

Policy Number:	D7315
Faculty Approved:	11/1997
Effective Date:	11/1997
Reviewed Date:	10/2017
Revision Date:	10/2017
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Policy Title: PhD Program Candidacy Exam

Purpose: The candidacy examination serves as a basis for determining the student's readiness for pursuing dissertation research. The examination permits a student to demonstrate a command of the theoretical and methodological issues related to a specific research area. The candidacy examination is viewed as a continuing step in the educational process, building on coursework and preceding the dissertation proposal defense. The student must submit a portfolio of copies of papers from all the PhD courses and independent studies to the Candidacy Committee for review prior to enrolling in candidacy. Upon the review of the portfolio, the Candidacy Committee will finalize the topic for the candidacy examination

Timing in Program: A required candidacy examination will be conducted with the approval of the academic advisor or dissertation chair after the student has completed a minimum of 35 semester hours of coursework. The student is encouraged to choose the dissertation chair as soon as the research focus has been determined. A student may be advised to complete electives and/or cognates prior to taking the candidacy examination. The candidacy examination process will take approximately 13 weeks. The student and academic advisor (or dissertation chair, if determined) should decide upon the most appropriate time to take the examination. Students should register for the 3 credit Candidacy Examination (N7590) during the semester the examination is to be taken.

Procedure: The candidacy examination has two parts, a written paper and an oral examination. The student must pass both the written and oral examination to be admitted to candidacy. Prior to the semester in which the student plans to register for the candidacy examination, the student will meet with the advisor to complete the Request for Candidacy Examination (C1) Form. This form, identifying the student's research area and proposing the membership of the Candidacy Committee, is submitted to the Coordinator of the PhD Council. Form C1 should be accompanied by brief biographies of all recommended committee members and rationales for their selection. The academic advisor or dissertation chair is encouraged to be a member of this committee to ensure continuity in the process.

The PhD Council will approve or reformulate membership for the Candidacy Committee. The Form C1 will then be submitted to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs. The Candidacy Committee will be comprised of the Chair, who is NOT the student's advisor, and two other School of Nursing faculty members. The student will meet with the Candidacy Committee prior to start of the semester when the student will enroll for candidacy examination to clarify the topic of the candidacy examination and determine dates for the completion of both the written and oral examinations. The Chair of the Candidacy Committee will complete Form C2 (Notification of Candidacy Examination Topic and Committee) after this meeting and

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distribute it to the student, the committee members, PhD Coordinator, and the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

The candidacy examination will consist of a “state of the science” paper in the selected research area and an oral examination. The paper and oral examination should demonstrate a command of current knowledge, and theoretical and methodological issues in the area of research and include the following components:

- A comprehensive review of related literature
- A synthesis of the knowledge and identification of gaps
- A summary of theoretical/conceptual foundations
- A critique of methodologies and data analysis strategies
- A clear direction for future research in the field

The paper should be written using the most current edition of APA format and be of such quality to permit publication in *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* or journals of similar scholarly quality.

The oral examination is not meant to be a presentation of the student’s paper, but rather a thorough examination and discussion of the student’s knowledge in the selected topical area at the doctoral level of scholarship.

Process for Candidacy Examination (See Flow Chart and Flow Diagram): The student will have up to 6 weeks to complete the written examination paper and submit it to the Candidacy Committee. The members of the Candidacy Committee will inform the Chair of the Candidacy Committee within 2 weeks of receiving the paper whether or not the student passes the written examination. If the student passes the written examination, the date of the oral examination (stated in Form C2) will be confirmed. If the student fails the written examination, the student will meet with the Chair of the Candidacy Committee to receive feedback on the paper and will have 3 weeks to rewrite the paper. If the student passes the rewritten examination, the student will proceed to the oral examination. If the student fails the rewritten examination, the student must retake the candidacy examination in another semester. The student may not proceed to the oral examination until the Candidacy Committee determines that the written paper satisfactorily meets the criteria for a “state of the science” paper.

The student will be notified of the outcome of the candidacy examination immediately following the oral examination. The student may receive a grade of either “Pass” or “Fail.”

