Application for Candidacy [MSE]

Student replies to Graduate Studies Coordinator’s call for Candidacy Exam participants in the coming term (typically sent about two weeks before the start of AU or SP term; the Exam is not offered during SU). To be eligible, the student must have completed all three PhD Core Courses and earned a minimum grade of B in each of these Core courses or addressed any deficiency by way of qualifying exam(s). Additionally, the student must complete two semesters of MATSCEN 7895 with a Satisfactory grade. Grad Studies Coordinator reviews student’s records to confirm eligibility and, if eligible, the student will be provided with further instructions.

• See also Graduate School Handbook sec 7.3+, gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/7-3-doctoral-candidacy-examination

On or before 8:00 a.m. on Monday of third week of term:

Advisor sends email to MSE Graduate Studies Coordinator listing the three MSE faculty who will serve with the advisor on the Candidacy Exam Committee. Submission of the list is confirmation that all are willing and available to serve on the committee. The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) will review the committee membership and require changes, if necessary.

During the fourth week of term:

The Grad Studies Coordinator will provide the student’s committee members with a reminder of service as well as provide the student with further instructions about the Dissertation Proposal format, length, content, and other exam details.

Student is to arrange with his/her committee members a date, time, and location for the exam. An exam is two hours in length and must occur during university business hours.

Three weeks before the Candidacy Exam date:

Student must file an Application for Candidacy through GradForms.osu.edu (the exam date, time, and room are required in order to submit the Application for Candidacy).

• Note—Written exam start date = 1st day of the term; end date = two weeks before exam date.

No less than two weeks before the Candidacy Exam date:

Student is to upload his/her Dissertation Proposal to Carmen for an originality review. Student is also to email the Grad Studies Coordinator alerting him to the fact that the Proposal has been submitted. This serves as the written portion of the Candidacy Exam.

Graduate Studies Coordinator provides to the Committee the student’s: 1) Advising Report, 2) Dissertation Proposal, and 3) Dissertation Proposal originality report.

Advisor and GSC Chair must post approval on GradForms confirming that the exam should proceed.

On the Candidacy Exam date:

The Candidacy Exam gauges the student’s readiness to enter Ph.D. Candidacy. The exam is to be two hours in length. Optionally, a brief (10-15 minute) description of the student’s area of research may be provided prior to the exam.

Candidacy Examination Committee members will be granted access to the student’s Report on Candidacy in GradForms.osu.edu to post a satisfactory / unsatisfactory decision once the exam has begun. A decision must be posted by each committee member before the Report on Candidacy will be accepted by the Graduate School.

Following the Candidacy Exam:

Satisfactory completion: Graduate Studies Coordinator will provide the student with post-candidacy instructions concerning minimum enrollment, Dissertation Overview deadline, and how to apply for a Master’s based on Candidacy Examination.

Unsatisfactory completion: Graduate Studies Coordinator will provide the student with Second Candidacy Exam instructions if the Candidacy Exam Committee permits a second attempt at the exam.

Updated for AU19 curriculum 9/17/19
A Deadlines & Prerequisites

The Candidacy Examination is to be taken within five academic terms of the student joining the MSE department (the "academic terms" are Autumn and Spring). The examination can be taken in either Autumn or Spring terms, within the five term limit. The exam may only be taken after successful completion of the Qualifying Exam [or a grade of B or greater earned in each of the PhD Core courses—MSE 6730, 6737, and 6747] and completion of at least 2 semesters of MSE 7895 (Graduate Seminar and Colloquium) with a Satisfactory grade.

B Requesting to take the Candidacy Exam

The student should contact the MSE Graduate Studies Coordinator at least one week before the start of the term in which they wish to take the exam to inform the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) of their intent; e-mail reminders will also be sent to the students during this time. Those who respond will be given access to a Carmen site for that term's Candidacy Exam. Further instructions concerning document submission will be provided by the MSE Graduate Studies Coordinator.

C Candidacy Exam Committee

The Candidacy Examination Committee is chaired by the student's advisor. The committee includes three additional authorized MSE graduate faculty members selected by the student's advisor.

1 Committee Nomination

The student's advisor is to do the following by 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday of the third week of the term in which the Candidacy Exam is to take place:

i. Confirm with three active MSE faculty members their willingness to serve on the committee (the student may assist in coordinating this list), and further confirm that at least two of them are willing and able to also serve on the student's Dissertation Committee at Overview and Final Defense. Committee members chosen for continued service should have sufficient familiarity with the student's field of research to be able to provide relevant feedback about it.

   a. The committee members that later act as members of the student's Dissertation Committee should have category "P" status or be eligible for it (with status granted before the Final Defense).

   b. If the student is co-advised, only one of the co-advisors may serve as the advisor and committee chair on the committee, while the other should serve as a regular committee member.

ii. Email to the MSE Graduate Studies Coordinator the list of committee members and identify the members of the Dissertation Committee.

