

Implementation Guidelines for Ph.D. Qualifying Examination

School of Science and Engineering

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

1. The Written Examination

The written examination should be taken before the oral examination, and is scheduled **twice** a year:

- The first examination is held on **the third Sunday of June**.
- The second examination is held on **the last Sunday** before the spring semester begins in January.

For each of the courses offered by the corresponding programme and taught within the four full semesters immediately before the date of the written examination, an exam paper should be prepared by the corresponding lecturer. The exam paper for each course should be suitable for a **3-hours open-book** examination and should be designed to examine the student's capability of analysis and synthesis dealing with complicated problems. The lecturer should compose the exam paper based on the taught material and submit it to the Head of the Graduate Panel no later than **May 30** for the first examination and **December 15** for the second examination.

For courses not included above, any faculty member who has taught any one of them before can also submit an exam paper for inclusion in the written examination if he/she volunteers to do so. However, no single faculty member can submit more than two exam papers for the same written examination. In addition, no courses offered by other programmes and schools will be contained in the written examination, unless approved by the Graduate Panel.

The student needs to choose **2** exam papers/courses most relevant to her/his thesis work. For the Computer and Information Engineering programme, at least one of the two courses should be chosen from the lecture courses of **Group A**. The student shall finish the written examination according to the following schedule: **3** hours examination, **1** hour break, and **3** hours examination. No electronic devices but only books, printed-out or hand-written materials are allowed to be brought to the written examination. During the break, all question papers, answer sheets and sketch papers must be handed in. The student is allowed to take lunch in isolated seats, and rest. No talk or other inter-personal communications, e.g., mobile phone, are allowed.

Before the implementation of the written examination, for each course, the corresponding lecturer should also submit at least one sample exam paper approximately the same level of difficulty of his/her submitted exam paper to the Head of the Graduate Panel, who will then publish these sample exam papers to the interested parties.

The exam paper should be marked by the corresponding lecturer. The written examination can be taken no more than **twice**.

2. The Oral Examination

The oral examination should be taken within a maximum period of **6** months after the completion of the written examination. The maximum period cannot be exceeded unless extraordinary circumstances occurred, e.g., medical or family emergencies. In such cases, the maximum period can be further prolonged for **1** month but an approval must be obtained from the Head of the Graduate Panel. If otherwise, the student will receive a fail for the oral examination.

The student needs to first prepare a thesis proposal and then give a presentation on the thesis proposal. The thesis proposal should contain at least a statement of the intended research topic and a survey of the related research field, and can also contain other contents, such as a research plan and preliminary results.

The oral examination is examined by a panel which shall be appointed by the graduate panel and shall include the student's supervisor and **2** internal professors. The supervisor cannot be the chair of the panel and the **2** internal professors should be the (intended) members of the student's supervisory committee. If the student failed the first oral examination, the members of the student's second oral examination panel can be different from the members of the student's first oral examination panel but an approval must be obtained from the Head of the Graduate Panel.

The student should give a **45**-minutes presentation, which is followed by a **15**-minutes question/answer session open to everyone, and then a maximum of **45**-minutes question/answer session open to only the oral examination panel. During the oral examination, the members of the panel may ask the student questions related to his/her presentation, thesis proposal, and additional questions on general topics similar to the written examination but conducted in an oral format.

3. To Participate in and Withdraw from Qualifying Examination

The student must declare his/her intent to participate in the qualifying examination by **May 15** for the written examination in June and by **December 1** for the written examination in January.

The student must fill out the form "Intent to Participate in Ph.D. Qualifying Examination". In the form,

- The student must declare **2** courses that they plan to take in the written examination.
- Members of the student's oral examination panel must be nominated.
- The form has to be signed by both the student and the student's main supervisor.

The student must submit a thesis proposal **two** weeks before the oral examination. If otherwise, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the oral examination. Once the thesis proposal is submitted, the student cannot withdraw from the oral examination unless extraordinary circumstances occurred that prevent them from taking the examination, e.g., medical or family emergencies. In such cases, an approval must be obtained from the Head of the Graduate Panel. If otherwise, the student will receive a fail for the oral examination.

4. Assessment of Qualifying Examination

For the written examination, the full mark and passing mark for each course are **10** and **5**, respectively, and the passing mark for the written examination is **13** with a full mark of **20**.

For the oral examination, the oral examination panel should assess the student's performance based on his/her presentation, thesis proposal, and response in the question/answer session. After discussions, the panel makes a recommendation for the student to pass or fail the oral examination.

If the student passes both the written examination and the oral examination, then the qualifying examination committee makes a recommendation for the student to pass the qualifying examination. If otherwise, the qualifying examination committee makes a recommendation for the student to fail the qualifying examination and also decides on one of the following options for the student:

- (i) Take qualifying examination (or part of it) again the immediate next time.
- (ii) Switch to MPhil stream.
- (iii) Discontinue the study immediately.