

# **GUIDELINES FOR, AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF, THE DOCTORAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AND THE DOCTORAL FINAL EXAMINATION**

## **The Preliminary Examination:**

The Preliminary Examination is essentially an oral examination on a proposed dissertation topic and the student's academic preparation. The examination is taken upon completion of all required coursework for the Ph.D. degree, or the semester in which the final unit of coursework is taken, but no sooner, and is administered by a committee which is appointed by the Graduate College in accordance with departmental requests.

### **The Dissertation Proposal:**

The written dissertation proposal shall be no more than 20 double spaced pages in length including introductory pages, figures, etc. It should include: statement of proposed research, its objectives and significance; a brief review of previous work on related research; and a short discussion of tentative methods of analysis and / or experimentation. There are no specific format requirements for the proposal.

### **Registration Requirements:**

Students must be enrolled the semester they take the Preliminary Examination.

## **The Final Examination:**

The Final Examination consists of an oral defense of the dissertation and is administered by the doctoral committee the examination is open to the public. The Final Examination in Mechanical Engineering is to be taken no earlier than six months following the Preliminary Examination for ME students. TAM students may schedule a Final Defense at the discretion of their academic advisor.

### **The Dissertation:**

Detailed instructions for the preparation and completion of the thesis dissertation are available from the Graduate College website, [www.grad.illinois.edu/graduate-college-thesis-requirements](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/graduate-college-thesis-requirements) . Links to other information and resources for developing theses and dissertations may be found at [www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis-dissertation) .

The Thesis/Dissertation Approval form , or "TDA" form (which replaced the Certificate of Committee Approval or "CCA" form, which replaced the "red-bordered" form). is available online in PDF format in the Graduate College Web site at <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/forms/tda>

The PDF version of the form simplifies the preparation process for the majority of graduate departments and students. However, because of its PDF format, you may have problems with special characters like scientific symbols, international characters, and italicized type. Students with special characters in their thesis titles will still have to print out the form (only print after filling out all requested information) and add the title separately, most easily by feeding the page through a printer. Please assure the font styles remain consistent. Students are responsible for preparing three (3) original copies of this form to bring to the Final Examination. Please make sure to fill in ALL required information before printing the form. Nothing handwritten will be accepted on this form except for the signature of the committee members (however, students MUST type in the name of the committee members underneath the signature lines. Forms are not accepted without typed names that are clear and legible to identify the signatures).

## **The Examination Committee:**

This committee shall have a minimum of four voting members, at least three of which must be from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, two of which must be tenured (Associate Prof. or Professor), and at least one member not from the department of the candidate. The committee composition should show an element of breadth (include members from more than one area of specialization). Committee members from outside the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign are able to be included as voting members of a UIUC doctoral committee by the following process: A letter of justification, signed by the advisor, must be submitted to the department graduate programs office along with a copy of the CV for the requested committee member. This will be submitted to the graduate college along with the request to form the doctoral committee ("Form A" for prelim, "Form C" for final).

The “Chair” must be a member of the Graduate Faculty from the candidates department and may also be the Director of Dissertation Research. The chair is responsible for convening the committee, conducting the examination, and submitting the Certificate of Result to the department in which the student is enrolled.

A “Contingent-Chair,” if designated (not required) must be a member of the Graduate Faculty. The Contingent-Chair serves if the original chair is unable to serve for any reason.

The Director of Dissertation Research is responsible for guiding/advising the student in their thesis research as part of an ongoing research project. He/ she may also discuss a tentative course of study or recommend a sequence of courses the student can take reflecting the interest of the student.

**A Department Affiliate cannot serve as a “Chair” or a “Contingent Chair” of a Preliminary Examination or Final Examination Committee. Only faculty members of the Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering may serve in that capacity.**

If a proposed voting member is not on the Graduate Faculty, a letter of justification from the Committee Chair needs to accompany Attachment A or C. This justification letter should include information about the proposed member’s expertise in the area of research and association to the candidate. Non-voting members, such as an external reader, a member of the faculty who is off campus, or others who can make a significant contribution to the research, may be appointed. A letter of justification is not needed to appoint a non-voting member to the committee.

Both Voting and non-voting committee members may sign the “Thesis/Dissertation Approval” form that becomes part of the thesis document. **Only the voting members of the dissertation committee sign the Certificate of Result.**

If, for some reason, your examination committee has to be changed (committee member dropped or added, etc.), please inform the Graduate Programs Office immediately. A new “Request to Appoint a Doctoral Examination Committee” form must be submitted to the Graduate College (Form A or C).

#### **Scheduling and Timing of the Preliminary and Final Examinations:**

1. **At least three (2) weeks prior to the proposed PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION date**, the candidate must provide the Graduate Programs Office with the information requested in Attachment A.
2. **At least one (1) week prior to the proposed PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION date**, the candidate must provide the Graduate Programs Office with the information requested in Attachment B and an electronic copy of the proposal.

