

Ph.D. Candidacy Examination Procedures and Regulations for the Four Areas of Specialization in the Kinesiology Graduate Program

As a consequence of the Western University review of the Kinesiology Graduate program (October 2013), the procedures for the Candidacy Examinations for the individual fields of specialization in the program were amalgamated into a single procedure to be followed by all four of the fields of specialization (Integrative Biosciences in Kinesiology; Management and Leadership in Kinesiology; Psychological Basis of Kinesiology; Sociocultural Studies in Kinesiology).

The Candidacy Examination represents a “Milestone” within the program. All Doctoral students are required to successfully complete program specialization-specific Candidacy Examinations **within the first 24 months** of being admitted into the graduate program.

The Candidacy Examination in Kinesiology consists of both written and oral components. The written component will normally be completed in the student’s home, or a room scheduled by the School of Kinesiology Graduate Office. It is required that the oral component will be completed in a location scheduled by the School of Kinesiology Graduate Office.

A Candidacy **Examination committee** will consist of three members. Two members will usually be from the student’s advisory committee (selected from members in the Kinesiology program but can include members from other departments/research institutes from within or outside the University). The advisory committee may choose to invite someone from outside the advisory committee to act as an "expert" examiner; however, at least one member of the committee shall be a full-time core member of the School of Kinesiology. The supervisor may choose to serve as the third examiner. In the case of co-supervisors, only one supervisor may serve as an examiner. Supervisors can also choose to remain at “arm’s length” throughout the proceedings, in which case a third examiner and an examination “chair” will be invited to participate in the proceedings. Notably, a supervisor may not chair the examination committee and it is the responsibility of the supervisor to secure a chair, who is a full-time core member of the School of Kinesiology for the meeting. A postdoctoral fellow serving in the same lab group as the candidate may not serve as an examiner or chair of the candidacy exam. At the time of formation of the examination committee, and before the student begins preparation for the exam, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to submit the list of examiners to the Kinesiology Graduate Office for approval.

Candidacy Examination Committee

- 3 members – at least one full-time core member of the School of Kinesiology
- One supervisor may participate as an examiner
- Cannot be a postdoctoral fellow in the same lab group as the candidate

Examination Chair – identified by supervisor

- Must be a full-time core member of the School of Kinesiology
- Cannot be a supervisor or co-supervisor of the candidate

The Examination committee, in consultation with the graduate student and the supervisor and/or advisory committee, will identify the depth and breadth of areas to be examined. Normally three areas will be selected which will be in the "general area" but not exclusive to the student's eventual research program and thesis.

Each of the Examination committee members will provide the student with direction and key reference material related to the member's area as a guide for studying (i.e., a reading list consisting of review and/or research articles, books and/or book chapters, and/or a list of specific authors who specialize in the topic). The student is expected to read these and other related articles in order to achieve an integrated understanding of the topics at a level of expertise expected for a successful outcome. It is the student's responsibility to meet with each member of the examination committee to discuss the topics and/or articles contained within the candidacy exam. It is expected that meetings will take place well in advance of the written examination. The student must demonstrate that they have met with each committee member (i.e., via email documentation) before they progress to the written examination.

The **written component** precedes the oral component, and usually within four months from when the student begins studying for the Examination. The written component will consist of questions related to the areas decided upon by the Advisory committee. Each of the three examiners will provide two questions and the student will be required to answer only one question from each examiner. The questions should be of a nature to test the student's basic understanding and relevant depth of the identified topics within the field. A well-prepared student should be able to provide a satisfactory answer to a question within a 2-hour period.

The supervisor is responsible for scheduling (finding dates/times/examiners/chair) the written and oral components of the Candidacy Examination, and for notifying the Kinesiology Graduate program office with the scheduled dates/times/examiners/chair. The Graduate program will reserve the location for the oral component and a laptop computer and/or room, if requested, for the written questions. The Examining committee will submit their questions to the Kinesiology Graduate Program Coordinator *no later than one week prior to the written component*. Questions will be collated and sent to the supervisor for approval (alone or in consultation with the Advisory committee) and will form the written component of the examination.

The **written component** will take place on a single day during which all *three questions are answered within a time period not to exceed 7 hours in duration* (includes time for lunch and other breaks). The exam will be completed 'open-book' and the complexity and depth of the questions should account for the open-book nature of the exam. The candidate will normally complete the written exam from their home, but can arrange a different location in consultation with the Graduate Office. The candidate may not consult with other individuals during the written examination. The candidate will have access to notes and the internet, but must write the exam in their own words. The Kinesiology Graduate Coordinator (or designate) will email exam questions to the candidate at the start time for their exam. The candidate must email their completed exam to the Graduate Coordinator (or designate) within 7 hours of receiving the exam questions. The Graduate Program Office will be responsible for distributing the examination answers to the appropriate examiners for marking. Each answer will be graded independently by two of the Examination committee members (as determined by the supervisor). The student must pass two out of three questions and with an overall average of 70% from the six independently submitted grades. A passing grade of 70% is required on the written component before the student will be allowed to proceed to the oral examination. In circumstances in which the student's performance on the written component is a "failure", or a "borderline-failure", the Examination committee may choose to meet to discuss the written performance and whether to proceed to the oral. It is advisable for the Examination committee to inform the Kin Grad Chair of this meeting, and the Kin Grad Chair (or their representative) may participate in this meeting, if desired. If the student's performance on the written component is a "pass", then the student will move forward to the oral

component at the prearranged date and time.

The *oral component* will usually take place only after successful completion of the written component and usually **within one week of the written component**. Questioning during the oral examination normally will be within the agreed upon topic areas but also can extend to topics peripheral to these and/or to topics which should be considered “basic” to the understanding of the field of specialization. At the completion of the oral component the student is asked to leave the room and the Examination committee will discuss the student's performance during both the written and oral components. The outcome of the Candidacy examination (“pass/fail”) is based on a “majority” decision determined by closed vote of the Examination committee. At this time the Chair of the Candidacy Examination will invite the student back into the room and will explain the successful decision.

If the student is unsuccessful in either the written or oral components, the student will be given one additional chance at a time agreed upon by the student, the supervisor, and other members of the Examination committee (but normally not before three months). Based on the student’s performance with the written and/or oral components of the examination, the Examining Committee can request that the student repeat the written, oral or both components, or can propose an alternate method to assess the student (e.g., an essay of a particular topic plus “truncated” oral examination). At this time the Chair of the Candidacy Examination will provide the student with an explanation for the unsuccessful decision. The student’s supervisor will follow-up with specific directions for preparation and remedial work for repeating the exam. If the written component is repeated and is assessed a “failure”, the Examination committee will meet to discuss whether the student should be given the opportunity to proceed to the oral component. If the Examination committee determines that the student, despite being given a second opportunity to successfully complete the written and/or oral components, has not met the knowledge base and standards expected of a Doctoral student in the program area, the Candidacy examination will be considered a “failure” and the student will be required to withdraw from the PhD program.

The student is reminded that successful completion of the Candidacy Examination represents a major “Milestone” in the Kinesiology Doctoral program. The student is expected to follow the University’s Code of Student Conduct and Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students, http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/appeals_discipline/index.html).

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