

CBE Graduate Program Milestones/Expectations, updated October 2016

Leading up to the Q exam

Graduate students enrolled in our PhD track will be required to take CHEME 7920 and write a fellowship-type research proposal as an integral part of the course. The proposal should be drafted following discussions with a potential advisor as part of the advisor selection process, a writing exercise/assessment, and fellowship proposal preparation.

All fellowship-eligible students will submit applications for NSF (*etc.*) fellowships. Students will receive coaching in CHEME 7920, but faculty advisor engagement is paramount to success.

The DGS will aim to finish advisor selection ~ mid-October, or sooner, if possible.

Students will work towards the goals written in this proposal (or write another one if the advisor has changed) as a roadmap for their first-year research leading up to the Q exam. In this way, expectations are clear from the advisor what is to be achieved by the time the Q exam report is written.

The Q exam is to be completed by the end of the summer of the first year (following their second semester). The Q evaluation is based on:

- Performance in core courses; the minimum expectation is a B average for all cores and none below B-
- Evaluation of the content and quality of the written research report
- Progress in research to date & advisor endorsement

All students are required to take all safety requirements specific for the lab they join before starting any research activities. In addition CPR & First Aid training are obligatory for all groups and is a department-wide requirement. You must complete this as soon as possible, before the A exam or you will not be allowed to schedule your exam.

Doctoral candidates must have a full Special Committee assembled and registered with the graduate school no later than the end of the third semester.

Leading up to the “A” exam

*** Note that following these recommendations is always at the discretion of the committee.**

In the second year, a student should form a special committee and host an informal committee meeting to discuss his or her research topic. Special committee meetings should be held at least once per year to provide students ample feedback on their progress.

Grad School Policy: The special committee must be formed no later than the end of third semester of study. The “A” exam must be done by the 7th semester. A petition is required after this for each semester delay.

CBE Recommendation: Our expectation is that, under normal circumstances, students will graduate within 5 years. For this to occur routinely, students will be expected to schedule their “A” exam sometime between the 4th-6th semesters. All CBE students are expected to schedule their “A” exam before the end of the 6th semester.

All students should submit a written document (as defined by their special committee) to accompany the “A” exam presentation. The document could be a paper preprint, a paper draft, a thesis proposal, a research report, or a summary of their research and plans to complete their doctoral degree (the details of what is to be included will be as defined by their special committee). The expectations for the “A” exam will be communicated to the student during the first committee meeting (Year 2). This written document should be delivered to the committee no later than two weeks before the “A” exam to allow enough time for committee review.

“A” exam presentations are open to the “public,” *i.e.*, department-wide participation is encouraged. The examination portion will be closed following public questioning. All members of the special committee must attend the meeting. Faculty may participate via skype but one member must be physically present, on campus with the student. Faculty who are participating remotely may designate one of their colleagues to sign the results form on their behalf.

Note about scheduling your exam: You must provide 7-days’ notice to schedule your “A” exam. **The DGS will not sign your scheduling form unless you are compliant with this deadline.**

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Leading up to the “B” exam & before degree conferral

*** Note that following these recommendations is always at the discretion of the committee.**

The expectation is that students will finish their Ph.D. in 4-5 years. Students should continue to host committee meetings each year after the “A” exam until the “B” exam is completed to stay on track.

By the *Graduate School Code of Legislation*, a complete thesis draft must be delivered to committee no less than six weeks ahead of the defense so that the committee can evaluate if it is suitable for defense. **THERE IS NO EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE UNLESS YOU OBTAIN EXPLICIT PERMISSION FROM EVERYONE ON YOUR COMMITTEE.** At least five business days before the defense, the student must give each member of the committee a final version of the thesis. This version of the thesis may require modification following the examination, but is expected to be in as close to final form as possible. Once the committee approves of the draft version (but not necessarily the final document), *then* scheduling of an oral defense can be made. The oral defense is to be announced with no less than 7 days of public notice of the date. **The DGS will not sign your scheduling form unless you are compliant with these deadlines.**

Students should plan to commit to spending two weeks after the defense to make thesis edits mandated by the committee.

Grad School Policies & Procedures for your reference:

- The oral defense is to be announced with no less than 7 days of public notice of the date.
- B exams presentations are open to the “public,” *i.e.*, department-wide participation is encouraged. Examination portion will be closed following public questioning.
- Faculty Participation in Examinations: All members of the special committee are expected to attend all examinations. At the discretion of the field demonstrated by permission from the DGS and with the agreement of all members of the committee when scheduling an exam, one or more committee members may participate from a remote off-campus location via appropriate, high-quality electronic audio and video conferencing. At least one committee member must be located on the University campus with the student during the exam.
If the chair is participating in the exam from a remote location, he or she must designate one of the minor members with signature authority (not an ad hoc member) in attendance on campus to sign the Results of Examination Form on his or her behalf. The special committee chair must inform the student, the Director of Graduate Studies of the student’s field, and the Graduate School of the arrangements.
A special committee chair may not designate a proxy; he or she must participate in the exam. A minor member may either designate a proxy or participate from a remote location. If a proxy is selected, he or she must represent the same concentration as the regular committee member. On a committee with only the minimum required number of members, a member may not proxy for participation of another member. When an individual agrees to serve as a proxy, the regular committee member must inform the student, the Director of Graduate Studies of the student’s field, and the Graduate School of the agreement. If a committee has more than the required number of minor subject members, one minor member may designate another as his or her proxy
- Committee chairs need to establish a clear understanding among committee members and the student, at the time of the examination, of what revisions are required before the dissertation will be approved. *A dissertation is generally expected to be in virtually final form before the exam is given.* At times, of course, the committee concludes that various revisions are warranted. If there are any concerns about the dissertation, any conditions attached to its final approval, these must be made very clear to the student in a statement on the Results of Examination form. *The Results of Examination form must be submitted within three business days of the exam.*