*(To arrange a conference room for the PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION, see staff in the Communications Office, Rm 160 MEB.)*

3. **Within six-nine (6-9) months after successful completion of the preliminary examination, and at least two (2) weeks prior to the proposed date of the Final Examination**, the candidate should provide the Graduate Programs Office with the information requested in Attachment C. Meaning; students are expected to take their Final Exam within one (1) year of completion of the Preliminary Examination.
4. **At least three (3) weeks prior to the FINAL EXAMINATION date**, the candidate must provide the Graduate Programs Office with the information requested in Attachment D and an electronic copy of the abstract.
5. **Rules on who must attend these exams:** Graduate College now states that no more than one committee member can “remote” in to the examination, and that member cannot be the Chair or Director of Dissertation. They must be physically present.

*(When arranging a room for the FINAL EXAMINATION, first see staff in the Support Services Office, Rm 160 MEB. If there is not a conference room available that will seat at least 30 people, then you should consult the staff in the Undergraduate Office, Rm 154 MEB, to schedule a classroom.)*

**THE DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING REQUIRES A MINIMUM OF SIX MONTHS BETWEEN THE PRELIMINARY AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS**

### **Following the Examinations:**

After completion of the preliminary examination and final examination, “The Certificate of Result of the Preliminary Examination”, signed by each committee member, must be returned to the Graduate Programs Office, Rm 160 MEB, for processing. They are submitted to the Graduate College and, thereby, recorded officially in the system. Degree Certification cannot take place until both exam results have been officially recorded and show in the system. Students must be enrolled the semester they take the Prelim and the Final Exam (you may enroll for 0 hrs 599 thesis research if all coursework/hour requirements have been met. If you are on campus, MechSE requires you to also register for the MechSE Seminar – ME 590/TAM 500 – until you have passed the Prelim.

To Obtain the department head’s signature on the “Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form” (TDA): MS students should leave secretary. Please provide a copy of your thesis for his review BEFORE your appointment.

**ATTACHMENT A**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ UIN: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL ADDRESS (not MechSE Department) \_\_\_\_\_

APPROXIMATE DATE OF EXAMINATION \_\_\_\_\_

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

**PRELIMINARY EXAM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

<u>VOTING MEMBERS:</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Specialization</u>	<u>Graduate Faculty Member</u>	<u>Tenured</u>
Chair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Contingent-Chair (not required)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Director of Dissertation Research	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C0-Director of Dissertation Research (if appropriate)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*To add a VOTING member who is non-UIUC Faculty you must attach a letter of justification, as described in the Guidelines.*

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS OFFICE NO LATER THAN TWO (2) WEEKS PRIOR TO THE PROPOSED DATE OF THE EXAM.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ATTACHMENT B**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF PRELIMINARY EXAM \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM \_\_\_\_\_

(Rooms can be reserved through Support Services, 160 MEB)

**This form should be submitted to the Graduate Programs Office (166 MEB) at least two weeks prior to the exam.**

**Submit an electronic copy of your Preliminary Examination Dissertation Proposal to the Graduate Programs Office no later than one (1) week prior to the preliminary examination date.**

**Students are responsible for sending a copy of the proposal to the committee. This should be done at least two (2) weeks prior to the exam, and no later than one (1) week.**

**Dissertation Proposal Title:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACHMENT C**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ UIN: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL ADDRESS (not MechSE Department) \_\_\_\_\_

APPROXIMATE DATE OF EXAMINATION \_\_\_\_\_

AREA OF SPECIALIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

**FINAL EXAM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

<u>VOTING MEMBERS:</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Specialization</u>	<u>Graduate Faculty Member</u>	<u>Tenured</u>
Chair	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Contingent-Chair (not required)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Director of Dissertation Research	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Co-Director of Dissertation Research (if appropriate)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*To add a VOTING member who is non-UIUC Faculty you must attach a letter of justification, as described in the Guidelines.*

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS OFFICE NO LATER THAN TWO (2) WEEKS PRIOR TO THE PROPOSED DATE OF THE EXAM.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Advisor Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**ATTACHMENT D**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF EXAMINATION \_\_\_\_\_

TIME \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM \_\_\_\_\_

(Rooms can be reserved through Support Services, 160 MEB)

MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY \_\_\_\_\_

DISSERTATION TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**This form, along your Abstract (required) and Vita (if you choose) should be submitted electronically to the Graduate Programs Office at least three (3) weeks prior to the exam date in order for the announcement to be sent out.**

A copy of your dissertation should be given to the Committee **AT LEAST TWO (2) WEEKS PRIOR TO THE DATE OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION, and no later than one (1) week.**