

EXAMINATIONS

Master's Examinations

Master's Comprehensive Examination

The master's comprehensive examination is used to determine whether the student has acquired the knowledge commensurate with the courses shown in the student's Graduate Degree Works Worksheet. The examination may be oral, or written, or both. The academic unit determines the form, scope, and time of the examination. The master's thesis examination may serve as the comprehensive examination.

The academic unit has the option of offering professional master's degrees with a minimum of 30 credit hours without requiring a comprehensive exam (i.e. coursework only).

In the case of an oral examination, at least two tenure-track faculty members must be present to serve in the student's committee at the examination. One external, non-Illinois Institute of Technology faculty (or other faculty categories at the university) committee member with voting privilege may be included with the approval of the VP of Academic Affairs. With the approval of the academic unit chair, the student's adviser must recommend the external member to the VP of Academic Affairs. A resume should be attached to the recommendation. Other faculty and external visitors may attend.

The result of the examination must be approved by a majority of the committee. The committee's decision must be submitted to Academic Affairs on **Form G303** (Masters Comprehensive/Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Results) at least 15 days prior to the end of the semester. The graduate student must be registered in the semester in which the examination is given. A student who fails the comprehensive examination may repeat the examination once after a period of at least 30 days from the initial examination. Any additional consideration must be petitioned, supported by the academic unit, and approved in writing by the VP of Academic Affairs.

Master's Thesis Examination

The thesis adviser shall be the chair of the examining committee, and is responsible for all aspects of a thesis degree, including thesis advising, forms, and research credits. A thesis adviser may be any tenure-track faculty member from any unit provided that the person is approved by the student's departmental academic adviser and primary unit chair.

A student may have up to two thesis advisers, but at most one may be from a unit outside the student's primary unit. All approved thesis advisers have joint responsibility for a student's thesis, their thesis research credits will be accepted toward the thesis requirement, and they shall be listed as thesis advisers on the final submitted thesis. In the case of two thesis advisers, one will be chair of the thesis committee to be chosen by mutual agreement of the thesis advisers.

In cases where there are two thesis advisers, or the thesis adviser is from a unit other than the student's primary unit, the minimal thesis committee will require one additional tenure-track faculty member from the student's unit (three total).

The university also allows one external member as a committee member or co-chair. External members are experts in the field from industry, research institutions, or other universities, who have to be nominated by the committee chairs with the approval of the academic unit heads. The VP of Academic Affairs requires a short resume of an external member to establish his/her credentials.

The form, scope, and time of the examination are determined by the academic unit. The examination result must be submitted on **Form G303** at least 15 days prior to the last day of courses. The graduate student must be registered in the semester in which the examination is taken.

A student who fails the thesis examination may repeat the examination once after a period of at least 30 days from the initial examination. Any additional consideration must be petitioned, supported by the academic unit, and approved in writing by the VP of Academic Affairs.

Doctoral Examinations

Qualifying Examination

A qualifying examination is required for all doctoral students. The composition of the qualifying examination committee is determined by the academic unit. The voting members of the committee should be tenure-track faculty. One external, non-Illinois Institute of Technology (or other faculty categories at the university) committee member with voting privilege may be included with the approval of the VP of Academic Affairs. With the approval of the academic unit chair, the student's adviser must recommend the external member to the VP of Academic Affairs. A resume should be attached to the recommendation. The exam may be given along with the master's comprehensive examination. Students must be registered in the semester in which the qualifying examination is administered. The following rules apply to the qualifying examination:

1. The qualifying examination may be written and/or oral, and cover major and minor subjects.

2. If the academic unit requires a written exam, the student's committee is responsible for submitting the questions and for conducting the exam. The committee may conduct an oral portion of the qualifying examination. A minimum of four tenure-track faculty members must participate in the oral portion of the examination.
3. The examination must be taken within the first year of Ph.D. study if the student has an M.S. degree.
4. The results of the qualifying examination must be submitted within 15 days of the administration of the examination on **Form G303** to Academic Affairs.
5. If the student fails the qualifying examination, the examining committee may recommend a re-examination. At least one semester of additional preparation is considered essential before re-examination. The second chance for taking the qualifying exam is regarded as final. Any additional considerations must be petitioned, supported in writing by the academic unit, and approved in writing by the VP of Academic Affairs.

Comprehensive Examination

After the mandatory advising session, passing of the qualifying examination, and within a period of time specified by the academic unit, the student must complete the comprehensive examination. Though students typically take this examination at the end of the second year of Ph.D. study, the only time requirement is that the comprehensive examination is completed at least one year prior to the final thesis examination. The student must be registered in the semester in which the examination is taken. The proposal for the doctoral dissertation is normally presented as part of the comprehensive examination. The following rules apply to the comprehensive examination:

1. The examination may be written, oral, or both.
2. A quorum of faculty for a doctoral examination committee must consist of three members from the home major or Academic Unit ("internal"; depending on the practice of that major/Academic Unit) and one from outside the major or Academic Unit. Additional members may be added for reasons specified below but the expected quorum of the committee is four. Furthermore, two members of the home major or Academic Unit must be tenure-track faculty.

One of the three internal seats in the committee may include an affiliate faculty, provided they are professionally qualified. ("Affiliate" here means a faculty member appointed at IIT, but includes categories other than current tenure-track: emeritus professors; departed faculty; teaching, research, affiliate, practice, and clinical faculty.) Affiliate faculty who serve on exam committees are expected to contribute significantly to the thesis and its evaluation.

