

Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Graduate Student Handbook

Professor Han Li
Vice Chair for Graduate Studies
Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Program
han.li@uci.edu
949-824-5668



Welcome to the Graduate Program in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

This handbook is designed to help you navigate your way through your graduate career and lists useful resources. I encourage you to become active in the department's Graduate Student Association (GSA), as a way to get to know the other students and to have a voice in different aspects of graduate student life. A multitude of useful information for your graduate studies can be found here:

<https://engineering.uci.edu/current/graduate>

Academic Program. The first year of graduate school can seem difficult and overwhelming at times, but we are committed to your success, and have a track record of graduating highly successful students. Most of these students have found additional resources on campus that have helped them throughout their graduate studies. I will also remind you that if you feel stressed, there are free campus resources available to you at the Counseling Center (949) 824-6457.

If you are in the Ph.D. program and have not matched directly with an advisor, I encourage you to use the research rotation period wisely to help you decide which groups best meet your interests.

If you are an international student, we will expect that you will have passed the UCI SPEAK test with a passing score of 50 or higher, or the UCI TOEP test with a score of 5 by the end of the spring quarter of your first year (or have 26 or higher on the Speaking portion of the TOEFL iBT). You will then have demonstrated a good command of spoken English and will be eligible to apply for TA-ships. TA training is offered in the fall, and is required to become eligible for a TA appointment.

For a list of steps to complete after you arrive on campus, please see the following:
<http://engineering.uci.edu/current/graduate/new-graduate-students>.

I look forward to your success, and we hope this roadmap will make your drive to a graduate degree all that much easier and stress-free.

Han Li

Associate Professor and Vice Chair for Graduate Studies, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

1. Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Key Personnel and Other Useful Contacts

- Professor Szu-Wen Wang – Department Chair (ISEB 6052)
- Professor Han Li – Vice Chair for Graduate Studies (Graduate Advisor) (ISEB 3438) – for questions on classes, research, and other academic matters. han.li@uci.edu
- Katie Smith – Senior Graduate Student Services Advisor (ISEB 6044) – source for all graduate paperwork and DocuSign submission for signature to Graduate Advisor, and answers on rules and regulations. kathles4@uci.edu
- Yi-San Chang-Yen – Department Manager, CAO (ISEB 6048) y.chang@uci.edu
- Cherry Chan – Front Desk/Business Office Analyst (ISEB 6000) – building/lab keys, CBE 298 seminar. chuimc@uci.edu
- Katherine Guerrero – Payroll/Personnel Analyst (ET 544) – handles all employment appointments (TA, GSR, etc.). katherine.guerrero@uci.edu
- Ronald Miller – Laboratory Manager (Engineering Tower) ron.miller@uci.edu
- Graduate Student Association (GSA) President – Vincent Martin (<https://sites.uci.edu/cbegsa/>)
- Majde Al Salibi – Director, SSoE GSA (MSTB 286) malsalib@uci.edu
- Professor Quinton Smith – DECADE Faculty Mentor quintons@uci.edu

2. Course Selection

(see Schedule of Classes online: <https://www.reg.uci.edu/perl/WebSoc>)

You should become familiar with the Schedule of Classes online at UC Irvine. Each quarter check our department (CBE) and other related disciplines to see if there are new courses that interest you. For a description of CBE Department courses, see link: <https://catalogue.uci.edu/allcourses/cbe/>

Special topic courses (CBE 249) are offered every academic year and the description varies. If interested in a specific CBE 249 course not listed in the catalog, please contact the CBE Department office.

2.1 Core Courses Required for CBE Graduate Students

The following CBE core courses are REQUIRED for all new students. The PhD preliminary exams and MS comprehensive exams are based, in part, on material covered in these required core classes.

