

December 4, 2014

Guidelines for Advancement to Candidacy Exams
in the Department of Biomathematics

Note: These guidelines are minimum guidelines. Students should check with their dissertation advisors for any additional requirements specific to their own exam.

The doctoral committee must be approved prior to holding the oral qualifying examination. Refer to Standards and Procedures for Graduate Study at UCLA:
<https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/spfsgs.pdf>

Also refer to Biomathematics program requirements:
<https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/pgmrq/biomath.asp>

The purpose of the exam is to test whether the student has the ability to conduct dissertation quality research in the field of Biomathematics. To demonstrate this ability the student needs to show that: (1) their proposed research project is novel, feasible and of sufficient quality; and (2) they have a plan for carrying forward this research (typically for the next 1 to 3 years).

The exam consists of two parts, a written proposal and an oral defense.

- (1) The student will prepare a written proposal. The proposal should include the aims, background, preliminary work and the research plan for carrying out the work. The proposal is typically 15 to 50 double spaced pages long (with additional pages for figures, tables or references) however there are no absolute minimum or maximum lengths. The proposal should be provided to the committee two weeks before the oral portion of the exam.
- (2) In the oral exam students will present and defend their proposed work. Typically students should prepare a 35-50 minute talk. The committee may ask questions at any time. Lengthy discussion can ensue so the student and committee should be prepared for the exam to last between 90-150 minutes. Most of the questions asked by the committee will directly pertain to the proposed research. However, the committee members may ask questions designed to ascertain the student's general understanding of Biomathematics and their biological specialty area.

Note: Students are allowed to work with their dissertation advisor(s) to prepare for the exam including (1) having the advisor read and revise drafts of the proposal before it is provided to the full committee and (2) practicing for the oral portion of the exam.