**Expectations for CTS Comprehensive Exam Committee Members**

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Comprehensive Examination Committee for a Ph.D. student in Clinical Translational Sciences! This document explains what you can expect as a member of the committee.

**Written Comprehensive Exam**

Initial Committee Meeting

Once the full committee has been formed, you can expect the student to contact you to schedule an initial committee meeting. This meeting is held to allow the committee to:

* Discuss the student’s background and research interests.
* Set a date for the student to submit the CTS written comprehensive exam.
* The format of the written research proposal will follow the guidelines for National Research Service Award (NRSA) proposals submitted to the NIH, with two exceptions:
  + a. The Background & Significance section must be at least 5 pages long, but no longer than 8 pages long. This section must include a more in-depth discussion of alternative approaches and perspectives to the research problem than that which is being proposed. The goal of this requirement is to ensure that the student has a broad perspective on the research problem and is knowledgeable of multiple approaches that may be used to address the problem.
  + b. The research plan should be presented in 3 to 5 pages.
* Determine the student’s written exam requirement (if any) for his or her minor, including setting the date for that exam.
* [*Chair only:*] Report to the CTS Program by e-mail to [CTSsupport@email.arizona.edu](mailto:CTSsupport@email.arizona.edu). Report confirms initial committee meeting has been held, as well as the NRSA assigned to the student and the student’s deadline to submit it.

CTS Written Exam Procedure

By the agreed deadline, the student will e-mail the completed research proposal to all committee members. Each committee member individually reviews the proposal. *Within 2 to 3 weeks*, you should send the Chair the following:

1. A vote of “Pass,” “Provisional Pass,” or “Fail” on the student’s proposal.
   * *Pass* indicates the proposal needs only trivial changes, if any, and can stand as presented.
   * *Provisional* *Pass* indicates the proposal is generally sound, but needs to be revised before it is acceptable as a workable approach to answering the proposed question. You should state what needs to be revised in the written feedback you provide (below).
   * *Fail* indicates that either the question posed is not valid, or that the research plan presented is not feasible or will not answer the research question. You should state the issue(s) you identify in the written feedback you provide (below).
2. Written feedback to provide to the student with suggestions about what might be improved or changed in the proposal. Note: The goal is not specifically to prepare a proposal that can win funding, but to present a significant scientific question and a feasible approach to address it. The student should identify advantages of the proposed research plan, as well as its limitations.

No later than 4 weeks after the student submits the proposal, the Chair will determine the committee’s decision (Pass, Provisional Pass, or Fail) based on the committee members’ votes. The Chair also compiles all relevant written feedback from the committee. If necessary, the Chair may convene a new meeting of the committee if discussion is needed to reach consensus on the committee’s decision.

The Chair informs the student, committee members and the CTS Program of the committee’s decision by e-mail. The written feedback from the committee is also sent to the student. The next step depends on the decision rendered by the committee:

* + *Pass*: Once student has completed the written exam for the minor, he or she will work with the committee to schedule the oral comprehensive exam (see below).
  + *Provisional* *Pass*: The student has 2 weeks to revise the proposal based on the feedback from the committee and resubmit it to all committee members. *You then have 1 week* after you receive it to review it and report to the Chair. You will either report a vote to “Pass” at this point, or state what the student still needs to revise. The Chair will compile the votes and decide whether the student has a final “Pass” or must make one final round of revisions. If the Chair asks the student for further revisions, he or she may decide whether to review the final revisions alone or have them sent to all committee members for comments. The Chair will then report the final “Pass” decision to the student, committee members and the CTS program, with any final feedback that will be useful to the student.
  + *Fail*: The student must rewrite the proposal and send the new proposal to all committee members within 4 weeks. *You then have 1 week* to review it and report to the Chair. You will vote to either “Pass” or “Fail” the student’s proposal at this point, and you may provide written feedback for the student in either case. The Chair compiles the committee’s votes and renders a final decision of “Pass” or “Fail” for the CTS written comprehensive exam. (A final “Fail” at this point terminates the student’s Ph.D program.)

Oral Comprehensive Exam Procedure

When the student has passed the CTS written exam and any exam given by the minor, he or she will schedule the oral comprehensive exam with the committee. The student then submits the Announcement form for the oral exam in GradPath; you can expect to receive an e-mail with a link to that form as notification the exam has been officially scheduled. (The Chair will instead receive an e-mail prompting him or her to approve the Announcement form.)

The oral comprehensive examination centers on the student’s presentation of the grant proposal submitted as the CTS written comprehensive examination, with questions and critiques from the committee. The Graduate College provides instructions for conducting the oral comprehensive exam at <https://arizona.app.box.com/v/grad-gsas-comporalexam>.

The committee must ensure that the student is well versed in the specific scientific questions and techniques described in the student’s research proposal, and that the student can describe and state the advantages and disadvantages of alternative approaches to the research problem. The committee also confirms the student can situate their specific proposal within the broader field of their studies.

The committee may also ask questions related to the major and minor coursework, as well as any topics of specific relevance to the student’s research in the minor subject. According to Graduate College policy: “The examining committee must attest that the student has demonstrated the professional level of knowledge expected of a junior academic colleague.”

Upon completion of the oral examination, the committee meets privately without the student present. The Chair collects votes anonymously from the committee members and determines the outcome of the exam. Per Graduate College policy, more than 1 Fail or Abstain vote results in a failed exam. The Chair informs the committee and then the student of the exam result and also reports it to the Graduate College on the Results of Comprehensive Exam form in GradPath. (You can expect an e-mail from GradPath notifying you the exam result has been submitted by the Chair.)

If the student fails the oral exam, the committee decides whether to offer the student a re-examination. If no re-examination is offered, the student is disqualified from the Ph.D program. If a re-examination is offered, the committee should discuss privately the timeframe for the new exam. The Chair reports this timeframe to the student along with the Fail decision. The student will again work with the committee to schedule the re-examination and will submit a new Announcement in GradPath. The procedure for the re-examination is the same as for the first oral examination. A student who fails the oral comprehensive exam twice is disqualified from the Ph.D program.