CBE 200 Applied Engineering Mathematics I, Fall Quarter
CBE 240 Advanced Engineering Thermodynamics, Fall Quarter
CBE 220A Transport Phenomena I, Winter Quarter
CBE 210 Reaction Engineering, Spring Quarter

6 total units of CBE 298 Seminars in Engineering (2 units each in Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters)

2. 2 Elective Courses for CBE Graduate Students

Coursework-based MS: MS students taking the comprehensive exam option are required to take 5 graduate courses (3 units minimum/course) as electives. At least 3 of these elective courses must be taken within the CBE department. In some instances, an upper-division undergraduate course may be used to satisfy the elective requirements. Please DISCUSS WITH AND GET APPROVAL FROM THE GRADUATE ADVISOR- han.li@uci.edu for any elective courses offered outside of the CBE department and/or are upper-division undergraduate courses. Elective approval does NOT override the minimum CBE elective (3) requirement.

Thesis-based MS: MS students taking the research thesis option follow the same elective course requirement as coursework-based MS as mentioned above, with the following modification: Up to eight units of CBE 296 (MS Thesis Research) may count to substitute for up to two elective courses.

PhD: PhD students follow the same elective course requirement as coursework-based MS as mentioned above. With the following modification: PhD students are required to take 2 additional electives, so 7 electives in total.

For all PhD and MS students: Higher education is becoming increasingly inter-disciplinary. Examine the course offerings in other departments closely to find courses relevant to your career goals and research interests. However, please get approval from the Graduate Advisor before enrolling, to make sure that the course you are interested in taking can count toward your degree requirements.

2.3 Research Units

PhD students who have matched with an advisor, and MS thesis students: Students engaging in academic research towards their MS thesis or PhD dissertation must register for CBE 296 (MS) or CBE 297 (PhD) units under their supervisor's section. CBE 296 and CBE 297 must be taken with the letter-grade grading option. Students should carefully review the expectations for a satisfactory research grade with their faculty advisor.

PhD and MS/PhD students in research rotations should enroll in CBE 299 units under the faculty advisor they are rotating with that quarter. If a rotation has not been assigned, students can temporarily sign up for CBE 299 under the CBE Graduate Advisor's name (Professor Han Li) as a placeholder, until the research rotations are assigned, at which time you must electronically change (add/drop) to your rotation research supervisor's section of CBE 299. **Comprehensive exam option (coursework-based) MS students** who want to get credits for research experiences should enroll in CBE 299 units under the faculty advisor. All CBE 299 should be taken with the "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grade option. Students should carefully review the expectations for a satisfactory research grade with their faculty advisor.

2. 4 The PLAN OF STUDY Form

This form codifies the courses that you plan to take to satisfy the requirements of your degree. You can obtain this form from the Student Services Advisor (Katie Smith) or open the link under Plan of Study here: <https://engineering.uci.edu/dept/cbe/graduate>. Completion of this form is required for ALL MS and PhD students by the **end of the first quarter**. You should submit your completed form to the Student Services Advisor, who will then send it for approval to the CBE Graduate Advisor. You can modify/re-file the form later if your course interests change. If you have a previous MS degree in Chemical Engineering, please disregard filling in the core courses, and use Plan of Study to list your electives as well as the three CBE 298 required seminars.

3. MS Degree Requirements:

1. Students must file the Advancement to M.S. Candidacy **one quarter before** graduation quarter by submitting the form via DocuSign. Contact Enmanuel Gallardo when you are ready to advance and he will initiate the form in DocuSign.
2. Complete the course requirements (see below under Option 1 and Option 2).
3. Discuss with the graduate advisor early on whether the comprehensive exam or thesis option best suits your interests. Students in the MS/PhD track may select either approach.

Option 1: MS Degree with Comprehensive Exam

- Must complete the four CBE **core courses**, and five **elective courses** (3 units minimum/course) numbered 200-289 (or 200-295 if offered by other departments). A minimum of 3 out of 5 of the electives must be from CBE. Any non-CBE electives must be approved by the CBE Graduate Advisor.
- Must complete the written **comprehensive exam**. This exam is offered annually in the SPRING quarter. The exam tests the ability of students to perform an in-depth analysis of a research paper using Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering principles. Details will be provided to each student during the quarter that this exam is given.
- Comprehensive exam-based MS students are also welcome to participate in research. However, Research units **do not count** towards the degree requirements.
- In some instances, one of the elective courses may be substituted by an upper-division (numbered 100-199) undergraduate elective courses, *if approved* by the CBE graduate advisor. Contact Katie Smith for instructions to enroll in undergraduate courses.
- All students must sign up for the departmental seminar, CBE 298, each quarter, during their first year. (A total of 3 quarters, or 6 units, are required).

