

GUIDELINES ON SCHEDULING THE POSTGRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR PhD DEGREE

1. What is a Postgraduate Qualifying Examination (PQE)?

Students enrolled on PhD programs are required to pass a qualifying examination within a stipulated period in order to obtain the PhD candidacy. The PQE consists of two parts:

- a) A written proposal, and
- b) An oral presentation by the student.

The written proposal should contain:

- a) A background introduction of the proposed research;
- b) A description of proposed research direction; and
- c) The result of preliminary work, if any.

The length of the written proposal should be between 5 to 10 pages in length, excluding figures and references.

The format of the written proposal:

- a) Page size: A4
- b) Font : Times New Roman
- c) Font Size : 12 point
- d) Margin : 1-inch all round
- e) Spacing : Single-line spacing

The oral presentation should contain:

- a) A 3-minute self-introduction;
- b) A 30-minutes presentation on the research proposal; and
- c) Question and answer session.

In the question and answer session, the committee will ask academic questions to check the background and research capability of the student. Student should expect questions directly related to the proposed research topic. They should also be able to answer more general questions, which are not directly relevant to the proposed topics, but are relevant to PhD research in the general ECE program.

The oral presentation is closed for public.

2. When should PhD student take the PQE?

All students, part-time or full-time, must take the PQE at their thirteen months and pass the exam within two years after admission, with a maximum of 2 attempts. A PHD student should then take the PQE during the 3rd semester of PhD study. The student will acquire the PhD Candidate status after passing the PQE.

3. Appointment of Chairman and PQE Committee Members

The PQE Committee shall consist of three faculty members in the research area, including:

- A Chairman, and
- Two other faculty members.

The membership of the examination committee is appointed by the Department. The supervisor or mentor of the student would be excluded from the committee.

4. How to schedule the PQE?

a) PQE period

All oral presentations should be scheduled within the PQE period, normally week 8-9 of the Fall and Spring term.

b) Submission of Notice of Intention to Take Postgraduate Qualifying Examination (PQE)

- The student is required to complete and return the form “Notice of Intention to Take Postgraduate Qualifying Examination (PQE)” to Adrian at the departmental Administrative Office (Rm 2457) at least SIX WEEKS before the oral presentation (by the week 2 of Fall and Spring term). The form can be downloaded from the website “Information for MPhil/PhD Students (<http://course.ee.ust.hk/pginfo>).
- Students would be informed by the Department the date, time and venue of the oral presentation.

c) Written Proposal Submission

- The student is required to submit ONE softcopy of the written proposal to Adrian at eepqe@ust.hk at least FOUR WEEKS before the oral presentation for review of the PQE Committee member and the Department Head. If the 4-week requirement is not followed, the department will request the oral presentation be postponed.
- The Committee has the discrete right to cancel the exam if the quality of the written proposal does not meet their standard. Should such case occurs, the student will be notified by the dept at least 2 weeks before the oral presentation.

d) Evaluation

- Students will be evaluated base on the following criteria:
 - a. The quality of the written proposal;
 - b. The quality of the presentation, including the student’s ability to understand the background of the proposed research and the research potential demonstrated during the presentation;
 - c. Student’s ability to answer questions raised by the committee

e) Possible Grades for PQE

- The exam result would be announced officially by the Department to the student.
- Within ONE WEEK after the examination, all PQE Committee members should return the Individual Reports and the chairman of the PQE Committee should return the “Examiner Report” to Adrian in order to report the outcome of the review meeting back to the PG Coordinator.
- The outcome of the PQE can be a pass, a fail, or a conditional pass.
- For conditional pass, the student needs to take up to 2 courses (ELEC courses only) in addition to the program required credits to make up for any insufficient background as identified by the committee. The courses are decided by the committee, and could be either UG level courses or PG level courses. If the student earned a grade B or higher from the designated courses, the result of the PQE will be updated to a Pass.
- For students who received a fail grade for the first time, they could apply to re-take the exam. Normally, the PQE committee remains unchanged from the first attempt.

5. Appeal

a) Procedure

- The student submits an appeal within 2 weeks after the results release.
- The PQE committee handling the student’s exam views and comments on the appeal.
- The PQE coordinator reviews the appeal and the committee’s response and makes a recommendation.
- This recommendation is reviewed and endorsed by the PG committee.
- PQE coordinator conveys the decision on the appeal to the student.

****Please note:**

- 1) Failure to adhere to the rules and deadlines will lead to POSTPONEMENT of the examination.
- 2) Most of the examination venues, i.e. classrooms, are equipped with computer facilities and/or LCD projector. Student can borrow additional AV equipment from the ITSC loan counter (Room 2021, Lift 2) themselves.