

Policies for Biodefense PhD Qualifying Exam

Each student's qualifying exam is written by his/her dissertation committee and administered by the committee chair to the individual student.

The dissertation committee will decide the subject areas and research skills (if any) to be tested, and decide whether or not there is to be an oral portion along with the written portion.

In general, the written portion can be expected to consist of 6-8 long-answer essay questions designed to assess the student's ability to synthesize knowledge gleaned from the program courses, in the context of critical thinking.

- Committee and student together decide on a suitable exam date. This date may be no earlier than the student's last semester of coursework. **It is strongly recommended that it be no later than 6 weeks prior to the semester of expected candidacy.**
- The student will be allowed up to 7 (continuous) hours to complete the written exam in a designated room at the Prince William campus. Student may bring food, drink, two pens, and any writing material specified by the committee (e.g. loose-leaf paper, scantron, blue book, etc.).
- Pass/Fail results of any given exam are available two weeks after the exam date. Committee chair sends a memo to the program director regarding the results.
- The dissertation committee will determine the course of action for any student who fails an exam. Possible courses of action are re-taking courses and passing a (possibly second) oral examination.
- A copy of the completed written exam will be included in the student's departmental file, as will notes from any oral exam portion.

As soon as a student's committee is formally approved, the student can begin discussing with the committee members further details of the content of the qualifying exam.

Passing the qualifying exam is one of the requirements for a student's advancement to candidacy to engage in dissertation research.