Rule of thumb: 4 CBE Core Classes, 5 graduate elective classes, plus passing score on Comprehensive Exam = MS degree with Comprehensive Exam option

Option 2: MS Degree with Thesis (original research with an advisor and a written MS thesis)

- Must complete a **MS thesis** approved by a committee of 3 faculty members. The committee chair, as well as the committee majority must be affiliated with CBE.
- Must complete the four CBE **core courses**, and five **elective courses** (3 units minimum/course) numbered 200-289 (or 200-295 if offered by other departments). Please obtain approval from the CBE Graduate Advisor for courses outside of CBE.
- Up to **8 units of CBE 296** (MS Thesis Research) may count to substitute for up to two elective courses.
- In some instances, one of the elective courses may be substituted by an upper-division (numbered 100-199) undergraduate elective course, *if approved* by the CBE graduate advisor. Contact Katie Smith for instructions to enroll in undergraduate courses.
- All students must sign up for the departmental seminar, CBE 298, each quarter during their first year. (A total of 3 quarters, or 6 units, are required).

Rule of thumb: 4 CBE Core Classes, 3 graduate elective classes, 8 units of MS research, plus the MS thesis = MS degree with Thesis option

Transferring to the PhD Program option: MS students who are interested in transferring to the PhD program in CBE should engage in research, and contact the Graduate Advisor as soon as possible, to learn about the requirements.

4. PhD Degree Requirements:

Matching with an advisor:

PhD students must be matched with a research advisor to be in good academic standing toward the degree. Two mechanisms are available to match with a research advisor:

Direct match: PhD students are already matched with a research advisor at the time of admission, or after the admission but before the start of Fall quarter of their first year.

Rotations: PhD students who are not directly matched can select 2 research rotations during their first year (one per quarter in Fall and Winter). At the conclusion of each research rotation, you must submit a Quarterly Research Rotation Report (see next page for rules and guidelines) to both your rotation supervisor and the CBE Graduate Advisor, unless exempted by the rotation supervisor.

In order to remain in good academic standing, PhD and MS/PhD students are expected to match with an advisor by the end of Winter quarter, and must be matched with a faculty research advisor by the end of the Spring quarter of their first year. Students who are not matched by the end of the Spring quarter of their first year will be placed on Academic Conditional Status (ACS), with a condition to match by the Fall quarter of their second year at the latest. Failure to match by this latest timeline can result in disqualification from the program.

Other PhD degree requirements:

- The initial course requirements are the same as the MS degree with the comprehensive exam option (see previous page).
- PhD students must take two additional elective courses beyond the MS degree requirements (7 in total).
- PhD students must pass the PhD Preliminary Exam during their first year (see below).
- To remain in good academic standing, an Individual Development Plan (E-IDP) form must be completed in consultation with your faculty advisor(s) and submitted annually (by July 31st each year) to the Graduate Advisor. The form can be obtained from the Student Services Advisor (Katie Smith).
- The PhD Qualifying Exam (advancement to candidacy) **should be completed in Year 3** (see below). You are required to complete the PhD Qualifying Exam Nomination form. Please contact Katie Smith for the form. Once you and your advisor have signed the form, please send it to Katie Smith. When it is approved, the PhD Form I will be initiated in DocuSign.
- Your final milestone will be the written PhD dissertation with oral defense (see below).
- All students must take a minimum of 12 units per quarter (Fall, Winter and Spring) to be considered full time. We recommend enrolling in 16 units per quarter.

Preliminary Exam

- All 1st year MS/PhD and PhD students are required to take the Preliminary Exam, which will be offered during the Spring quarter. More detailed exam guidelines will be emailed to you by the Graduate Advisor in Spring quarter.
- Passing the Preliminary Exam is required to remain in good academic standing.
- The Preliminary Exam is an oral exam where the student will present and be examined on a journal paper related to their general, but not specific, field of research.
- You must have taken and passed certain core courses such as CBE 220A to be eligible to take the exam.