Note: submission of this list indicates that each committee member has confirmed their willingness and availability to serve on the student's Candidacy Exam Committee and Dissertation Committee. It is important to make sure this is indeed the case.

iii. Members of the student's Candidacy Committee will later form their Dissertation Committee, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. In case the committee needs to change, a petition to the GSC needs to be submitted.

2 Committee Confirmation

i. The GSC will review the list of committee members. If changes are required, the advisor will be
contacted. The GSC will confirm especially that at least two of the committee members hold “P” status in MSE (this is an unavoidable requirement), and that all advisors are on the committee in case of co-advising.

ii. The GSC will inform the student of the finalized Candidacy Exam Committee members.

iii. The GSC will provide further instructions regarding the Candidacy Exam procedures, including submission of the Application for Candidacy on-line form.

iv. By two weeks before the scheduled exam date, the GSC will pass along to each of the Candidacy Exam Committee members an electronic copy of the student's transcript, Critical Literature Review and Research Plan, and a computed originality report (e.g. from TurnItIn).

3 Candidacy Exam Time and Location
The student is to arrange the date, time, and location for the Candidacy Exam with the committee members. The Candidacy Exam must take place during normal university operating hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thus the exam may begin no later than 3:00 p.m.

D Application for Candidacy

1 Application for Candidacy
The student is to log in to GradForms.osu.edu (OSU username and password) and create an Application for Candidacy. The time, date, location, and committee membership is to be provided. Upon submission, the Application then moves to the advisor and GSC Chair for approval.

i. Submission of the Application for Candidacy is to occur three weeks prior to the exam date.

ii. Advisor and GSC Chair approval must occur at least two weeks prior to the oral exam date.

iii. Note: The Graduate School is inflexible on these rules.

The last date on which the oral exam may take place is the last business day prior to the start of the next term. Therefore, the last date on which the Application for Candidacy may be approved is two weeks before the last business day before the start of the next term.

2 Report on Candidacy
At the time of the exam, as specified on the Application for Candidacy, the Report on Candidacy will become available in each committee member's task list on GradForms.osu.edu. Each committee member must log in to GradForms and post their decision regarding the exam (approve/deny). The exam is considered incomplete until each committee member has posted a decision.

E Candidacy Document

1 Content and Expectations
The candidacy document should have the form of a “Dissertation Proposal,” which is composed of approximately equal parts of introductory information (especially a significant amount of critical literature review) and a research plan focused on the student’s research work. The purpose of the literature review is to lay the foundation on which the research plan is built. The research plan can contain results from the student’s research findings to date. Specifically, this "Dissertation Proposal" should contain the following sections:

a. **Title**
Short and concise; should answer the question: What is the research about?

b. **Abstract**
The abstract should include the topic, aims of the study, who will be involved in the research, the methods and the timeframe. It should conclude with a statement that explains the relevance of the research (why it is needed). Abstracts for dissertation proposals are generally in the future tense (the student should outline what they intend to do).
c. **Introduction and Background**

Should outline why the student chose their topic and should include:

a) **Justification** – Why the topic is important

b) **Critical Literature Review**

The literature review needs to be a substantial part of the document and should demonstrate that the student has read broadly on the topic and its wider context. It should highlight trends in the literature relating to the research topic, including research areas, methodology, theoretical approaches and findings.

The literature review should outline limitations and/or gaps in the literature that the student has identified (a critique). The student will need to draw on their literature review to justify their research. They should indicate the gaps their research is addressing and note the original contribution it will make to the field in general.

The literature review should inform and set up the theoretical framework, methodology and design of the research to be performed.

c) **Research objectives/questions or hypothesis**

What is the research question that the student is trying to find the answer to? This can also be termed as the aim or purpose of the research. Think about how to finish this statement: “The purpose of this research is …”

d. **Research Plan**

Drawing on the different theories/methods identified in the literature review, the plan should identify which approach (or approaches) are and will be employed in the research and why.

In discussing the methodology, the plan should draw on reviewed literature and consider the different methodological approaches used.

For research design and method, it is important to demonstrate that the student has read other studies in their area of research. They should be able to address the strengths and limitations of the methods in similar research and justify why they have chosen their methods. They should also discuss results that they have obtained to date and evaluate how well the chosen methods work.

