

Interdisciplinary PhD Qualifying Exam in Mechanical Engineering

The Interdisciplinary PhD Qualifying Exam in Mechanical Engineering will be conducted as a department level program, in order to insure that interdisciplinary students across the department take the exam under a uniform set of policies and procedures. However, in administering the program the department will rely on the areas, including the area coordinators and area staff. This approach recognizes that department level resources are limited, and that administrative coordination of department and area level qualifying exam activities makes the most efficient use of faculty and staff time.

The timeline and procedures for implementation of the Interdisciplinary PhD Qualifying Exam are as follows:

Sep 1/Feb 1: Areas announce topics on which they will offer written exams.

Oct 1/Mar 1: Areas notify the graduate office of students in their areas who have elected to take the next Interdisciplinary PhD Qualifying Exam, by submitting to the graduate office a spreadsheet which lists the name and email of each student and the three topical areas in which they have elected to take a written exam.

Nov 1/Apr 1: The graduate office distributes to the areas a consolidated spreadsheet in the aforementioned format, listing the name and email of each student and the three topical areas in which they have elected to take a written exam.

Dec 1/May 1: The areas submit to the graduate office, in sealed envelopes (one envelope for each topical area), a copy of the written exam for each student who has selected that topical area (plus two extra copies). The graduate office will keep the sealed envelopes under lock until exam day.

Exam Day (last working day before the start of classes in each long semester): The faculty proctor for the written qualifying exam will pick up the exam envelopes from the graduate office, distribute and proctor the exams in one large room, and then return the worked exams to the graduate office. The faculty proctor must return the exams in sealed envelopes, broken down by topical area, with one envelope per topical area. The areas will alternate in providing a faculty proctor, with each area tasked in proportion to its number of faculty. The faculty proctor will be excused from all area level qualifying exam responsibilities during that semester.

One week after Exam Day: The first working day after the exam the areas will pick up (from the graduate office) the sealed envelopes with the worked exams in their topical areas. Within one week, the areas must grade the exams and report a pass/fail grade for each exam to the graduate office. An exam must be graded by at least two area faculty in order for the area to assign a pass/fail grade.

Two weeks after Exam Day: The graduate office will consolidate the pass/fail grades for each of the three written exams for each student, and provide those results to both the Graduate Advisor and the Chair of the GSC.

Last class day of the semester: Students who pass all three of the written exams must take the oral exam during that same semester. By the last class day of the semester the faculty advisor must report the oral exam results (pass/fail) to the graduate office. The graduate office will report those results to both the Graduate Advisor and the Chair of the GSC.