



PhD Qualifying Examination Rules of Procedure (Remote Examinations due to COVID-19)

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, examinations are being held remotely using a variety of modalities (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, etc). Where possible, IMS will book the exam using Zoom.

Additional Considerations for Remote Examinations:

- IMS will work with the Supervisor to confirm the appropriate platform. Instructions for joining the examination meeting will be pre-circulated to the Examination Committee by the IMS Office
- All participants are expected to join the meeting 5 minutes early to ensure their technologies are working smoothly, so that the exam can proceed on time
- Exams are strictly confidential and cannot be recorded
- The Supervisor will manage/host the exam technology (i.e. Zoom Meeting Host) however, in some cases, this role may be delegated to a PAC member

Examination Committee Member Checklist:

- ✓ The Examiner/Chair receives the electronic examination file from the IMS Office
- ✓ The Examiner/Appraiser has submitted their appraisal to the IMS Office
- ✓ Only the pre-approved examination committee members may attend:
the Examiner/ Appraiser and Examiner/Chair must attend
- ✓ ALL members must have read the research proposal and prepared questions and feedback

At the Start of the Examination:

1. The Examiner/Chair introduces the members and the candidate and ensures that all approved examiners are present. If members are missing, the Examiner/Chair advises the IMS Office and discusses action to be taken. **The examination will be cancelled if quorum is not met.**
Quorum is as follows:
 - Supervisor
 - One Program Advisory Committee member
 - Examiner/Appraiser
 - Examiner/Chair
2. The Examiner/Chair instructs the supervisor of their responsibility to carefully document items for revision and modification (if necessary) during the examination.
3. The Examiner/Chair will ask the student to withdraw from the examination. The student will either completely disconnect from the meeting or, if using Zoom, be placed in the Zoom Waiting Room by the meeting host. It is not sufficient for the student to simply be on mute.

4. The Examiner/Chair advises the Examination Committee members of the exam procedures and what is expected of them. This is particularly important if there are members from other departments or universities who are not familiar with IMS exam procedures.
5. The Examiner/Chair advises the examiners whether the student has completed qualifying course requirements and inquires whether there are any major concerns about the upcoming examination.
6. The Examiner/Appraiser summarizes their appraisal with focus on the most pressing points. Discussion may follow the summary of the appraisal.
7. The Examiner/Chair provides the supervisor with a soft copy of the appraisal.
8. The Examiner/Chair and the Examination Committee determine the order of questioning. Order of questions is usually from the most-to-least distant to the student i.e., Examiner/Appraiser, Examiner/Chair, PAC members, and Supervisor (if necessary).

Presentation by candidate:

9. The Examiner/Chair will invite the student back into the examination to give their presentation (if not using Zoom the Chair will ask the Supervisor to call/email the student to reconnect).
10. The student will give a 20-minute (uninterrupted) presentation. **This is a strict time limit.**
11. A PowerPoint presentation usually accompanies the presentation. The student will have already distributed their slides to the examination committee ahead of the exam. During the exam, the student can simply share their presentation screen when using Zoom.

Question period:

12. Following the student's presentation, the examination committee ask questions in the pre-determined order. These are presented as a round of questions, with 10 minutes allotted to each examiner per round.
13. The Examiner/Chair allows only one examiner at a time to ask questions at a time (discussion by examiners among themselves will only detract from the 10-minute time period) **and will intervene if another examiner, or the supervisor, starts to join in the discussion.**
14. A second (typical) or third (unusual) round of questions is permitted. Some examiners may choose not to ask additional questions, or not to take up the full 10 minutes on the second round.
15. The Examiner/Chair should keep informal notes about the content of questions that may lead to proposal revisions for reference during the analysis of the defense.

16. Following questioning, the Examiner/Chair will ask the student to withdraw from the examination (either completely disconnect from the meeting or be placed in the Zoom Waiting Room by the Meeting Host).

Committee discusses the examination and votes:

17. The Examiner/Chair asks the following specific questions of the examiners. All examiners must address the following three questions:

Is the Research Proposal acceptable?

- With no modifications
- With minor or organizational corrections (typos, change in format, additional information, no new data or new interpretation of data required). The student has one month to complete the corrections.
- With minor modifications (rewrite part of the proposal, addition of new experimental data and/or completely new interpretation of data). The student has two months to complete the modifications and these must be reviewed by a sub-committee appointed by the Examiner/Chair after the exam.
- Not acceptable (major modifications are required to the proposal (e.g. insufficient preliminary results, flawed proposal, scope of proposal is too limited). The student may have one reconvened qualifying examination, to be scheduled within two months of the exam, or defend a thesis at the M.Sc. level.

Was the Oral Defense:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Not acceptable; must undergo re-examination within two months or defend at the MSc level

The Committee recommends the continuation of the candidate in the IMS Ph.D. program be:

- Approved
- Approved conditional on completion of minor corrections/minor modifications
- Not approved; will re-examine in two months or defend at the MSc level

18. In the case that a consensus about the recommendations is not reached, the Examiner/Chair must ask for a vote on each question.
19. More than one negative vote (or abstention) causes the examination to be adjourned.
20. **If minor modifications are required, the Examiner/Chair appoints a Modifications Subcommittee (see [After the Examination](#)).**
21. The Examiner/Chair completes the online Chair's Summary Form using the link provided by the IMS Office.

22. The Examiner/Chair will be submitting the Chair's Summary Form on behalf of the examination committee; in lieu of signatures, the committee may request the Examiner/Chair to share their screen (or equivalent) to view the online document.

Outcome:

23. The student is invited back into the examination, and the Examiner/Chair advises the student about the outcome of the examination (see [After the Examination](#)).
24. A clear statement about who will review the revised Research Proposal is given to the student and supervisor, and the examination is adjourned.

After the Examination:

25. Within 24 hours of the examination, the Examiner/Chair will submit the online Chair's Summary Form to the IMS Office using the link provided.
26. IMS will send next steps instructions to the student.
 - a) **If Minor or Organizational Corrections are recommended**
 - Student will consult with supervisor and PAC members about changes, revises proposal and submits it to their PAC
 - Supervisor confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 1 month of the examination
 - Student submits revised proposal to the IMS Office
 - b) **If Minor Modifications are recommended**
 - Examiner/Chair will appoint a subcommittee
 - The subcommittee must include the Examiner/Appraiser and 2 other members
 - The Subcommittee Chair cannot be the supervisor
 - Student will consult with the subcommittee members about changes, revises proposal and submits it to the subcommittee
 - Subcommittee Chair confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 2 months of the examination
 - Student submits revised proposal to the IMS Office
 - c) **A repeat PhD Qualifying Examination is absolutely required if:**
 - The research proposal is deemed not acceptable
 - Student does not pass the oral defense. This may occur when a vote is required (i.e., examiners disagree about the recommendations) and there is a negative outcome
 - Corrections are not submitted within the required timeline (above)

d) The student must reclassify into the MSc program if:

- Student no longer wishes to continue in the PhD
- Does not pass the reconvened Qualifying Examination

The student is allowed one repeat of the PhD Qualifying Examination within 2 months of the original examination, or the student can choose to schedule an MSc Final Oral Examination.