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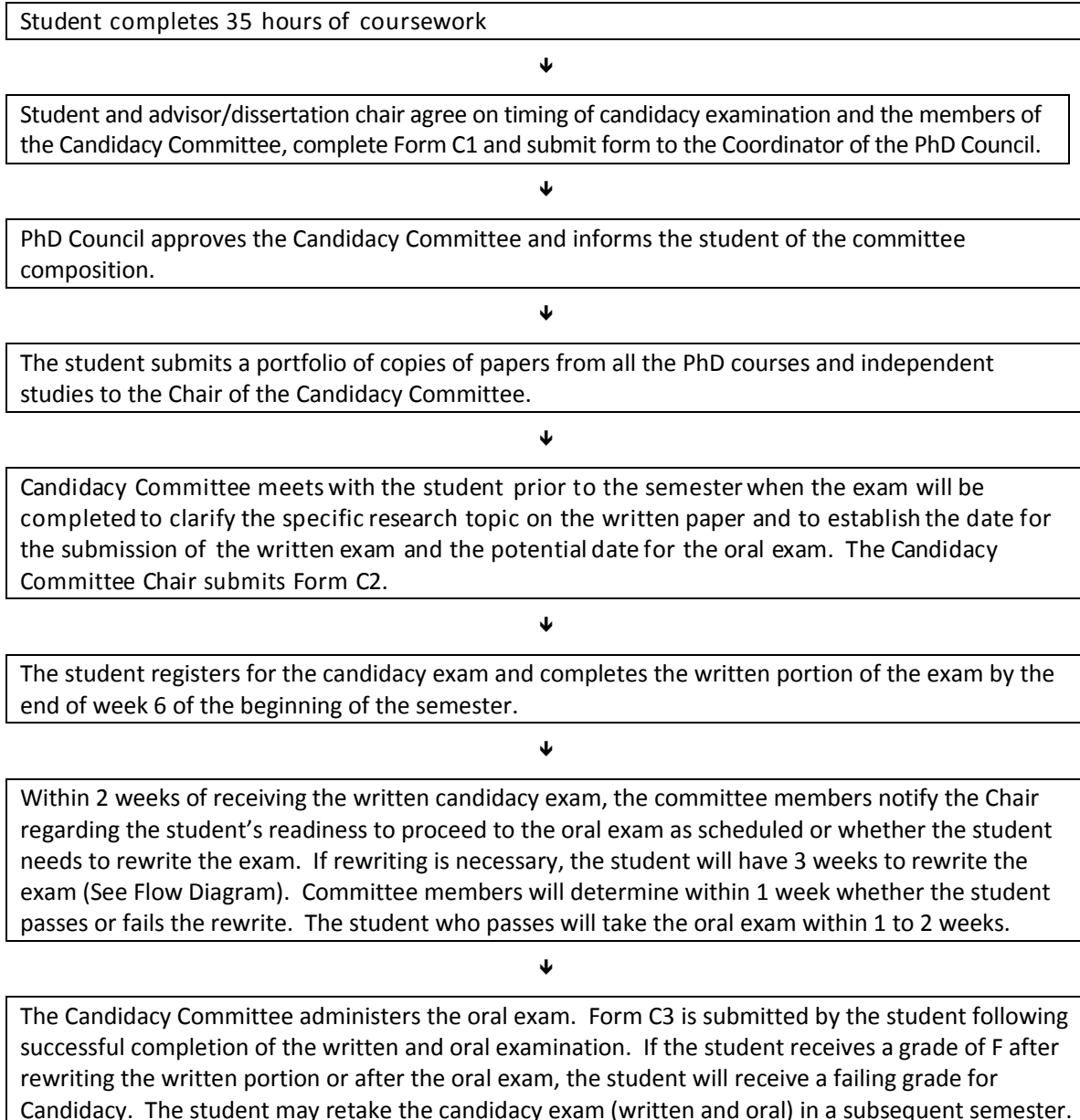
All Candidacy Committee members must agree on the final grade. If the student, who has passed the written examination at the first attempt, fails the oral examination, the student may retake the oral examination within 2 weeks following the first oral examination. If the student fails the second oral examination, the student must retake the candidacy examination (written and oral) in another semester. Similarly, if the student fails the oral examination after rewriting the paper, the student must retake the candidacy examination (written and oral) in another semester.

Upon successful completion of the candidacy examination, the student will submit Form C3 to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and be admitted as a candidate for the PhD degree. Students then proceed to dissertation proposal defense and dissertation.

