

#### Appendix 10: Guidelines on Administration of Qualifying Examination for PhD Students (applicable to the 2019/20 intake and thereafter)

The PhD Qualifying Examination is mandatory for all full-time and part-time PhD students, including those under joint PhD programmes, who commenced study in 2019/20 and thereafter.

The requirements of the PhD Qualifying Examination are as follows:

1. The PhD Qualifying Examination is an additional requirement on top of the Qualifying Report and Annual Progress Report assessments.
2. For students under regular PhD programmes, they are required to pass the Qualifying Examination within 10-24 months (full-time) or 20-48 months (part-time) after commencement of their PhD studies.
3. A maximum of two attempts will be allowed. Those students who cannot pass the Qualifying Examination by the deadline will result in termination of PhD study.

#### Format of Examination

4. The PhD Qualifying Examination shall consist of written examination only.
5. A common written Qualifying Examination paper be applicable to all PhD students of the same School/Department, and the examination paper for students under joint PhD programme be the same as the one for regular students for the sake of fairness and quality assurance consideration. Considering that students within the same School/Department will have different research disciplines, Schools/Departments may either design one set of written examination paper providing choices of questions covering different areas/fields, or several sets of Qualifying Examination papers each covering a specific area/field.
6. Individual Schools/Departments may determine the format and content of the examination paper. Schools/Departments may engage academic advisors to review the examination papers to ensure the standard is comparable with their counterparts in the international arena, if necessary.
7. Individual Schools/Departments will have discretion to determine the number of Qualifying Examination(s) to be offered in an academic year. Meanwhile, Schools/Departments are required to offer Qualifying Examinations at least twice a year for PhD students.
8. Schools/Departments should notify the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies immediately of the list of students who have passed the PhD Qualifying Examination for record purpose.
9. Under exceptional circumstances, supervisors with justifications may recommend their students to take the Qualifying Examination offered by another School/Department, instead of that of the students' home department. Such arrangement requires the endorsement from all relevant parties (including Dean/Head of student's home School/Department and Qualifying Examination offering unit, as well as the respective College/School Graduate Studies Committee (C/SGSCs) and approval by the Committee on Research Degrees Candidature.

#### Exit Channel

10. At the discretion of individual Colleges/Schools/Departments, PhD students who are terminated due to failure of the Qualifying Examination may seek transfer to a self-financing MPhil programme with or without supervisor's studentship support using non-University Grants Committee (UGC) funds. The study period for the MPhil programme is two-year full-time. The previous period of study in the PhD programme will be counted

towards the candidature of the MPhil programme and credit transfer is determined by individual Colleges/Schools/Departments.

#### Review and Appeal

11. The prevailing regulations and appeal procedures for review of course grade will be applicable to the review of the result of the Qualifying Examination. However, there will be no appeal against the decision to terminate PhD candidature after students fail two attempts at the Qualifying Examination.

#### Arrangements for Qualifying Examination for Students under the Mainland Collaboration Schemes and Joint PhD Programmes with Overseas Universities

12. PhD Qualifying Examination is a mandatory requirement for new students under joint/collaborative PhD programmes (i.e. 2019/20 intake cohort and thereafter). The written Qualifying Examination paper should be the same as that for regular PhD students due to fairness and quality assurance considerations.

13. Given that joint/collaborative PhD programmes with Mainland universities and overseas universities are operating under different study models, there will be slight variation in the examination timelines and exit channel, as below:

#### Timeline for Passing the Qualifying Examination

(a) For students under the joint PhD programmes and the successive Master and Doctoral degree programme, in view of the study arrangements set by City University of Hong Kong (hereafter “CityU” or the “University”) research supervisors, flexibility should be given, so that such students can fulfil the requirement of passing the Qualifying Examination at an earlier stage, and put stronger focus on fulfilling the coursework requirements and carrying out research works during study at CityU Hong Kong campus.

(b) Students under the joint PhD programmes, successive Master and Doctoral degree programme, and collaborative PhD programme will have to pass the Qualifying Examination from the 10th to the 36th month upon official registration as a student at CityU, or to the end of normal study period, whichever is earlier, regardless of the study locations.

#### Exclusion on Exit Channel

(c) Exit channel for PhD students who fail the Qualifying Examination to transfer to MPhil programme is not applicable to students under the Mainland Collaboration Schemes and joint PhD programme with overseas universities. If a student fails in the second attempt, he/she will be terminated from the joint PhD programme. Yet, he/she can continue his/her PhD study at the partner university.

14. Notwithstanding the proposed timeline for passing the Qualifying Examination and the exclusion on exit channel presented above, these students are subject to the same rules and regulations regarding the Qualifying Examination requirement for PhD students, such as advanced studentship rate, and format of examination.

#### Location of Qualifying Examination

15. The location of the Qualifying Examination can be in CityU Hong Kong campus or in one of the University’s designated study locations in China (currently either Suzhou or Shenzhen).

Mutual Recognition and Comparability of Qualifying Examination for Students under Joint PhD Programmes with Overseas Universities (subject to the agreement between CityU and the

relevant University)

16. Students under Joint PhD programme with overseas universities will be required to pass CityU' s Qualifying Examination if the partner universities do not have any qualifying examination requirement.

17. If partner universities also have their own qualifying examination requirement, student will only be required to pass the qualifying examination of their home universities.

18. In case the format or standard of a partner university' s qualifying examination is deemed not comparable to that of CityU, the relevant CityU College/School/Department will be delegated the authority to negotiate with the partner university' s academic unit whether the students passing their home university' s qualifying examination can be recognized as fulfilling CityU' s Qualifying Examination requirement. Individual College/School may stipulate more stringent requirements.