

General Examination for Ph. D. in Civil Engineering Fields of Study

To be admitted to candidacy, each Ph.D. student must pass the General Examination. The purpose of this examination is to confirm that the student is qualified and sufficiently competent to prepare a dissertation. Each Research Group in the Civil Engineering Field of Study specifies its own guidelines for the examination within the broader guidelines given here. The examination committee consists of at least five faculties including all of the student's advisory committee and additional faculty selected by the advisory committee in consultation with the student. The final decision as to whether or not the student has passed the examination shall rest solely with the advisory committee after completion of the Oral Exam component of the General Examination. Different members of the examining committee may participate in different parts of the General Examination. The General Examination is given in three parts:

Written Exam:

A closed-book or partially open-book three- or four-hour written examination consisting of four or more questions covering the content in the MSCE core subjects and a related or supporting area chosen by the student. These questions are prepared and graded, if possible, by members of the examining committee who taught the respective courses to the student. At least four different faculties will be involved in grading this part of the exam.

Research Plan

A research plan (twelve pages maximum length) on a topic assigned by the examination committee in consultation with the student. This document proposes a topic to be investigated, justifies its relevance, describes a plan for investigating it, and explains how the findings would be used. This research plan could be the first draft of the student's dissertation prospectus. The student is given at least one week to complete this part immediately following completion of the first written part. The advisory committee grades this part of the exam.

Oral Exam

A one- to two- hour oral examination given after the first two parts have been evaluated by the examination committee. In this part the student gives a fifteen-minute oral presentation of the research plan. Participating faculty from the examining committee then ask questions about this presentation and content of the research plan, about the academic preparation of the student to conduct the research (if the plan is to become the student's prospectus) and about the student's answers to the first written part.