1. Timing: The thesis proposal is to be scheduled within three terms of the successful completion of the Qualifying Exam. For example, a student starting in September would submit the thesis proposal no later than August, 2 years later. The exact date and time are to be determined by the student and supervisor, in consultation with the graduate chair.

2. Content: The thesis proposal should contain a review of relevant literature and tools, and report on a novel contribution that would, at the least, be sufficient for a poster or presented paper at a national conference. The student should also outline future research plans. This will form the basis for the oral examination. The content will be prepared in conjunction with the supervisor. A report containing the thesis proposal is to be submitted to the supervisor and examiner at least one week prior to the defence.

3. Exam: An oral examination will be conducted for each thesis proposal. It will commence with a Public Lecture lasting approximately 30 minutes. This will be followed immediately by a private question period which should last no longer than 20 minutes.

The supervisor(s) plus one other faculty member from within the program, chosen by the Graduate Chair in consultation with the supervisor(s), will ask the questions. In addition, a member of the Graduate Affairs Committee will also be present. No one else will be present for this stage of the exam.

4. Outcome: It is expected that the outcome of the Thesis Proposal will confirm the student in their current direction of study. A standardized form will be used to provide feedback to the student on various aspects of the Thesis Proposal presentation and document, to assist them in their future work.

5. Satisfactory Progress: Ph.D. Students are reminded that they are required to make satisfactory progress on their program throughout their degree. In this context, if the standardized forms from the Thesis Proposal exam reveal a significant deficiency of any sort*, the Graduate Affairs committee will meet in consultation with the supervisor(s) and the non-supervising examiner to determine an appropriate course of action to address the situation.

*Specifically – if either examiner fails the student on two or more categories from the top three on the standardized form.