate Group