Qualifying Exam

- Passing the Qualifying exam is required to remain in good academic standing.
- The Qualifying Exam covers dissertation ideas and results of PhD research.
- Your research advisor will be the chair of your exam committee. The committee must be comprised of at least 4 faculty members, with at least 3 holding an appointment in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (of which at least 2 must hold primary appointments in CBE), and 1 outside member. An outside member is a UCI faculty member who is not your research advisor and is not holding a primary appointment with CBE. Nomination form needs to be approved 2 weeks before the exam date, please contact Katie Smith for the form.
- **The exam must be taken after passing the Preliminary Exam, no earlier than the end of the 1st year, and no later than the end of the 3rd year in the MS/PhD program.**
- A written research proposal (dossier) of approximately 30-40 pages in length must be submitted to the committee members at least one week prior to the exam.
- The exam will take approximately 90 minutes – your research presentation should be 40-50 minutes and reviewed by your advisor before your exam.

Oral Defense

- An oral presentation at the completion of your PhD dissertation is required.
- Committee members for the PhD dissertation (3 including advisor, selected after passing the Qualifying Exam) are invited as well as the entire department faculty and students. Visitors are welcome.
- A 45-minute public presentation should summarize your major research findings, followed by questions from the audience. The committee will then have a closed session for their questions.
- Please submit your Dissertation title, a copy of the abstract, advisor's name, date, time, and location of your Defense to Katie Smith, two weeks in advance.

Dissertation

- The doctoral dissertation is a written documentation of original research with scholarly merit in the field of study. For Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, indicators of scholarly merit include peer reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings, patents or patent applications, book chapters, or documented adoption of innovative technology. Upon joining a research group, all doctoral students in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering will work with their graduate advisor(s) to develop a plan for meeting the requirements for the degree.
- Copies of past dissertations are available in the UCI library.
- Have your advisor approve the dissertation first, then the two other committee members.
- Note that writing will take a *minimum* of 3 months. Plan ahead!
- Tip – use your publications as a base.

Quarterly Research Rotation Reports – Rules and Guidelines

1. Reports are due each quarter to the research supervisor before grades are due, unless exempted by the rotation supervisor. Specific deadlines will be set by the research supervisor. Supervisors may ask for advance drafts and require revisions prior to assigning a grade for the research rotation.

2. Students are also expected to provide electronic copies of all data to the research supervisor, and copies of lab notes at the same time the report is submitted.

3. Students must provide a copy of each quarterly report to the CBE Graduate Advisor, unless exempted by the rotation supervisor. These reports will be part of the assessment process for first year students by the graduate committees, which is why the CBE Graduate Advisor will be collecting a copy.

4. Reports should be at least 5 pages in length, excluding the title page, references and appendix and should have the following sections formally indicated.

- a. **Title Page:** Title of project, name, date, research supervisor's name.
- b. **Abstract:** 100-300 words.
- c. **Introduction:** Literature review of articles read regarding the research project, context for the research, hypothesis or main problem to be addressed, and approach to solve the problem.
- d. **Methods:** Description of experimental or computational techniques utilized.
- e. **Results:** Relevant results with tables, micrographs, and Figures as appropriate, briefly described.
- f. **Discussion:** Discussion of the implications of these results, comparisons with prior published research and suggestions for future work.
- g. **Conclusions:** Short (one paragraph) description of major findings.
- h. **References:** Provide references at the end for all literature cited in the report and for any facts that need references. References must include the following information – full list of authors, full article title, journal title, volume, issue, pages, and year. Websites are generally not appropriate references and Wikipedia and popular science magazines are never accepted as primary references. Peer reviewed archival journals (can be found on Web of Science, SciFinder and other library databases) are the gold standard. Occasionally reference books are cited also.
- i. **Appendix:** Extra figures and extended tables of raw data may be included.

Means of Support

All support is given competitively and based on continuing good standing. The general means of support are:

- Fellowships (both internal and external). <https://grad.uci.edu/funding/current-fellowships/>
- Research Assistantships (GSR), funded from faculty research grants.
- Teaching Assistantships, when available. <https://grad.uci.edu/funding/teaching-assistantships/>
- Please contact Department CAO, Yi-San Chang-Yen - y.chang@uci.edu *before* considering applying for loans, as it may affect your financial fellowship status.

