

## CMDB PhD Theme Policy on the Qualifying Exam

CMDB students are to form their Graduate Committee and the first meeting should be held in the Spring Semester of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the program. The student should provide a copy of the research project write up (not presentation slides) and an updated CV to the committee 2 weeks ahead of the first meeting, and should introduce themselves and give relevant background information during the introduction. Each committee member and the student will complete the GBS graduate committee evaluation and return this to the Theme office. The first committee meeting is to occur before the QE exam.

It is preferred that CMDB students pass their QE by the end of year 2, and the QE is to be held no later than the end of December of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the program.

Since this occurs a bit earlier compared to other themes and departmental programs' timelines, the QE for CMDB students is meant to be a true exam testing both depth and breadth of knowledge, with less emphasis on preliminary data. Having preliminary data on their project is much less important than being able to put together a logical hypotheses and approaches to test them. It's much more about the student being able to formulate and defend his/her ideas, address questions and think experimentally. Brad or Alecia will attend the QE in order to address any questions regarding the format and expectations of the CMDB theme.

A brief overview of the procedures for the CMDB students' QE follows:

The student is to include the CMDB Theme Director(s) and Program Manager on the correspondence used to schedule the QE meeting. One of the Theme Directors will attend the QE to represent the theme. The student is to provide a copy of the research project to the committee and CMDB Theme Director(S) 2 weeks before the QE meeting.

The mentor and each committee member need to read over his thesis proposal/research plan before the QE exam. During the exam, each committee member will be allowed sufficient time to ask the student questions about his aims, experimental design, methods, and other aspects of his proposed thesis research. The student should also be asked questions that are not specifically related to the written document, such as those that test the student's general scientific knowledge or other relevant areas.

The student is to prepare a PowerPoint presentation with some relevant background information, preliminary results, and an outline of each proposed aim. This presentation will be limited to around 20 minutes, and committee members should ask questions at any time throughout the presentation. The meeting should not last longer than 1.5-2 hours. The Committee Chairman/mentor will be there for the entire exam, but will not ask any questions or answer any for the student.

Also, each committee member will fill out a CMDB QE evaluation meeting form; blank copies will be provided at the meeting, and one is also attached to this email, for your information.

**UAB, Graduate Biomedical Sciences**  
**Qualifying Exam Checklist – CMDDB Theme**

- No later than the Spring Semester of the student's 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the PhD program, the student's graduate committee is to be formed and the first committee meeting is to be held.
- No later than 2 weeks prior to the first committee meeting (which is held before the QE), the student will provide to the committee members and theme directors: a copy of the research project write up (not presentation slides) and an updated CV.
- No later than 1 week after the first committee meeting, the student and faculty evaluation forms are to be completed and provided to the GBS Office, current contact: Nan Travis, [ntravis@uab.edu](mailto:ntravis@uab.edu).
- The student will include the theme directors on QE meeting scheduling correspondence.
- The student prepares and presents limited number of slides describing preliminary data (if any) and plans. This should not exceed 15-20 slides.
- No later than 2 weeks prior to the QE committee meeting the student will provide a copy of the research project to the committee and theme directors.

**Cell, Molecular, and Developmental Biology Graduate Theme  
Qualifying Examination Evaluation**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluation of Qualifying:**

A. **Written Proposal**

B. **Oral Presentation**

C. **Breadth and Depth of Knowledge in Research Area and Relevant  
Areas of Cell Biology**

**Recommendation:**

$\pi$  Pass

$\pi$  Pass with condition

$\pi$  Fail