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Candidacy Exam Flow Chart



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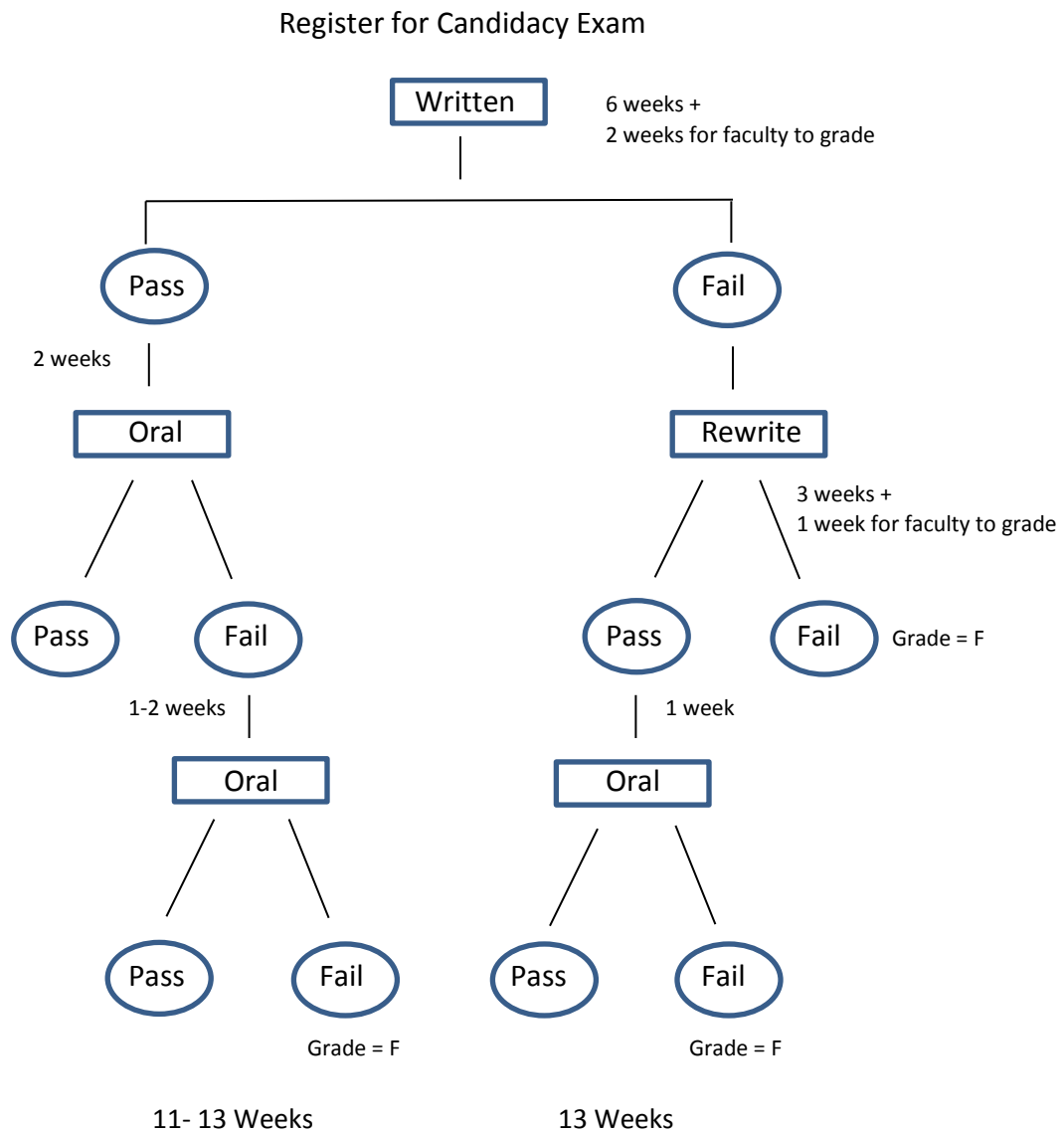
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Flow Diagram for Candidacy



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Form C1

School of Nursing PhD Program

Student Request for Candidacy Examination

(To be completed following student/advisor meeting)

Student: _____

Advisor: _____

Dissertation Chair: _____

Research Area: _____

Requested Committee Members

Chairperson: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Advisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form, together with the biographical information on the suggested committee members, is to be submitted to the Chairperson of the PhD Council. When the Committee Membership is approved by the PhD Council, the form will be forwarded to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

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Form C2

School of Nursing PhD Program

Notification of Candidacy Examination Topic and Committee

Student: _____

Advisor: _____

Dissertation Chair: _____

Topic of Written Examination:

Date Written Examination Due: _____

Expected Date of Oral Examination: _____

Committee Members

Chairperson: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Member: _____

Candidacy Committee Chairperson distributes original to the PhD Council Chairperson, copy to Student, Candidacy Committee Members, Advisor, Dissertation Chair, and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.

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Form C3

School of Nursing PhD Program

Evaluation of Candidacy Examination

Student: _____

Written: Pass: _____ Fail: _____

Rewrite: Pass: _____ Fail: _____

Oral: Pass: _____ Fail: _____

Oral retake: Pass: _____ Fail: _____

Signature Candidacy Committee Members

Chairperson: _____ Date: _____

Member: _____ Date: _____

Member: _____ Date: _____

Member: _____ Date: _____

Comments and Recommendations:

Vice Dean for Academic Affairs: _____