All U.S. citizens and Permanent Residents **must** fill out the FAFSA form each year, due March 2, <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov> in order to be eligible for certain financial awards such as GAANN Fellowships and Work Study awards.

Advisors

MS students taking the comprehensive exam option do not need an advisor other than the CBE Graduate Advisor. MS students selecting the thesis option should select a research advisor as soon as possible. PhD and MS/PhD students who have not directly matched with a research advisor upon arrival are expected to match with a research advisor by the end of the Winter quarter of their first year,

In order to remain in good academic standing, PhD and MS/PhD students must be matched with a faculty research advisor by the end of the Spring quarter of their first year.

Please see list of core Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering faculty followed by a link where a list of CBE-affiliated faculty can be found. CBE-affiliated faculty can advise graduate students as approved by the CBE Graduate Advisor.

CBE Core Faculty: <https://engineering.uci.edu/dept/cbe/faculty-staff/faculty>

CBE Affiliated Faculty: <https://engineering.uci.edu/dept/cbe/faculty-staff/affiliated>

CBE Core Faculty

- Tayloria Adams: Dielectrophoresis, microfluidic devices, stem cells, biomarker development, cell membrane biophysics, cell sorting.
- Herdeline Ardoña: Biomaterials, self-assembly, optoelectronics, stimuli-responsive materials, in vitro tissue models, biosensors.
- Plamen Atanasov: Electrocatalysis and electrocatalysts for energy conversion processes, bio-electrocatalysis and energy harvesting systems.
- Nancy Da Silva: Molecular biotechnology, metabolic engineering and synthetic biology, eukaryotic expression systems, biorenewable chemicals.
- Alon Gorodetsky: Cephalopods, adaptive materials, camouflage, bioelectronics.
- Ryan Hayes: computational protein engineering, therapeutics, biocatalysis, drug design, molecular simulation.
- Han Li: Metabolic engineering, synthetic biology, biomanufacturing renewable chemicals, protein engineering.
- Ali Mohraz: Soft matter engineering with applications in health care and energy materials.
- Elizabeth Read: Dynamics of complex biochemical systems, stochastic processes in cell biology, computational modeling.
- Erdem Sasmaz: Heterogeneous nanoparticle synthesis, reaction kinetics, high-throughput experimentation, nano-catalysts for clean energy production and carbon dioxide utilization.
- Quinton Smith: Pluripotent stem cells, regenerative medicine, organoids, microfluidics, tissue engineering.
- Vojislav Stamenkovic: Energy conversion and storage, surface modifications, thin films, nanoscale synthesis, electrochemical interfaces, fuel cells, electrolyzers and batteries.
- Vasan Venugopalan: Laser-generated thermal, mechanical and radiative transport processes for application in medical diagnostics, imaging, therapeutics, and biotechnology.
- Szu-Wen Wang: Bioinspired materials, immunomodulatory materials, nanoparticle vaccines, therapeutics, protein engineering, drug delivery.
- Lily Wu (Associate Professor of Teaching): Engineering education, experiential learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, online and hybrid modality
- Iryna Zenyuk: Renewable energy, fuel cells, electrolyzers, batteries, X-ray imaging techniques, multi-scale modeling, transport phenomena.

CBE Affiliated Faculty:

For an updated list of CBE-affiliated faculty, please see the department website:

<http://engineering.uci.edu/dept/cbe/faculty-staff/affiliated>

5. A Few Questions and Answers

What do Teaching Assistants and Readers Do?

- TA's grade homework and tests, run demonstrations, hold office hours, lead discussions, maintain class websites, maintain records of grades, and run labs.
- Readers grade homework and tests, also can hold office hours.
- Students are selected based on faculty nominations, match with course material, GAANN/CAREER grant priority, past experience.
- All students who want to be a TA or Reader must have completed the TA training in September prior to Fall Quarter (additional training may be available in Winter/January): <https://dtei.uci.edu/opportunities/grads-postdocs/ta-professional-development-program/>

What are the Language requirements for international students who want to serve as a TA?

