

Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology Preliminary Examination for PhD Candidates

The preliminary examination is a requirement for all PhD candidates in the department. The examination must be conducted not less than 1 year prior to the submission of a Doctoral Thesis. It is an **oral examination** designed to determine that the depth and breadth of the student's knowledge of biological structure and function, as related to the broad area of their thesis research, is commensurate with PhD candidacy.

Procedures for the conduct of Preliminary Examinations

In preparation for the examination the candidate provides a detailed **progress report to their** Advisory Committee no less than one week prior to an Advisory Committee meeting to be held not less than 3 months before the preliminary examination. This report contains the project title, general objectives, rationale, research plan and methods, and a summary of progress made to date. At this meeting agreement is reached concerning the areas of knowledge that could be covered during the preliminary examination, the composition of the Examination Committee, and a date for the examination. The preliminary examination begins with a brief (5 minute maximum) oral report on progress since the previous Advisory Committee meeting. Up to three rounds of questions are allowed for each examiner.

Procedures for the Evaluation of Preliminary Examinations

A satisfactory outcome of the preliminary examination is based on a positive majority decision of the Examination Committee. If during the examination, areas of minor weakness are identified, the committee can recommend that the candidate undertake remedial study to enrich their knowledge. According to the Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations, an unacceptable performance during the preliminary examination may lead to dismissal of the candidate. The Examination Committee may, however, recommend that the candidate repeat the examination. If so, the candidate must take the examination within 12 months following the original examination. Candidates failing the preliminary examination the second time must withdraw from graduate studies in the Department of Anatomy & Neurobiology. *Any disagreements between the student and the Advisory or Examination Committee concerning the composition of the Examination Committee, the scope of the examination or the conduct of the examination shall be resolved by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee.*

Membership of the Preliminary Examination Committee

The membership of the Examination Committee must be approved by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee no later than 2 months prior to the proposed date of the examination. The Examination Committee will consist of i) a Chairperson who is a member of the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee and is responsible for the conduct of the examination ii) the members of the candidate's Advisory Committee iii) one other faculty member, external to the Advisory Committee. The committee must consist of no less than 3 members (exclusive of the Chairperson). The Chairperson does not have a vote but, in the case of a tie decision, renders the final decision. All final arrangements related to the membership of the Examination Committee, the place and time of the preliminary examination and the distribution of relevant documentation are the responsibility of the student with the assistance of the Departmental Graduate Studies Coordinator.

Approved November 24, 2003