

# EXAMINATIONS

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## 10.1 Synopsis of Graduate Studies at Illinois Institute of Technology

A Synopsis of Graduate Studies is found at [bulletin.iit.edu/graduate/graduate-education/synopsis-graduate-studies](http://bulletin.iit.edu/graduate/graduate-education/synopsis-graduate-studies). Graduate forms and applications are located at [web.iit.edu/gaa/students/student-forms](http://web.iit.edu/gaa/students/student-forms), except for the results-of-examination Forms G303 and G309. The Office of Academic Affairs, which provide services to graduate students and academic units, are located at IIT Tower, 10 West 35th Street, 2nd floor, and may be reached via email at [gradcoll@iit.edu](mailto:gradcoll@iit.edu); or via phone at 312.567.3024. The Sequence of Events outlines important dates and deadlines that are specific to graduate education for the current semester and is located at [web.iit.edu/gaa/students/dates-and-deadlines](http://web.iit.edu/gaa/students/dates-and-deadlines).

Graduate studies policy outlines the overarching institutional policies regarding graduate examinations. Each academic unit is responsible for the establishment of specific processes and timelines for these examinations as appropriate to the discipline and in accordance with graduate studies policies. The master's Comprehensive Examination is optional for professional master's degree students. Academic units have the option of offering professional master's degrees with a minimum of 30 credit hours without requiring a Comprehensive Exam (i.e., coursework only).

## 10.2 Membership of the Examining Committees

Examining committees for graduate degree programs are nominated by the respective academic unit head, and appointed by the VP for Academic Affairs. The VP for Academic Affairs is an ex-officio member of all examining committees. Members of the faculty who hold tenure-track/tenured appointments (Category I) may serve as members or chairs of examining committees.

The thesis adviser shall be the chair of the examining committee, and is responsible for all aspects of a thesis degree, including thesis advising, forms, and research credits. A thesis adviser may be any Category I faculty member from any unit provided that the person is approved by the student's departmental academic adviser and primary unit chair. A student may have up to two thesis advisers, but at most one may be from a unit outside the student's primary unit. All approved thesis advisers have joint responsibility for a student's thesis, their thesis research credits will be accepted toward the thesis requirement, and they shall be listed as thesis advisers on the final submitted thesis.

The thesis adviser shall be the chair of the thesis committee. In the case of two thesis advisers, one will be chair of the thesis committee to be chosen by mutual agreement of the thesis advisers.

In cases where there are two thesis advisers, or the thesis adviser is from a unit other than the student's primary unit, the minimal thesis committee will require one additional Category I faculty member from the student's unit.

The university also allows one external member as a committee member or co-chair. External members are experts in the field from industry, research institutions, or other universities, who have to be nominated by the committee chairs with the approval of the academic unit heads. The Dean of the Graduate College may require a short resume of an external member to establish his/her credentials.

### Master's Committee

In the case of an oral thesis examination, at least two Category I (tenure-track) faculty members from the student's department must be present to serve in the student's committee at the examination. One external, non-Illinois Institute of Technology faculty (or other faculty categories at the university) committee member with voting privilege may be included with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College. With the approval of the academic unit chair, the student's thesis adviser must recommend the external member to the VP for Academic Affairs. A resume should be attached to the recommendation. Other faculty and external visitors may attend.

### Doctoral Committee

A minimum of four members of the tenure-track/tenured faculty is required for all examining committees of doctoral candidates. Three members from the committee must be from the academic unit recommending the degree, and one must be an Illinois Institute of Technology faculty member who is outside the student's major (may be from the same department, e.g., MAE faculty may serve on a MSE student committee). The VP for Academic Affairs is an ex-officio member of all examining committees. In addition, one external (non-university) member with voting privileges is allowed, as defined above.

The role of the outside member of the committee is to provide an element in the examining committee function that is independent of the immediate interest of the academic unit in which the degree candidate is seeking his/her degree. The outside member of the committee has the responsibility of representing the interest and function of the Graduate College and the university in a broad context as distinct from that of the degree-granting academic unit. Faculty holding joint or adjunct appointments in the degree-granting academic unit cannot be outside members on a student's committee; however, they may serve as the fifth member of the committee.

### Retired/Departed Faculty

Tenured faculty who retire but remain as emeritus or those who have resigned their job as Illinois Institute of Technology professors may continue their service on examining committees for one year. Former faculty who wish to continue their service beyond this period will require the endorsement of the academic unit head and the approval of the Dean of the Graduate College.

### **Substitution of Members at Examinations**

If an examining committee member cannot be present at the student's final defense, a graduate faculty member in the same academic area may substitute for the absent committee member. The substituted member should sign the final examination form in the space provided for committee members, noting the name of the absent member. In addition, the student's adviser must indicate on the form (or by accompanying correspondence) the reason for the missing member's absence and that the missing original committee member has agreed to this substitution. A substituted committee member may not sign the signature page of the thesis or dissertation.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- It is the duty of the examining committee members to inform the student of all regulations governing the degree sought. This does not absolve the student from the responsibility of becoming informed of the regulations.
- The committee should meet with the student to discuss the progress in his/her degree program.
- The committee should meet with the student, as part of the Comprehensive Examination, to discuss a thesis or dissertation topic and to approve this topic and the plans for carrying out the research.

### **10.3 Attendance at Oral Examinations**

Any oral examination, which fulfills part of the requirements for any advanced degree, shall be open to Illinois Institute of Technology faculty. At the discretion of the academic unit such oral examinations may be open to other persons who are not Illinois Institute of Technology faculty. The defense of the Ph.D. dissertation shall be open to the public without restriction.