For future/proposed work, the student should discuss:

- Data collection: how will they go about collecting their information (experiments, computations…)? This should also include any equipment or facilities that will be needed.
- Data analysis and discussion: once the information has been collected, what will be done with it? Include any tools that will be used to assist with analysis (e.g. programs, models). Indicate how analyzing the data in this way will answer key research questions.
- Limitations: assess their methodology and consider any weaknesses or limitations that may occur as a result of the proposed research design. Address the limitations by indicating how they will be minimized.

e. **Significance of Research**

In the concluding part, it is important to convince the committee of the validity of the proposed research. The student needs to communicate enthusiasm and confidence for the research, arguing clearly as to the contribution it will make to the subject area and discipline in general.

f. **References**

It is important to include all references that have used when writing the proposal. This demonstrates that the student is indeed serious about their research and has invested both time and thought into the process.
While the contents of the research plan can/should be coordinated with the advisor, the written Candidacy Document must be solely the work of the student. Students must ensure that their documents are free of plagiarism and all other forms of academic misconduct. The student's advisor should not see the document before any of the other committee members. The document should not be reviewed by other faculty, staff, post-docs, or students prior to submission. It must be written in sufficiently high quality English such that any grammatical errors do not interfere with the technical message. Any students requiring assistance with the language aspects of the document can consult the Writing Center. They will help with the grammar and can provide a list of people who will proof read and edit for a fee.

Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing, CSTW
4132 Smith Lab
174 W. 18th Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43210
Phone: (614) 688-5865
Web: https://cstw.osu.edu/writing-center
E-mail: cstw@osu.edu

2 Format and Submission of the Candidacy Document

The document is to be 15-20 pages in length, exclusive of references. The entire document is to be typed in 12 point Times New Roman font, line spacing set at 1.5, with one inch margins throughout. Any figures or tables are to be included in the 20-page length and are not to be included in an appendix. The reference listing has no set length and may extend beyond the 20-page limit. The student should be judicious in selection of figures to include as the figures will reduce the amount of space for text needed to communicate the matters described in 3.3.E.1.

At least two weeks before the Candidacy Exam date an electronic version of the Dissertation Proposal in Word or PDF format is to be submitted on-line via the "MSE Candidacy Examination" Carmen site. The Graduate Studies Coordinator will then forward both the Proposal and its originality report to the committee. The student must inform the Graduate Studies Coordinator by email once the Dissertation Proposal has been uploaded to the Carmen Dropbox.

The Candidacy document is to be an original work developed by the student. Any of the committee members may perform a plagiarism review on the documents provided for the Candidacy Exam.

When submitted to the Carmen Dropbox, the Candidacy Document will be reviewed by TurnItIn.com for an originality review. The MSE department takes plagiarism very seriously and will forward cases to the OSU Committee on Academic Misconduct as necessary.

"Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas." OSU Code of Student Conduct (3335-23-04)

For further information: https://oaa.osu.edu/academic-integrity-and-misconduct

F Candidacy Examination

1 Examination contents

The examination is composed of both a written and oral part, which are constructed as follows:

i. Written portion

The written portion of the Candidacy Exam is comprised of the Candidacy Document (see above). The written portion will be evaluated based on the expectations described in Sec. E above.
ii. **Oral portion**

Attendance at the oral exam is limited to the student and members of the Candidacy Examination Committee. All members of the Candidacy Examination Committee must be present during the entire oral examination. Except for the advisor, other committee members can connect through video conferencing, provided the Graduate School rules for video conferencing are observed. The oral portion of the candidacy examination may last no more than two hours. Questioning of the student should occupy the entire period of the examination. All committee members are expected to participate fully in the questioning during the course of the examination and in the discussion and decision on the result of the candidacy examination.

The questioning in the oral examination should focus on the written document, including the pertinent literature and the proposed research plan. However, the student must be able to demonstrate understanding of the research topic supported by the relevant fundamental knowledge in the field. Any use of prepared materials must be limited and only in response to a specific question. However, candidates should be prepared to present the content of their research proposal in a suitable way.

The Candidacy Exam Committee should meet at least 24 hours prior to the oral portion of the exam to evaluate the written document. Should the committee decide that the document is so deficient that the student has no chance of passing the overall Candidacy Exam, the student must be informed and then be given the option to take or waive the oral portion of the Candidacy Exam.

