

PhD Qualifying Examination Guidelines **Approved by History Faculty, May 2009**

1. The Dossier: The purpose of the dossier is to gather together students' best written work for the CQE's review and more generally to establish a record of the student's course of study for the doctorate. The dossier is a component of the examination process that establishes the scope and content of the examination and guides student preparation for the next step, the oral exam. Students will work closely with their Chairs and consult with other committee members as necessary to prepare the dossier for final submission. The dossier will be submitted to the CQE on October 1 for spring exams, and March 1 for fall exams. If necessary, the CQE may ask the student to revise and resubmit the dossier, until the committee is satisfied with the result.

Contents –

- **Bibliography:** In consultation with the Committee on the Qualifying Exam (CQE), each student will develop a reading list of the scholarly literature that he or she will be expected to have mastered at the time of the examination. These lists should include a minimum of sixty books within the Regional Concentration and forty books within the Thematic Concentration (or the equivalent in a mix of books and scholarly articles). These figures, of course, represent minimum standards and provide only a rough guide; the members of a student's CQE will determine the scope and size of a particular reading list.
- **Syllabi:** The dossier will include copies of syllabi from courses relevant to the student's two concentrations and from the graduate methods and historiography courses.
- **A sample of the student's written work:** This sample (not to exceed a total of fifty pages) will represent the best papers that the student has submitted while completing coursework requirements. It is anticipated that before placing such papers in the dossier, the student will review and revise them as appropriate under the supervision of the Chair of the CQE.

Format –

- A title page will indicate the name of the student, date of dossier submission, intended semester of the oral examination, PhD Fields of Concentration, Regional Specialization, and the membership of the CQE (see attached Template).
- A Table of Contents will list the order of materials contained in the dossier.
- All materials contained in the dossier will be typed and double-spaced, and use 12-inch font and 1-inch margins. Copies of course syllabi may be submitted in original format. Bibliographic citations will conform to the styles demonstrated in chapter 17 of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th Edition.
- The final dossier will be submitted in a binder to each member of the CQE.

Evaluation –

Within three weeks of submission, the CQE will notify the student and DGS in writing about whether the dossier has been approved. Committees that return a dossier without approval to the student will specify the changes needed and suggest a timeline for

submission of the revised dossier to the committee. Once a dossier has been approved, the student and Chair of the CQE will schedule the oral examination for early in the following semester. The time reserved for the oral examination will be three hours, which at the discretion of the CQE may be scheduled as a single block of time, or as two blocks of time in a single day.

2. The Oral Examination: The purpose of the exam is twofold: to allow students to demonstrate their familiarity with the key information and historiographical debates within their fields, and to allow students and faculty to communicate in a professional capacity about important questions within the field.

Preparation –

- The basis for the examination will be the contents of the dossier, as approved by the CQE in the semester prior to the oral examination.
- The student will meet with members of the CQE in the weeks prior to the oral examination to review bibliographies and dossier materials, review possible areas of questioning, and discuss any further issues relevant to the student's exam preparation.
- The Chair of the CQE will monitor the student's preparation to determine advisability of proceeding with the exam as scheduled.

Structure –

- Each of the five committee members will examine the student, in the order and manner previously agreed upon by the committee.
- A break of 10 minutes per hour spent in examination will be allowed at a juncture determined by the CQE Chair.

Evaluation –

- Having excused the student at the close of the examination, the CQE will discuss in detail the student's performance and decide the results of the examination on a pass/fail basis. If a student has passed the oral examination, the committee will at this juncture also make its recommendation for the third and final phase of the examination: the public presentation, which will be scheduled within two weeks of the oral examination.
- In the event that the CQE decides to fail a student, the committee members will collectively explain the CQE's decision to the student. The CQE Chair will next address the student in a memo that specifies the course of action recommended by the committee, and copy the memo to the CQE members, Graduate Director, and Department Chair.
- In the case of a failure, options available to the committee are the following:
 1. The History Department will report the examination result to OGS and a retake of the oral exam will be scheduled for the following semester.
 2. If a student's performance on the oral exam does not meet the expectations of the CQE in all areas examined, but merits a "qualified pass," the committee may select from, but is not limited to, one of the following options:

- The CQE may schedule a second attempt at the oral examination within two weeks;
- The CQE may schedule a written examination in lieu of a second attempt at the oral examination.

3. The Public Presentation: The presentation, the third and final phase of the student's doctoral examination, will address a student's Regional or Thematic Concentration and be similar in format and scope to a research talk, an upper-division undergraduate course lecture, or a public history oral presentation.

Preparation –

- The student will work with his/her Chair to schedule a date and time for the event, which should transpire within two weeks of the oral examination and which will accommodate all CQE members, Graduate Director, and Department Chair.
- The precise topic of the lecture, as well as the venue and audience, will be determined by the CQE in consultation with the student. At the discretion of the CQE, a student may be asked to present a talk or lecture previously delivered in another venue.

