

Department of Communication, Media and Film Guidelines for Candidacy Exams

- 1)** The student develops a thesis proposal and submits it to his/her supervisory committee no later than June 30th of their 2nd year in program.
- 2)** When the supervisory committee is satisfied with the design of the proposal, they ask the student to sketch out 3 possible areas in which he/she might be examined with reference to the proposal.
- 3)** The supervisory committee in consultation with the student selects two other individuals to make up the candidacy examination committee. Copies of the thesis proposal and a sketch of the 3 possible areas of examination are sent to these new committee members.
- 4)** Approximately 3 months before the candidacy examination the candidacy examination committee meets to discuss the areas on which the student will be examined. In the first part of the meeting the student answers questions from committee members regarding the proposal and the three topic areas chosen. At a certain point the student is asked to leave the room. The supervisory committee, with input from the other examiners, discusses whether the proposal is an acceptable basis for going forward with the candidacy exam. Ideally the whole examination committee reaches consensus about the proposal, but approval of the proposal rests with the supervisory committee. The examining committee as a whole discusses the appropriateness of the 3 areas to be examined. The committee may agree to accept the areas as currently outlined by the student. Alternately, they may desire to recast one or more of the areas in terms of additional literatures to be reviewed. When a consensus has been reached regarding the shape of the 3 areas, the student is invited to rejoin the meeting and is given instruction concerning the scope and interpretation of the 3 examination areas.
- 5)** In the subsequent weeks, up until the day when the questions are sent out, it is entirely appropriate for the student to contact individual supervisory committee members for advice or clarifications.
- 6)** About 6 weeks prior to the oral examination the supervisor collects questions from all members of the candidacy examination committee. Members are invited to submit one or more questions related to any one of the three areas. The supervisor then collates these questions.
- 7)** The supervisor sends out the full set of examination questions to the student 4 calendar weeks before the oral examination.
- 8)** The student has 3 weeks to complete the written examination. The student must answer one question from each of the 3 areas. Typically, the answers to each question are word processed in the range of 20-25 pages double spaced.
- 9)** At the end of 3 weeks, the student sends the answers back to the supervisor who redistributes them to the other members of the candidacy examination committee. They have one week to review the answers prior to the oral examination.
- 10)** After the candidacy exam has been successfully completed, the candidate must submit a revised research proposal, approved by the supervisor, to the graduate program office before undertaking the research.