The fourth member must be tenure-track, from either (a) IIT, but outside the major or Academic Unit, or (b) external to the University. The VP of Academic Affairs has final approval on external members. The composition of the committee must meet the approval of Academic Affairs prior to the thesis examination. This should be communicated to Academic Affairs at least two weeks prior to the examination to allow for this review.

With the approval of the academic unit chair, the student's adviser must recommend the external member to the VP of Academic Affairs. A resume should be attached to the recommendation. Faculty members holding the rank of research professor or associate professor may be appointed as non-voting co-chairs of the final thesis examination committee. An emeritus professor who has a current research professor appointment and who has been active in guiding and supporting the student may be a co-chair and voting member of the student's committee. The examining committee is nominated by the academic unit head and confirmed by Academic Affairs by the second week of the semester in which the examination will be administered.

Tenured faculty who retire but remain as emeritus or those who have resigned their job as Illinois Institute of Technology professors may continue their service on examining committees for one year. Former faculty who wish to continue their service beyond this period will require the endorsement of the academic unit head and the approval of the VP of Academic Affairs.

The thesis adviser shall be the chair of the examining committee, and is responsible for all aspects of a thesis degree, including thesis advising, forms, and research credits. A thesis adviser may be any tenure track faculty member from any unit provided that the person is approved by the student's departmental academic adviser and primary unit chair. A student may have up to two thesis advisers, but at most one may be from a unit outside the student's primary unit. All approved thesis advisers have joint responsibility for a student's thesis, their thesis research credits will be accepted toward the thesis requirement, and they shall be listed as thesis advisers on the final submitted thesis. The thesis adviser shall be the chair of the thesis committee. In the case of two thesis advisers, one will be chair of the thesis committee to be chosen by mutual agreement of the thesis advisers.

In cases where there are two thesis advisers, or the thesis adviser is from a unit other than the student's primary unit, the minimal thesis committee will require one additional tenure-track faculty member from the student's unit.

The VP for Academic Affairs is an ex-officio member of all examining committees.

To substitute for the chair of the committee, the new chair must be a tenure-track faculty member.

The role of the outside (or external) member of the committee is to provide an element in the examining committee function that is independent of the immediate interest of the academic unit in which the candidate is seeking his or her degree. This fourth member of the committee has the responsibility of representing the interest and function of the university in a context distinct from that of the degree-granting academic unit. Faculty holding joint or adjunct appointments in the degree-granting academic unit or non-faculty co-advisers cannot be outside (or external) members on a student's committee. They may, however, serve as additional members of the committee.

3. The committee is nominated by the academic unit head and confirmed by Academic Affairs. The nominations must be arranged on **Form G301A** by the end of the third week of the semester in which the examination is going to be held. Academic Affairs must be notified on **Form G301A** of the time and date of the comprehensive examination no later than two weeks prior to the exam date.

4. Any faculty member may attend oral comprehensive examinations, but only the appointed tenure-track and external committee members may vote. Passing the examination requires one vote more than a majority of the official committee. Dissenting members may bring a split decision before the graduate dean for adjudication.

5. If part of the examination is failed, the report should note which part is to be repeated in a second examination. A student who fails the comprehensive examination may be re-examined after a period of 30 days has elapsed. Students failing the examination twice will be asked to terminate their graduate study at the university. In extenuating circumstances the academic unit head may show cause why a third examination should be given. A re-examination after two failures requires the approval of the VP of Academic Affairs. Failure of the third examination will result in termination without recourse.

Final Thesis Examination

The final thesis examination may be scheduled at least one year after the comprehensive examination. The following rules apply to the final thesis examination:

1. The eligibility for the membership of the final thesis examination is the same as that listed earlier for the comprehensive examination.
2. Upon final submission, the signature pages and the final thesis approval form (**Form G501**) are checked by the thesis examiner for signatures of committee members and the academic unit head. The signatures on **Form G501** indicate that the committee members are satisfied with the content of the dissertation and no additional changes are required before its final online submission for the thesis examiner's review. It is the responsibility of the student and the committee chair to notify Academic Affairs of any changes in the structure of the examining committee. The same committee that approved the preliminary dissertation must also approve the final copy of the dissertation.
3. The examination is open to all faculty but only the appointed committee members may vote. The chair of the committee is responsible for the conduct of the examination. In addition, **Form G301B** must be received by Academic Affairs by the end of the second week of the semester in which the examination is going to be held. Academic Affairs must be notified of the date and time of the final thesis examination at least two weeks before the examination using **Form G301B**. Examination results reported on **Form G309** must be received by Academic Affairs at least 15 days before the last day of the semester. The final copy of the thesis is uploaded by the student using an online document submission process, and confirmed by the thesis examiner with the degree candidate, at least nine days before the last day of the semester.
4. A student who fails the thesis examination may be re-examined after a period of 30 days has elapsed. Students failing the examination twice will be asked to terminate their graduate study at the university. In extenuating circumstances the academic unit head may show cause why a third examination should be given. A re-examination after two failures requires the approval of the VP of Academic Affairs. Failure of the third examination will result in termination without recourse.

Qualifying, comprehensive, and final examinations for graduate students are to be held on the university's Mies Campus. Exceptions to this policy are made only for certain graduate students whose examinations are administered at other university campuses.