- To be a TA, the international student must pass TOEP (with a score of 5), or a TOEFL iBT score of 26 or higher on the Speaking component.
- TOEP is given at UCI to students in place of the SPEAK; please refer to: <https://www.humanities.uci.edu/glc/toep>
- Classes offered through ESL can prepare graduate students for these exams and improve communication skills.
- Humanities 21A, 21B, 29 are for graduate students who are not native English speakers. Please meet with the Academic English Coordinator, Dr. Susan Earle-Carlin, before enrolling in any of these classes. She will meet with you and evaluate your English to see what class level you need to enroll in. <https://www.humanities.uci.edu/ae/>

What grades do I need to have to maintain good standing?

Students must have a 3.0 GPA minimum with no grades below a B to remain in good standing. MS/PhD and PhD students are generally expected to achieve GPAs greater than 3.5. A "B–" grade is considered failing and will not count for any course requirements. You need to have a GPA higher than 3.2 for certain types of fellowships, and a GPA higher than 3.1 for any TA position. Students will be placed on Academic Conditional Status (ACS) when the Overall GPA is below 3.0, Term GPA is below 2.0, or fail a required core course.

What should I do if I want to change my research advisor?

- Inform the CBE Graduate Advisor (Professor Li).
- Talk with research advisor – if unable to do so, ask CBE Graduate Advisor to talk to research advisor.
- Talk with other faculty about research projects.
- If you have been fully supported financially by your advisor on a GSR, you can be required to finish up a project component (requiring no more than one extra quarter), before you can switch advisors. During this extra quarter you should be given financial support (GSR/TA/Reader/fellowship) equal to 50% GSR.
- PhD and MS/PhD students who want to change research advisors must find and successfully match with a new advisor (with financial support) at the latest one quarter (Summer quarter not included) after they stop working with their old advisor or will no longer remain in good standing in the program.

Can I switch to another degree program at UCI if I find my interests are better matched by another degree program?

Yes, you can apply to other degree programs at UCI. However, if you are accepted and decide to change your degree program, you cannot apply for readmission to the CBE program after the start of the next academic quarter in your new degree program. All financial support from the department will be terminated if you change degree programs mid-year. If you choose to be re-admitted to the CBE Department, you must first meet with the CBE Department Graduate Advisor.

CBE MS Comprehensive Exam Additional Information

1. The MS comprehensive exam will be offered during the SPRING quarter. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Student Services Advisor, Katie Smith, of their plan to take the comprehensive exam at the **beginning** of their last quarter of studies.
2. The MS students will write a report on a research paper on one of the following topics of their choice: (a) Biomolecular Engineering and Biotechnology; (b) Macromolecular Engineering (c) Energy and Sustainability.
3. The research paper is chosen by the exam committee after the students pick the topic.
4. Successful completion is required for terminal MS students with Comprehensive Exam option. The final degree paperwork will be initiated in DocuSign by Katie Smith.

CBE Preliminary Exam Additional Information

1. The preliminary exam will be offered during the Spring quarter.
2. Students will prepare a 20-minute oral presentation describing/analyzing the results of a research paper in their general (but not specific) area of research.
3. During and following the presentation, the student will be examined by a faculty committee on the topic of the paper, the related research area, and CBE core courses relevant to the research paper.
4. Student performance on the oral examination combined with performance in CBE core courses and research rotations will be considered to assess the student's academic progress.
5. Students will be notified during the Spring quarter of their performance on the Preliminary Exam. The outcomes are Pass, Fail, and Conditional Pass. For students who receive a Conditional Pass, a formal correction plan is requested to address the weaknesses identified during the exam. Students who fail the preliminary exam will be placed on the Academic Conditional Status (ACS).

CBE PhD Qualifying Exam Additional Information

The purpose of the qualifying examination is to demonstrate that the student is capable of conducting PhD research and has a viable research plan for the doctoral dissertation. Feedback from the qualifying examination committee is very helpful in developing a viable dissertation topic and appropriate experiments.

