

*On November 2, 2021, the Graduate Faculty in SLS decided to adopt the following modification to requirements in the PhD in SLS program: Instead of completing written and oral comprehensive examinations ([Graduate Student Handbook](#), p.32), PhD students may fulfill the same requirement by completing two Qualifying Papers (QPs) following the procedures outlined in the remainder of this document. All students currently in the program have the choice between the old (written & oral exam) and the new (QP) route. For students currently in the program who choose the QP route, there will be some flexibility with regard to the timelines in Table 1. Students entering the PhD program after the adoption of the QP option (Spring 2022 admits and later) may also choose between the old (written & oral exam) and the new (QP) route. If they choose the QP route, the timelines in Table 1 apply. Specific timelines for the old route are currently under discussion and will be announced in Spring 2022; any modifications regarding timelines will apply only to students entering the PhD program after the formal adoption of these modifications by the Graduate Faculty.*

*- Theres Grüter, Graduate Chair, 11/2/2021*

## **Qualifying Paper (QP) option to fulfill Comprehensive Exam requirement in PhD program**

PhD students must complete two single-authored, Qualifying Papers (QPs) in accordance with the procedures below. Successful QPs are those which are determined by the committee to be of high enough quality to be submitted to a professional journal. While the submission of successfully completed QPs to journals is not required to fulfill academic requirements in the SLS PhD program, it is highly encouraged.

### **1 Composition of QP committees**

- QP committees consist of 2 faculty members: Reader 1 and Reader 2. Reader 1 provides primary guidance on the QP project. Reader 2 provides additional input and feedback.
  - Any faculty member who appears on the department's list of [regular](#)\* and [cooperating](#) faculty may be asked to serve as Reader 1 on a QP committee.
  - Any member of the UHM graduate faculty may serve as Reader 2 on a QP committee.
  - \*At least one of the two readers must be a [regular](#) (not including cooperating or affiliate) faculty member in SLS.
- Non UHM faculty members cannot serve as Readers 1 or 2 on QP committees. With the approval of Readers 1 and 2, students can petition for the addition of a 3rd reader who is not UHM faculty. Petitions will be evaluated by the Graduate Chair.

- The same person may not serve as Reader 1 on both papers, but may be Reader 1 on one paper and Reader 2 on the other.
- No more than one faculty member may serve on both QP committees for a given student.

## **2 Content of QP**

### **2.1 *Manuscript types and format***

Different manuscript types are acceptable for a QP, similar to different manuscript types for papers in peer-reviewed journals in the wider SLS field. When determining the manuscript type and topic of a QP, the student in consultation with both readers should:

1. identify a journal in the field which would constitute a good fit for publishing this QP;
2. in the Instructions for Authors provided by this journal, identify the manuscript type for this QP;
3. follow the journal's guidelines for formatting, length and content for the selected manuscript type in the QP.

Note that not all journals specify different manuscript types. While most journals accept Empirical Research Studies,\* others also accept manuscript types such as Systematic Review Articles, Methods Tutorials, Registered Reports, Replication Studies, among others. The goal is that the student adopts a format that would be acceptable by the journal they choose. (Note that here is no requirement to submit a successfully completed QP to this journal.) Manuscript types of 6,000 words or less (e.g., Brief reports, research reports, squibs) cannot serve as the format for a QP.<sup>1</sup>

\*At least one of the two QPs must be an empirical study.

### **2.2 *Thematic scope***

- Each QP must be situated in one of the four areas of specialization in SLS (analysis, learning, use, education) or focus on Research Methods (e.g., in the form of a Methodological Review Article).
- The two QPs cannot be from the same area of specialization in SLS (analysis, learning, use, education). One QP in an area of specialization and the other focusing on Research Methods is possible.
- Determination of fit with area of specialization is made jointly by the two readers.
- Papers used to fulfill program requirements for a different degree or certificate (e.g., an SP for an MA degree or an AGC) cannot constitute a QP. However, pre-existing data may serve as the basis for a QP if it is used to address a substantially different research question requiring substantial new analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Upon successful completion of their QP, students may, of course, revise their project into a different submission format if desired.

### 3 Timelines for completion of QPs

Table 1 presents the timelines for completion of the two QPs. Students are encouraged to start thinking about the topics of both QPs (and the dissertation) from the start of their time in the PhD program.

Note that "end of semester" refers to the day of Commencement in the respective Fall or Spring semester (see UHM academic calendar).

