



Saint Mary's University

SCIENCE

PhD in Applied Science Doctoral Qualifying Examination Chair Guidelines (APSC 7603)

The Chair makes welcoming remarks:

- Introduce yourself and the role of the Chair as an impartial guide to the Qualifying Exam process.
- Introduce the Student.
- Introduce the Supervisory Committee in the following order:
 - Faculty members outside the Student's home department
 - Faculty members from within the Student's home department
 - The Supervisor

The Chair announces the agenda:

- The Exam will consist of two rounds of questions. A third brief question round can be conducted should the Committee deem it necessary.
- Questioning will proceed in the order in which the Supervisory Committee was introduced.
- The Chair will inform the Supervisory Committee of how much time is being allotted to each of them for Questioning (see Details below).
- The Chair will inform the Supervisory Committee of the permitted content of their questioning based on which exam Format the Student is following (see Details below).
- When the Question Period has concluded, the Student will be asked to leave the room while the Supervisory Committee deliberates.
- The Student will then be invited back into the room to hear the results of the Examination.

Details on the Question Period:

- There are two possible exam formats. Students who began the APSC PhD program in September 2026 or later will follow Format 1. Students who began the APSC PhD program before September 2026 can choose either Format 1 or Format 2.
- In Format 1, the Student has submitted a written Critical Review on their research field and was provided fields of self-directed study.
- In Format 2, the Student was provided fields for self-directed study and then completed two written responses to questions provided by the Committee.
- The Question Period follows the same structure for both formats, however the content of the questioning will vary. In Format 1, the Committee can question the student on any aspect of the written Critical Review and the assigned self-study topics. In Format 2, the question period is to remain focused on the topics for which written responses were received.
- The Chair will manage the timing of the Question Period.
- A standard size Supervisory Committee is 3 members. Each Committee Member will have 20 minutes per round of questions. If the committee is larger than standard, the Chair will adjust the time allotted to each Committee Member to ensure that **each round lasts no**

longer than 60 minutes. In the rare case of co-supervision, they will be considered as one individual for the purpose of timing (*i.e.*, 10 minutes each).

- The Chair will ensure that questioning takes place in a fair and organized manner.
- The Chair will ensure that the focus remains on the Student and will discourage discussion between Committee Members or interruption of one Committee Member's time by another.
- If necessary, the Chair will intervene to remind Committee Members that this event is an Examination and must be treated as such.
- The Chair will intervene during Questioning if necessary to maintain the schedule.
- **The Question Period must not last longer than 2.5 hours.**

Details on Deliberations:

- The Chair will ask each Committee Member in turn (in the order of the Introductions) to provide their assessment of the Student's written Critical Review or Responses.
- The Chair will then complete the Critical Review section of the Evaluation Form under the guidance of the Supervisory Committee. The Chair will request specific rankings for all of the Assessment criteria and record any specific comments the Committee requires.
- The Chair will then ask each Examiner in turn to provide their assessment of the Student's performance during the Question Period.
- The Chair will then complete the Question Period section of the Evaluation Form, under the guidance of the Supervisory Committee. The Chair will request specific rankings for all of the Assessment criteria and record any specific comments the Committee requires.
- The Chair will then ask for the Examination Committee's Decision (Pass or Fail) and record it on the Evaluation Form.
- If Fail on a First Attempt, the Committee **MUST** provide components requiring revision and re-examination, which the Chair will record.

Post Deliberations:

- The Student will be invited back into the room, where the Chair will relay the final decision of the Committee to the student. The Committee can then discuss the specific feedback.
- The Committee Members, Chair, and Student will then sign the Evaluation Form.
- In the event of a Fail on a First Attempt, the Committee and the Student must determine a date for re-examination, which the Chair will record.
- In the event that it is not possible for all Committee Members to sign the form at the time of the Exam, the Chair will inform the Committee that it is the Supervisor's responsibility to circulate the form for Signatures.
- The Chair will inform the Committee that it is the Supervisor's responsibility to submit the final signed Evaluation Form to the APSC Program Manager for final approval by the APSC Graduate Program Coordinator.