The CBE PhD qualifying exam committees follow the rules set by the Graduate Council. The

student selects the qualifying exam committee consisting of at least 4 faculty members, with at least 3 holding an appointment in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (of which at least 2 must hold primary appointments in CBE), and 1 outside member. An outside member is a UCI faculty member who is not your research advisor and is not holding a primary appointment with CBE. While your research advisor will serve as the chair of the examination committee, the expectation is that s/he will largely remain silent during the oral exam itself; thereby allowing a full and thorough evaluation of your research dossier by the other committee members. The committee should primarily be composed of faculty familiar with your area of interest, insofar as that is possible. Nomination form needs to be approved 2 weeks before the exam date, please contact Katie Smith for the form. Once the form is completed and signed by both student and advisor, send to Katie Smith to acquire the remaining required signatures.

The PhD Qualifying Examination should be scheduled before the end of your 3rd year of PhD studies for students entering with a BS degree, and before the end of your 2nd year of your PhD studies for students entering with a MS degree.

There are two required parts of the Qualifying Examination:

I. Research Dossier

The Research Dossier must be reviewed and signed off by your research advisor before it is distributed to the other committee members. The Research Dossier must be distributed to the committee members **at least two weeks** prior to the scheduled oral presentation. Any exception to this timeline must be approved by the committee. Late submission of the dossier may result in a rescheduling of the oral presentation. The dossier should define the topic of your dissertation in detail, place it in context, propose a detailed plan for tackling the problem, and provide sufficient preliminary results generated by you to demonstrate your ability to complete the work within your proposed timeline.

The recommended format for the dossier is to use Times New Roman 11/12-point font or equivalent, with 1.5 line spacing for readability, and a 30-page limit not including the Title, Abstract, and References. A suggested outline follows.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1 page | 1) <u>Title Page</u> – Title, Name of Student, Degree Program, Date, Advisor's Name and Advisor's Signature. |
| 1 page | 2) <u>Abstract Page</u> – 200-word summary – include the <u>new</u> information/ <u>new</u> understanding that the dissertation will provide. |
| 7 pages | 3) <u>Introduction and Background</u> – Summaries of prior published research to demonstrate your knowledge of the current state of the field; rationale for the research, its importance and contribution to the particular field of study, and its broader scientific and engineering context(s); and what <u>key</u> problems will be tackled. |
| 2 pages | 4) <u>Specific Aims and Expected Outcomes</u> – List of the major research accomplishments to be completed during the course of the dissertation research (typically 3-5 in number), and a summary of fundamental contributions expected from this work. |
| 10 pages | 5) <u>Preliminary Results</u> – Summary of the work completed to date, including interpretation of data obtained by the student. Include figures, graphs, and tables and the development of any theoretical models and/or new computational/experimental methods. |

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 10 pages | 6) <u>Proposed Research</u> – Thorough exposition of the experiments/ modeling/theory/computation the student plans to complete and how these will provide critical information for the dissertation and be an original, significant contribution to the research field. |
| 1 page | 7) <u>Timeline</u> – Estimated timeline of the duration and completion date for each task. |
| no page limit | 8) <u>References</u> – Author's name, full title of articles, journal name, volume, page, year. |

Document length does not necessarily correlate with quality. While it is likely that the research plan will evolve as the research progresses, the proposed research plan presented in the Qualifying Examination should be comprehensive and commensurate with the general expectations for the PhD. This document will serve as the basis for the PhD dissertation and will save time later when writing the dissertation.

II. Oral Examination (Approximately 90 minutes including Q&A)

The oral examination should summarize the written document in a presentation approximately 30 minutes in length if uninterrupted. The committee will ask questions during the presentation, with the total examination taking approximately 90 minutes. We recommend that 2 hours be scheduled to allow adequate time for questions and a closed-door discussion by the committee after the exam. Committee members may return the Research Dossier with written suggestions in the text. The Chair of the committee will notify Katie Smith of exam results. If passed, Advancement to Candidacy- PhD Form I, will be initiated in DocuSign.

6. Graduate Student Engagement in Departmental Climate

The CBE department welcomes feedback regarding departmental culture, policies and/or procedures to improve the departmental climate. While a UCI NetID is required to complete the feedback form, use of the form is completely anonymous and personally identifiable information (e.g., name, UCInetID, student registration number, IP address, etc) is **NOT** captured in any way. The feedback form can be accessed using the following link:

<https://forms.gle/gjyhw2MjEW8rdDvR9>.