Petitions for extension beyond the stated final deadlines due to extenuating circumstances will be considered. Petitions must be submitted in writing to the Graduate Chair prior to the passing of the final deadline in question.

Approved [Leaves Of Absence](#) do not count as semesters in the program.

Table 1. Timelines for completion of QPs

Semester in program	milestone goals (=target dates for completion of program in 4 years)	final deadlines (potential grounds for dismissal if not achieved)	QP1	QP2	dissertation
1			look for topic, read		
2	end of S2: notify Grad Chair of QP1 topic and committee		flesh out topic, identify committee, read, design research, IRB		
3	end of S3: complete/submit/defend QP1		conduct research, write, complete	look for topic, read	
4	end of S4: notify Grad Chair of QP2 topic and committee			flesh out topic, identify committee, read, design research, IRB	

5	end of S5: complete/submit/ defend QP2	end of S5: QP1 must be complete		conduct research, write, complete	narrow down topic and goals of dissertation, identify committee
6	end of S6: defend dissertation proposal, advance to candidacy				work on proposal, IRB
7		end of S7: QP2 must be complete			dissertation research and writing
8					dissertation research and writing, defense
9		end of S9: must have advanced to candidacy			...
10					...

#### 4 Procedures and evaluation of QPs

##### 4.1 *Notification of Graduate Chair that committee has been constituted*

Following consultation with both proposed readers, the student submits [a form](https://forms.gle/29FfrKLSN7wSanHg7) (https://forms.gle/29FfrKLSN7wSanHg7) to the Graduate Chair to provide the following information:

- name of Reader 1
- name of Reader 2
- tentative title of the QP
- area of specialization (or Research Methods) of the QP
- manuscript type
- target journal (see 2.1; there is no requirement to submit the final paper to this journal)

#### **4.2 *Conducting research and seeking feedback from readers***

The student should consult regularly with at least Reader 1, ideally both readers, while designing, conducting, analyzing, and writing up the QP study. The amount of feedback provided by each reader is at the discretion of each committee member. Committee members should strive to provide feedback in a timely manner and bear in mind that the final product is intended to be a single-authored paper by the student. Importantly, the writing of the final QP must be the student's and reflect the student's voice. (This does not preclude the addition of one or both committee members as co-author of a further revised and elaborated version of the final QP to be submitted to a journal.)

#### **4.3 *Submission of a QP***

By the end of week 4 in the semester in which the student plans to defend their QP, the student must notify, in a single email message, all committee members of their intention to defend the QP that semester. The committee then agrees in writing on (1) a deadline for submission of the pre-final draft to each reader (these may be different dates for each reader), (2) a deadline for submission of the final draft to both readers (one date for all readers), and (3) a date for the oral defense.

Students should bear in mind that most faculty members are on 9 month contracts and may not be available to participate in the provision of written feedback or oral defenses during the off-duty period (mid May to mid August; see academic calendar).

#### **4.4 *Evaluation of QPs***

- Both readers provide written feedback on one complete pre-final draft of the QP. The student then implements the readers' feedback and submits the final QP for evaluation to both readers. This final QP must conform to standards of written academic English as expected for manuscripts submitted to peer-reviewed journals.
- The committee and the student meet for an oral QP defense no sooner than 2 weeks after submission of the final QP. The format of the oral defense (discussion only or student presentation followed by discussion) should be decided by the committee. Oral QP defenses are expected to take approximately 1 hour. At the end of the oral QP defense, the committee decides on one of the following options:
  - a) pass oral defense and accept QP as is;
  - b) pass oral defense and accept QP with revisions; the committee decides whether the revised submission needs approval from all readers;
  - c) fail oral defense and reject QP.

If option (c) is chosen, this constitutes failing one attempt at the Comprehensive Exam. The committee decides whether the student may attempt another oral defense of the same QP after substantial revision, or whether a new QP project needs to be started. If the committee is unable to agree on one of these options, Reader 1 notifies the Graduate Chair, who will review the case and decide on further steps.

According to UH Graduate Division policy, students have two chances to pass the Comprehensive Exam. This means any further QP defenses (for this or the other QP) will need to proceed without failures or the student may be dismissed from the program. See <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/content/doctorate>.

A QP is considered complete once its oral defense has taken place and a decision of *(a) accept* has been rendered by the committee. Reader 1 will notify the Graduate Chair ([grdchr@hawaii.edu](mailto:grdchr@hawaii.edu)), cc-ing the student and Reader 2, once a final decision of *accept (a)* or *reject (c)* has been made.

Successful completion of the two Qualifying Papers constitutes successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination.