

The Specific Aims of the proposal should be agreed upon (by the committee members and student) during the Second Year Review meeting or shortly after (usually within a week) via email. Following the approval of their aims, the student has four weeks (28 days) to prepare the Candidacy Exam proposal. The advisor will submit an Annual Review form to the Graduate Studies Chairperson that summarizes the meeting and includes a list of the Aims decided upon.

c. Candidacy Examination (General Examination)

The Candidacy Exam proposal should be written in the format of an NIH grant application. The scope of the proposal should include sufficient work to occupy the full-time efforts of a single researcher for a two-year period. Students should review the format guidelines (http://microbiology.osu.edu/files/Guidelines_GeneralExam.pdf). The proposal must have the following sections: Specific Aims, Research Strategy, and References. The Research Strategy section has subsections titled Significance, Innovation, and Approach. The document must not exceed one page for the Specific Aims and 12 pages for the Research Strategy. The References section does not count toward page limits.

Within **one week** of submission of the document, each committee member will complete a proposal evaluation form, which will be submitted to both the advisor and student. The proposal will be graded as High Pass, Pass or **Unacceptable**. A minimum grade of Pass is required from all committee members before the student can schedule the oral portion of the exam. If any committee member finds the proposal to be unacceptable, the student will have two weeks to revise and resubmit the document to the committee. The revised document will not be re-graded and the student must defend this document in the oral exam.

Once the student's original proposal is approved by, or a revised proposal is submitted to, the Advisory Committee, the oral portion of the exam should be held within **three weeks**. The scheduling of this exam, and the completion of the Doctoral Notification of Candidacy Examination form, should begin immediately (see below).

In the circumstance where the Committee decides that the proposal is unacceptable, the student may waive the right to take the oral portion of the examination (per Graduate School rules) by submitting a written statement requesting the waiver to the Committee. The results of the Examination are recorded as "unsatisfactory" with the Graduate School. The Committee will then decide whether the student will be permitted to take a second Candidacy Exam and must record the decision on the Candidacy Examination Report form.

The student must complete the Doctoral Notification of Candidacy Examination form with the scheduled date of the oral examination. This form must be provided electronically to the Graduate School at least **two weeks** in advance of the scheduled oral examination.

During an oral examination the student should be prepared to answer questions on the rationale, design, and implementation of the proposed experiments as well as his/her general knowledge of the field. At the beginning of the oral exam, the student may give a brief overview of the goals of the proposal. This will be followed by a question and answer period. The entire exam cannot last more than two hours. Upon completion of the oral exam, the Candidacy Exam Form must be signed electronically by the committee members. The committee must unanimously agree that the student's performance was satisfactory for the student to pass.

Students who pass the written and oral portions of the Candidacy Exam will be advanced to Candidacy. If the Candidacy Exam is deemed unsatisfactory by the examining committee, the committee may: (i) recommend that the student retake the oral defense portion of the exam, based on the original written proposal, (ii) recommend that another problem and examination be given, at a time suggested by the Committee, (iii) recommend that the student transition to the Master's program and not be advanced to candidacy, or (iv) recommend that the student withdraw from the graduate program. In accordance with the Graduate School rules, no student is permitted to take the Candidacy Exam more than twice. On the second attempt, the Graduate School will assign a Graduate Faculty Representative to participate in the examination; the student will provide a copy of the proposal to the Graduate Faculty Representative as soon as the Graduate School informs the advisor. A student whose performance is recorded as Unsatisfactory on two attempts at the Candidacy Exam is not permitted to be a doctoral candidate in the same or in any graduate program at this University.