

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S DEAN'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR PH.D. ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

The purpose of the oral comprehensive examination for Ph.D. trainees is to: (1) assess a student's fundamental knowledge regarding existing information, theories and concepts related to their chosen field of research; (2) assess mastery of and ability to rationally defend their planned dissertation project including their proposed research, relevant methodologies as well as their applications, and anticipated outcomes and interpretations; and (3) evaluate their suitability to continue that research. Once initiated, an examination may not be continued at a later date. The student will either pass or fail the examination as administered on that date.

Responsibilities of the Dean's Representative. For the Ph.D. oral comprehensive exam, one member of the student's graduate advisory committee (GAC), other than the advisor, will be designated as the Dean's Representative by the Associate Dean for Graduate Education. The Dean's Representative fully participates as a member of the GAC and will also:

1. Chair the examination meeting and ensure that the examination process is appropriate, equitable to the student and maintains the standards of excellence in our programs.
2. Instruct the GAC as a whole on the purpose of the exam, focusing on the points above.
3. Together with the other members of the GAC, establish the general protocol for the questioning period (e.g. 10-15 minutes per GAC member and number rounds of questions). If the examination is lengthy (e.g. longer than 2 hours) or if the student is exhibiting signs of distress, the Dean's Representative may call for a brief recess.
4. At the conclusion of the questioning period, the Dean's Representative excuses the student and requests a motion and a second of PASS or FAIL for the examination outcome from the other GAC members. The Dean's Representative calls for and participates in discussion from all GAC members. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Dean's Representative calls for a vote on the motion by show of hands. All GAC members including the Dean's Representative must vote either PASS or FAIL on the student's performance. The GAC members including the Dean's Representative are the only persons allowed to vote. More than one negative vote constitutes failure of the examination. The Dean's Representative completes the examination outcome form and gathers all required signatures.

If the student does not pass the exam, the Dean's Representative should ask the other GAC members if they support a re-examination and, if so, the approximate date at which a re-examination might be held. The Advisor (or Program Director) is responsible for petitioning for the re-examination to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education for review by the School of Medicine Graduate Programs Committee.

5. The Dean's Representative recalls the student and informs them of the outcome. If the student does not pass the exam, the Dean's Representative (or Advisor) relays to the student the recourse decided by the GAC.
6. The examination outcome form indicating whether the student passed or failed the exam must be signed by all GAC members including the Dean's Representative. The Dean's Representative is responsible for returning the signed signature page to the Office of Graduate Education.