Qualifying Examinations

In order to advance to candidacy/dissertation, students must successfully complete their qualifying exams.

Timeline
Students who enter the Ph.D. program with a M.A. are expected to take both parts of the Qualifying Examinations together in the fall of their second year. Students who enter the Ph.D. program without an M.A. can take the first part of the Qualifying Examination in the fall of their third year, and the second part of the Qualifying Examinations in the spring of their third year.

Committee
A student’s QE committee will be at least three faculty members on the AADS Graduate Studies Committee. Any faculty members outside of AADS will be in addition to the three core faculty.

Content of Qualifying Examinations (QEs)
The QE is a two-part process: a sample class lecture (based on created syllabi) and a mock job talk (based on your prospectus).

1. Sample Class Lecture: Bibliographies and Syllabi
   In consultation with the student’s advisor, the student will develop syllabi for three distinct courses which reflect research areas in support of her/his dissertation. Each syllabus will include:
   - a bibliography of course readings and supporting texts
   - a narrative that discusses why these specific readings were selected
   - a schedule of daily activities in the course
   The dissertation committee will choose one of the syllabi on which to base an introductory lecture, which should be 20-30 minutes in length. The lecture serves to demonstrate the student’s oral competency, and the written narrative serves to demonstrate the student’s writing competency.

2. Job Talk: Dissertation Proposal (Prospectus)
The student will produce a dissertation proposal following these guidelines (full text available in the AADS Graduate Student Handbook, Appendix C).

   Doctoral students should use their proposal to outline the research and writing of their future dissertation. The exercise in creating a proposal is an important part of professionalization in the doctoral program, and the student’s committee must accept the proposal prior to extensive dissertation research and writing.
   Divided into five parts including a title page, the proposal should be between 20-40 pages in length depending on the topic.
   
   Purpose
   - To describe and outline the dissertation you intend to complete
   - To think about the issues and themes addressed in your study

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- To discuss the primary arguments/questions to be addressed in the dissertation
- To identify preliminary research methods
- To locate available archival sources/ethnographic sites needed to support the argument

**Goals**
- To create an outline for the research and writing agenda
- To identify areas of strength and weakness in the proposed study
- To receive feedback from committee members prior to dissertation research and writing

**Structure**

1. **Title Page**
   - Title of Dissertation
   - Student’s Name
   - Name of supervisor and committee members

2. **Introduction**
   - Explain and describe the proposed study.
   - Outline the preliminary thesis, proposed hypothesis, and major research questions.
   - Define significant terms.

3. **Literature Review**
   - Review of the literature published on the proposed topic.
   - Place the dissertation in conversation with the published literature.
   - Identify the primary documents and sources that frame the study.
   - Explain the contribution of this study as it relates to the current literature.

4. **Methodology**
   - Identify the methods you intend to use in your study.
   - Explain why the methods you have chosen are suitable for your study.

5. **Bibliography**

The student will offer a mock job talk on the topic of their proposal at a length of about 30 minutes. The job talk will be open to the public, and then the audience will be dismissed to allow the committee to deliberate and then ask questions of the student.

**Admission to Candidacy**

Upon completion of the qualifying exams and meeting the qualifications of the dissertation committee, students are admitted to candidacy and may register for dissertation courses (*99R and *99W). The Application for Doctoral Candidacy must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School electronically. This form will list the proposed chair and committee members of the student’s dissertation committee along with the title and a brief description of the proposed dissertation. For more information and access to the application see [http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/candidacy.html](http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/pdn/candidacy.html).

Dissertation courses are taken for CR/NC. All students must maintain continuous registration after admission to candidacy.

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