

General and Final Exam Policy

Department of Astronomy

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Purpose:

The Graduate School is relinquishing some of its administrative oversight for setting up the General and Final Exams for PhD students. Effectively this means a shift of responsibility to the Department to establish our own concurrence policies (that the student is ready for the exam), and with the student and faculty adviser playing essential roles. Although there is somewhat of an increased burden to all involved in the Department, there is also some additional flexibility under the new scheme: e.g., it will be relatively easier for us to reschedule exams when needed, print warrants, and email can usually suffice for faculty concurrences.

Policy:

The student will request the exams on-line, with approval then granted by one of several folks with grad/front-office authority and familiar with the grad program (often Sarah; but with Scott, Stan, Suzanne as backups if Sarah is unavailable, hereafter SSS). However, those with exam approval authority Sarah (SSS) will still need to rely on the dissertation adviser and the student to confirm (well in advance) that scheduling the exam is appropriate.

Before Sarah (SSS) can approve the exam schedule, action by both the Student (A) and faculty mentor (B) will be needed:

(A) **Student responsibility:** Before requesting to schedule the exam, the student will collect and collate concurrences (email or hardcopy fine) from all faculty on the supervisory committee participating in the exam indicating their agreement for an exam on the requested date. The student will forward those collated concurrences on to Sarah (SSS) for approval. The deadlines are 2 weeks in advance for the General, and 5 weeks in advance of the Final exam date.

For the General: the student will provide a ~10 page description of their dissertation topic to the supervisory committee at least 2 weeks in advance of the exam date. The student collects, collates, and delivers to Sarah (SSS) the concurrence (written or email) of all members of the supervisory committee on the intended exam date and submits the exam request online

For the Final: the student will provide a dissertation draft to their reading committee 5 weeks in advance of the intended Final exam date. (This is to allow enough time for the reading committee to review the dissertation and to allow rescheduling if there are any delays).

(B) Faculty Chair of Supervisory committee/mentor: independently, the faculty mentor should also directly send their concurrence to Sarah (SSS) verifying that the student is ready for the exam. Email or hardcopy is fine. For both exams, the signed exam warrant must be returned to Sarah (SSS) immediately after the exam, for conveying the committee decision to the Graduate School.

For the General: faculty mentor concurrence (e.g., email) that the student is ready for the General should be provided one week in advance of the intended exam date.

For the Final: the faculty mentor should consult with at least the reading committee (after they have had at least 3 weeks to review the dissertation draft from the student), and then verify to Sarah (SSS) the final concurrence of the mentor and rest of the reading committee that the student is ready for the Final defense. This concurrence to Sarah (SSS) should be delivered (e.g., email) at least 2 weeks in advance of the intended Final exam date.

Policy Deadlines:

Of course, in practice, tentative scheduling of exams should be done much earlier to insure feasibility, but a summary of the various suggested *policy deadlines* is:

General:

--at least 2 weeks before the General exam date the student provides the supervisory committee with a ~10 page description of their planned dissertation topic; the student collects, collates, and delivers to Sarah (SSS) the concurrence (written or email) of all members of the supervisory committee on the intended exam date and submits the exam request online.

--at least 1 week before the General exam date, the faculty mentor provides concurrence (e.g., email) to Sarah (SSS) that the student is ready for the General.

--signed exam warrant is returned to Sarah (SSS) immediately after exam takes place for conveying committee decision to Graduate School.

Final:

--at least 5 weeks before the Final exam date the student provides at least the reading committee with a draft dissertation for review; the student collects, collates, and forwards to Sarah (SSS) the concurrence (written or email) of all members of the supervisory committee on the intended exam date.

--at least 2 weeks before the Final exam date, the faculty mentor is to have consulted with (at least) the reading committee to concurrence that the student/thesis is ready for Final defense, and provides notification (e.g., email) to Sarah (SSS).

--Sarah (SSS) approves exam date after all concurrences received.

--signed exam warrant is returned to Sarah (SSS) immediately after exam for conveying committee decision to Graduate School.