



Department of Human Health and Nutritional Science  
Guidelines for Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

The PhD Qualifying Examination is an opportunity for the department to evaluate:

- The student's level of scholarly knowledge and ability to think independently and creatively in the chosen area of research, and also
- The presence of a solid knowledge of the basic sciences supporting this research area.

Acknowledging this range of purposes, the examination will be problem-based in areas around the student's central research expertise and knowledge-based in other related areas. The examination also serves to hone the student's communication skills and build self-confidence in a collegial environment.

During or before the student's 5<sup>th</sup> semester (as per the Graduate Calendar), the advisory committee will meet to discuss the student's research ability and promise. If they feel satisfied in this matter, they will document this satisfaction and suggest the composition of the qualifying examination committee to the Chair of the department. The Chair of the department will name the qualifying examination committee, will inform the members, and will direct the student to meet with each examination committee member individually to learn details of the parameters of the examination. Prior to those meetings, the examination committee will determine those parameters, taking into consideration the general guidelines offered here. The examination committee will also determine the format of the examination. The examination must include an oral component, but may also include a prior written component. If a written component is included, performance on the oral and written components will be evaluated together by the full examination committee. The examination committee members are urged to supply the student with a bibliographic listing which will form the basis for questioning. This information should be conveyed to the student at least six weeks prior to the examination. It is recommended that one to two weeks prior to the scheduled qualifying examination date, that the candidate provide a brief (less than one page) summary or abstract of each of his/her examiner's topics to be circulated to all of the examiners and the examination chair. This could also include a small sampling of a few representative readings from the literature.