

The Comprehensive Exam - SBME

Purpose

The purpose of the examination is to ascertain whether the proposed topic is suitable for a PhD thesis and whether the candidate is capable of carrying out the work required to successfully complete the Ph.D. degree. Suitability relates largely to the possibility of making original and significant contributions. Capability relates largely to knowledge and understanding of material in the subject area of the proposal as well as areas related to it that affect the proposed research.

Exam Format

The examination consists of the presentation of the proposal for the thesis work, followed by questions from the examining committee. The questions are to address both the specific research topic and topics related to the general subject area of the proposal. A two-hour period is scheduled for the examination. The first 25 minutes of which are devoted to the presentation of the proposal.

Chairperson Role

The chairperson ensures that the committee uses good judgement about questions on related topics. As an examiner, they will participate in the questioning and they will also clear up misunderstandings by the other members of the committee, to expose possible important weaknesses.

Examining Committee Recommendation – Post Exam

All recommendations of the examining committee must be submitted in writing to the Graduate Advisor of the School and be signed by all members of the committee.

- ❖ If the vote of the examining committee **is unanimous**, the recommendation stands.
- ❖ If the vote of the examining committee **is not unanimous**, the case will be referred to an arbitration committee. The arbitration committee will consist of all the full/joint professors in the School and will be chaired by one of the Graduate Advisors of the School's graduate program. The candidate's supervisor must be present and the proposal must be available during the discussion. The supervisor will not be present during the vote. Where a member of the arbitration committee (full professors) is the candidate's supervisor, she/he must withdraw during the vote. The chairperson of the arbitration committee votes, but if there is a tie, the supervisor's vote will also be counted.

	Recommendation to the Candidate	Outcome Details
A	Continue in the Ph.D. program.	The Advancement to Candidacy form may be signed by supervisor and graduate advisor, and submitted to G+PS.
B	Be given a conditional pass.	The pass is subject to satisfactory correction of specified deficiencies of a minor nature. Assessment of these corrections is to be the sole subject of a meeting of the committee and the candidate. The outcome of this assessment cannot be again category B.
C	Be re-examined within 3 months' time.	The re-examination is a completely new examination. The outcome of this examination cannot be again category C.
D	Case be reviewed by an arbitration committee.	In the event of recommendation E, the student may need courses to fulfill MASc course requirements, will need to write a thesis, and will then be examined on their thesis in order to graduate.
E	Be asked to withdraw from the Ph.D. program but permitted to: (letter F)	In the event of recommendation E, the student may need courses to fulfill MASc course requirements, will need to write a thesis, and will then be examined on their thesis in order to graduate.
F	Complete requirements for the MASc degree.	The student services team will request a transfer to the MASc program, after the student fills in the appropriate form.
G	Be withdrawn from the University.	