### **10.4 Master's Comprehensive Examination**

The Comprehensive Examination is optional for professional master's degrees. The academic units have the option of offering professional master's degrees with a minimum of 30 credit hours without requiring a Comprehensive Exam (i.e., coursework only).

In the case of an oral exam, at least two faculty members must be present at the student's final examination; however, only the two members of the examining committee are required to vote.

The vote must be unanimous. The results must be submitted to Academic Affairs in Form G303 at least 15 days prior to the end of the semester. The academic unit determines the form, scope, and time of the examinations. The graduate student must be registered in the semester in which the examination is given.

### **10.5 Doctoral Examinations**

#### **Qualifying Examination**

A qualifying examination is required for all doctoral students. The exam may be given along with the Master's Comprehensive Examination. Students must be registered when the Qualifying Examination is administered. The following apply to the Qualifying Examination for doctoral students:

- Type of Examination: The Qualifying Examination may be written and/or oral and covers the major and minor subjects.
- Administration of Examination: If the academic unit requires the written portion, the student's committee conducts the exam. The faculty involved is responsible for submitting the questions. The student's exam committee conducts the oral portion of the qualifying examination. A minimum of four faculty members must participate in the oral portion of the examination.
- Time Schedules: The examination may be taken within the first year of Ph.D. study.
- All work for a doctoral degree must be completed within six calendar years after the mandatory advising session or this examination must be repeated.
- Notification of Results: The results of the Qualifying Examination must be submitted promptly on Form G303 to the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Reexamination: If the student fails the Qualifying Examination, the examining committee may recommend a re-examination. At least one semester of additional preparation is considered essential before reexamination. The second chance for taking the Qualifying Exam is regarded as final. Any additional considerations must be petitioned and approved by the VP for Academic Affairs.

### **10.6 Comprehensive Examination**

After the mandatory advising session and within a period of time specified by the academic unit, the student must appear for the Comprehensive Examination. Normally this would occur at the end of the second year of the Ph.D. study and at least one year before the intended date of graduation. The student must be registered in the semester in which the examination is taken.

The proposal for Ph.D. dissertation is normally presented as part of the Comprehensive Examination. The examination may be written, oral, or both. The examination is conducted by an examining committee of at least four members of the Illinois Institute of Technology faculty (as defined above) who have agreed to serve and who are not themselves candidates for a degree from Illinois Institute of Technology or elsewhere. If there is an oral component, then one member of the committee must be an Illinois Institute of Technology faculty member from outside the student's major (though may be from the same academic unit). The committee is nominated by the academic unit head and

confirmed by the Office of Academic Affairs, which must receive the nominations on Form G301 at least two weeks before the date of the examination.

The chair of a student's examining committee, with permission of the academic unit and approval of the VP for Academic Affairs, can ask for an external member (fifth member) with expertise and special interest in the examining subject (may be from industry, research institutes, or another university) to serve on a student's committee. The external member has the privilege to vote.

Any faculty member may attend oral comprehensive examinations but only the appointed committee may vote. Passing the examination requires the approval of one member more than a majority of the official committee. Dissenting members may bring a split decision before the VP for Academic Affairs for adjudication. If part of the examination is failed, then the report should be marked "failed" noting that part to be repeated in a second examination to be scheduled later. A student who fails the Comprehensive Examination may schedule it again for not less than 30 days after the first failure. A student who fails the examination twice will be asked to terminate graduate study at Illinois Institute of Technology. In unusual, extenuating circumstances the academic unit head may show cause why a third examination should be given. Failure of the third examination will result in termination without recourse.

The final examination may not be scheduled earlier than the term preceding the semester in which the degree is to be conferred.

## 10.7 Thesis Examination

### Doctoral Examination

The examining committee must consist of at least four faculty members who must be present and sign the Form G301. The academic unit head must approve the appointment of the thesis examination committee. In addition:

- At least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense examination, the student must submit the final thesis/dissertation to each committee member for review and comment. The committee's review and comments are discussed at the defense.
- Upon final submission of the thesis/dissertation to the thesis examiner, the title page is checked for the committee chair's signature, and the Final Thesis Approval Form (G501) is checked for the signatures of the committee chair, committee members, and the academic unit head. The examiner then reviews the final uploaded thesis/dissertation copy for format and pagination and reads portions of the text for general usage, references, and bibliographic form. The signatures on the Final Thesis Approval Form indicate that committee members are satisfied with the content of the dissertation and no additional changes are to be made before its final submission to the Editorial Office. It is the responsibility of the student and the committee chair to notify the Office of Academic Affairs of any changes to be made to the membership of the examining committee according to graduate studies committee membership policy. The Thesis Examiner approves the form when the final thesis examination is satisfactory.

The same committee that approved the preliminary dissertation must also approve the final copy of the dissertation. The examination is open to all faculty but only the appointed committee may vote. The following rules apply to the oral examination:

1. Committee will be composed of at least:
  - Chair. Thesis adviser (not necessarily from the student's unit)
  - Additional Category I faculty member (the second thesis adviser if listed, or another faculty member from the primary unit when the thesis adviser is not a member of the primary unit)
  - Three Category I faculty members, one of whom is not the thesis adviser and is not from the student's unit
  - An optional non-voting member of the committee is allowed
2. Form G301 must be received by the Office of Academic Affairs at least two weeks before the date of the examination and at least **five weeks** before commencement.
3. Results reported on Form G309 must be received in the Office of Academic Affairs at least **15 days** before commencement. The student uploads the final dissertation document to ProQuest as directed by the Thesis Examiner, during the examination meetings, at least **nine days** before commencement.
4. Comprehensive, qualifying, and final examinations for graduate students are to be held on the Illinois Institute of Technology Mies Campus. Exceptions to this policy are made only for certain graduate students whose examinations are administered at Rice or Downtown Campuses.