

# Physics & Astronomy

## Qualifying Exam Checklist

- Choose your sponsor. This is usually your research advisor but is not required to be.
- Decide on the research topic for the exam with the guidance of your sponsor/advisor.
- Form your Qualifying Exam committee.
  - Note that this committee will become your Dissertation Advisory Committee through your Defense. This committee will likely comprise a majority of your Defense Committee.
  - The committee for the Qualifying Examination will consist of at least four faculty members, including:
    - The student's thesis advisor or sponsor. The advisor fills only that role on the Qualifying Exam Committee.
    - A faculty member in the same research area.
    - One theorist for a student working in experimental physics, or one experimentalist for a student working in theoretical physics.
    - One faculty member outside of the research area.
    - At least two faculty members on the committee must have primary appointments in physics and astronomy. One of the members may be from outside of the department, if appropriate.
- Set a date and time for your exam that is mutually agreeable to the committee.
  - This can be difficult to coordinate, so it is recommended that you begin this process at least 6 weeks prior to the anticipated exam date.
  - Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator to book an appropriate space for the exam.
  - Student should create a Zoom for the exam, if necessary
- Fill out a Qualifying Exam Appointment form.
  - Have your advisor sign this form, indicating their approval.
  - Return this form to the Graduate Program Coordinator 3 weeks prior to the exam.
    - The Graduate Program Coordinator will submit the form for approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and then to the Registrar's office for recording.
    - NOTE: This form MUST be turned in to the Registrar's office at least two weeks prior to your exam date
- Prepare a written brief of no more than 10 journal-style pages. Two weeks prior to your exam date, you must submit your brief to your committee, with a copy to the PAS Graduate Studies office.
  - If a student has published, submitted, or drafted a paper for a research journal based on this research, that document or a subset of it can be used as the exam brief, provided that the advisor deems the document to be reasonably accessible to the broader audience of the Qualifying Exam committee.
- Prepare an oral presentation of no more than 25 minutes in length.
- Bring to your Exam:
  - Copies of your unofficial transcript
  - Qualifying Exam Report Form
- Fill out a Qualifying Exam Report form to bring on the day of your exam.
  - All committee members must sign the form, indicating the approval of a Pass (or Fail).
  - Remote committee members should submit an email to the Graduate Program Coordinator indicating their approval of a Pass (or Fail) In lieu of signature.
- A faculty member must turn in the form to the Graduate Program Coordinator for submission to the Registrar's Office for recording on your official academic transcript.