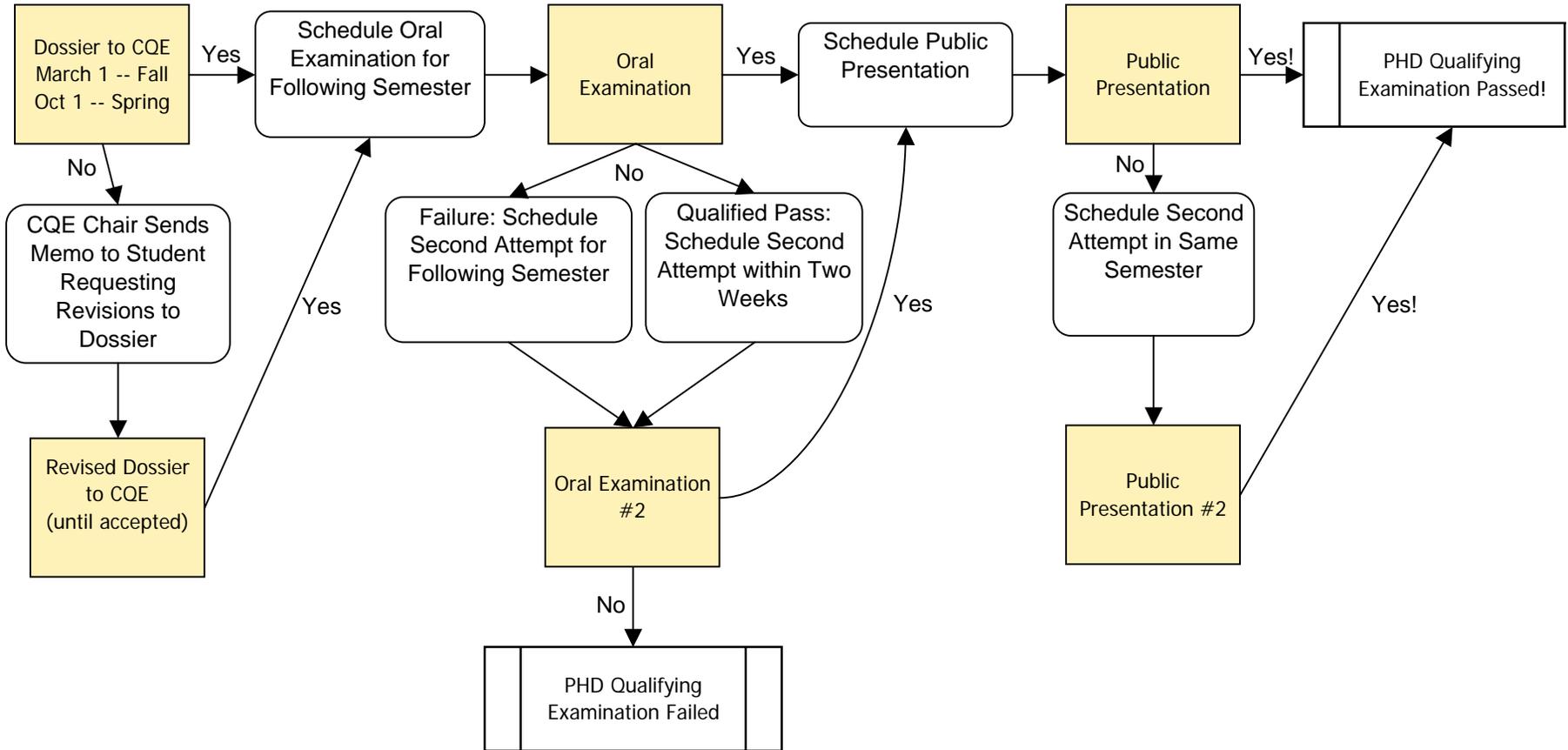
Structure –

- If the History Department Common Room is not available at the selected time, another campus venue may be reserved.
- The public presentation will be scheduled for one hour, allowing 45 minutes for the lecture and the remaining time for questions from those in attendance.
- The lecture will be announced and open to the general public

Evaluation –

- Once the event has reached its conclusion, the CQE will be excused to discuss the student's presentation. The CQE will determine whether the student has passed or failed the Qualifying Examination on the basis of the three components of the exam: dossier, oral examination, and public presentation. The CQE will then bring the student into the consultation room to communicate the results of the examination.
- In the event that the CQE determines not to pass a student after the public presentation, the Chair will also write a response to the student, explaining the reasons for the failure and recommending specific changes to improve the presentation. At the recommendation of the full CQE, the public presentation may be rescheduled within two weeks of the first attempt.

PHD Qualifying Examination Process



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