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### **PhD qualifying exam and prospectus procedures for MLC**

1) At the outset of the semester following the conclusion of the candidate's required doctoral coursework, an exam committee will be formally constituted, normally being composed of five professors having taught the candidate's coursework or whose area of expertise is appropriate to the proposed dissertation topic. The prospective dissertation director will chair the exam committee and will have the responsibility for organizing the exam and overseeing its procedures. The selection of the other committee members is normally determined by virtue of consultation between the committee chair and the candidate, with the advice of the appropriate Graduate Advisor(s) if needed. (If for any reason the original exam committee chair cannot continue to function in that capacity at any time during the exam cycle or cannot serve as the subsequent dissertation director, a new exam committee chair or dissertation director will be designated in consultation with the appropriate Graduate Advisors or the department Chair.)

2) After ample prior consultation and guidance from the prospective exam committee chair (who is also the prospective dissertation director, as indicated above), the candidate will submit to the exam committee chair a written "pre-prospectus," that is, a preliminary version of the prospectus. If deemed acceptable by the exam committee chair, said chair will distribute the pre-prospectus to the rest of the committee. If the exam cycle takes place during a fall semester, the exam committee should receive the pre-prospectus no later than October 1<sup>st</sup> (or the next nearest business day). If the exam cycle takes place during a spring semester, the exam committee should receive the pre-prospectus no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> (or the next nearest business day). In order to meet the stated deadlines, the candidate must have already begun work on the pre-prospectus well prior to the outset of the exam semester.

3) After reading the pre-prospectus, the exam committee members will submit to the exam committee chair a set of written questions. Each committee member will submit one question. That question, which may pertain to the pre-prospectus or to any of the candidate's course work taught by the examiner, may be narrow or broad and may contain multiple parts. If the exam cycle takes place during a fall semester, the exam committee members should normally submit their questions to the committee chair no later than October 7th (or the next nearest business day). If the exam cycle takes place during a spring semester, the exam committee members should normally submit their questions no later than March 7th (or the next nearest business day). After reviewing all the questions to verify that format guidelines have been followed, the exam committee chair will then submit all the questions simultaneously to the candidate. (In the event, however, that some of the examiners' questions are late in arriving, the other questions should be given to the candidate on the stated deadline, with the late questions following as soon as they are supplied. If Fall Break or Spring Break interferes with the stated deadlines, appropriate adjustments can be made.)

4) Once the questions have been submitted to the candidate, he/she will have a total of two full weeks to generate written responses to all of the questions. Each response should be a minimum of four standard pages in length (plus a reference bibliography, if required) and a maximum of ten standard pages in length (plus a reference bibliography, if required). A reference bibliography is required if the student cites any sources in the text of the response. The written responses must be typed, using the New Times Roman font (except for phonetic notation and other special characters) set for 12 points, and must be double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. Completed answers will be delivered to the exam committee chair, usually in electronic format, who will then be responsible for distributing the answers to the rest of the committee. Every member of the exam committee should be provided with a copy of all the written answers. If the exam cycle takes place during a fall semester, the exam committee members should receive the set of answers no later than October 25th (or the next nearest business day). If the exam cycle takes place during a spring semester, the exam committee members should receive the set of answers no later than March 25th (or the next nearest business day). (If Fall Break or Spring Break interferes with the stated deadlines, appropriate adjustments can be made.)

5) The exam committee members will have a maximum of ten days to evaluate the candidate's answers. They will then vote on the acceptability of the written exam (which includes both the pre-prospectus and the written answers). Every questioner votes primarily on his/her section of the exam, but may also take into account overall performance. Each individual examiner should register a vote according to the following gradation:

- PASS with distinction
- PASS
- PASS with reservation
- FAIL

This voting gradation is for department-internal use only; the final overall outcome will be reported to the Graduate School as either PASS or FAIL. In order to obtain an overall outcome of PASS, at least four of the five examiners must vote for any of the three gradations of PASS. In the event that the candidate does not obtain at least four positive votes, the overall outcome is reported to the Graduate School as a FAIL. The candidate will have, in accordance with Graduate School policy, one additional chance to retake the exam. In such a case, the candidate must retake all of the failed sections of the exam at a later date, to be determined by the exam committee in consultation with the student. In the event that there is a lack of consensus concerning the appropriate date for the retake, the departmental Chair, in consultation with all parties, will make the final determination. (If it is determined that the retake must occur in the subsequent semester, continuation of assistantship support for the candidate is not to be expected due to the lack of satisfactory academic progress as reflected in the failed exam. It will be up to the departmental Chair, however, to make the determination as to whether or not a failure on the exam results in withdrawal of assistantship support.)

6) When the candidate passes the written exam, he/she uses the feedback gained during the examination process, in consultation with the prospective dissertation director (that is, the former exam committee chair), to arrive at the final version of the dissertation prospectus (that is, the final revision of

what was formerly the pre-prospectus). Prior to the end of the semester, the prospectus will be defended orally in the presence of the dissertation committee. Ideally, to facilitate continuity, the membership of the dissertation committee will be the same or nearly the same as the previous exam committee, but circumstances may arise where changes will occur in the composition of the committee (for example, an examiner who had coursework with the candidate but whose expertise lies outside the parameters of the proposed dissertation topic might rotate off of the committee and be replaced by someone else when the dissertation committee is constituted). According to Graduate School policy, to constitute a successful defense, the prospectus must meet with the approval of at least three members of the committee. At the close of a successfully defended prospectus presentation, the members of the dissertation committee will sign the "Application for Candidacy" form. This is also an appropriate moment for the "Appointment or Change of Doctoral Dissertation Committee" to be completed and initialed by all members of the dissertation committee, if that obligation remains to fulfill. Both forms should then be delivered to the Graduate School, along with an "Outline of Ph.D. (Plan of Study)" form, if this item has not yet been filed.