2 **Evaluation of the Examination**

Since the Candidacy Examination is a single examination consisting of two portions, the student's Candidacy Examination Committee will base its satisfactory/unsatisfactory evaluation of the student's performance on both the written and oral portions. The vote must be unanimous for the student to pass the exam.

i. **Posting results of the exam – Report on Candidacy**

At the time specified on the Application for Candidacy, the Report on Candidacy will become available in each committee member's task list on GradForms.osu.edu. Each committee member must log in to GradForms and post his/her decision regarding the exam (approve/deny). The exam is considered incomplete until each committee member has posted a decision.

ii. **Satisfactory result**

A result of "satisfactory" at the conclusion of the Candidacy Exam is to be reported to the Graduate School by way of GradForms.osu.edu. Each committee member posts his/her decision via the Report on Candidacy.

The student may apply for a Master's non-thesis degree based upon completion of the Candidacy Exam (see section 3.3.7 below).

iii. **Unsatisfactory result**

A student receiving an "unsatisfactory" result at the conclusion of the Candidacy Exam may be granted, at the discretion of the committee, an opportunity to re-take the exam. A student may make no more than two attempts in total at passing the Candidacy Exam while at The Ohio State University.

The results of the initial Candidacy Exam are noted on the Report on Candidacy submitted via GradForms.osu.edu.
If the student is not granted a second opportunity, as indicated on the Report on Candidacy, the advisor should discuss with the student any options available to the student, such as completion of a Master's degree (with or without thesis).

3 Second Candidacy Exam procedures

If the student is permitted a second opportunity to take the Candidacy Exam, the second exam must take place no later than two terms before graduation. The student must resubmit an Application for Candidacy on GradForms.osu.edu.

i. Committee Members
The second exam committee is to have the same members as the first committee. Any changes to the membership must first be approved by the Graduate School by means of a Committee and Examination Petition submitted via GradForms.osu.edu.

The second Application for Candidacy is to be submitted and approved by the advisor and MSE Grad Studies Chair at least two weeks before the second exam date. This will permit the Graduate School to assign a Graduate School Faculty Representative to the second exam. Once the Graduate School Faculty Representative is assigned, the student will be informed via OSU e-mail account (name.##). The student may provide the representative with a link to this web page for a description of the department's Candidacy Exam procedures.

ii. Content of the second Candidacy Exam
The nature of the second candidacy examination is determined by the student's Candidacy Examination Committee. Normally the second exam will include both a written and an oral portion.

If a student fails the written portion of the first Candidacy Exam but passes the oral, this is considered an unsatisfactory attempt at the first Candidacy Exam and should be noted as such in GradForms. If the committee grants the student a second attempt at Candidacy, the student's Candidacy Exam Committee is to provide the student with a written summary of issues to be addressed in the second written document for the second Candidacy Exam. Following the first Exam, this written summary is to be provided to the student in a timely manner by the advisor.

In cases where the student's written examination document provided for the first Candidacy Exam is of such a high caliber that the exam committee does not require any rewrites, then only the oral portion needs to be repeated in the second Exam. If this is the case, the advisor should indicate on the Report on Candidacy Examination from the first attempt that a new written exam will not be required for the second attempt.

A second oral exam will always be required if a second Candidacy Examination is held.

iii. Results of the second Candidacy Exam
Results of the second exam are to be posted on the Report on Candidacy by each committee member using his/her account on GradForms.osu.edu.

If the student receives a "satisfactory" on the second exam the student may continue in the Ph.D. program in pursuit of a degree. The student may apply to receive a Master's based upon completion of the Candidacy Exam (see section VI below).

If the student receives an "unsatisfactory" result on the second exam the student cannot continue to pursue a Ph.D. at The Ohio State University. A student is permitted a total of only two opportunities to take the Candidacy Exam while a student at Ohio State. The advisor should discuss with the student any options available, such as completion of a Master's degree (with or without thesis).
G Master's Non-Thesis
Satisfactory completion of the Candidacy Examination is accepted in place of passing the MS non-thesis Master's Examination. To qualify for an MS non-Thesis degree, students must also fulfill all course-related requirements of the degree (see p. 3). A student who has successfully completed the Candidacy Exam may apply to receive a Master's degree in the term following completion of the Candidacy Exam.

H Enrollment Restrictions Following Candidacy
All students who have successfully completed the Candidacy Exam must enroll for at least 3 graduate-level credit hours per term. Three credit hours is considered full-time for post-candidacy students. Any graduate enrollment beyond three credit hours incurs additional tuition costs and requires the agreement of the student's advisor and/or funding source.

See Sec 7 of the Graduate School Handbook: https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook/7-7-doctoral-candidacy

I Questions
Please contact the Graduate Studies Coordinator with any questions at 614-292-7280, e-mail, or in 5027 Smith Lab. Students may also wish to contact the Graduation Services dept. of the Graduate School at 614-292-6031.