Qualifying Exam Checklist

PLANNING PHASE (~3-4 MONTHS BEFORE PROPOSED QE DATE)

☐ Meet with major professor to refine QE project and discuss 3 committee members.
☐ Draft QE proposal: typically includes a Central Hypothesis and 2-3 Specific Aims.
☐ Fill out PTX- Request PhD QE Committee form and submit to PTX Coordinator Katharine Moffat.
  *Ensure that all PTX requirements are complete before submitting the form.
  *It is recommended that you meet with your academic advisor as you fill out this form.
  *CEP will review your proposal and assign 2 additional members for a total of 5 QE committee members. Once finalized, CEP will notify you of your approved QE committee.
☐ Submit Grad Studies- Application for PhD QE form, listing the 5 approved QE committee members, to PTX Coordinator Katharine Moffat. Qualifying Examination Applications should be submitted no later than four weeks prior to the proposed exam date.

STUDY PHASE (~6-8 WEEKS BEFORE PROPOSED QE DATE)

☐ Once the CEP assigns your QE committee, send out a poll to your committee to select a QE date.
  *Due to busy schedules, it is recommended that you do this as early as possible.
  *Include at least 10 work days, with 2 options per day (morning & afternoon).
☐ Begin studying as much as possible. A break from lab work is recommended for at least a few weeks before your QE date. This will vary by student & should be discussed with your major professor.
☐ Meet 1 on 1 with each committee member to discuss QE proposal. These meetings are helpful for clarifying questions, refining the proposal, and discussing exam logistics with your QE chair.
☐ Practice your QE chalk talk. This will be ~10-15 minutes before the questioning portion begins.
☐ Run 3-6 practice exams with peers, lab members, or other colleagues. Diverse audiences are helpful.
  *It is possible to “over-practice”, so be sure not to stress yourself out with endless practice exams.
☐ Create a QE cheat sheet- use headings for major topics/methods and bullets for key points to remember.

APPROACHING THE EXAM (1-3 DAYS BEFORE QE DATE)

☐ Relax and review. You are likely more prepared than you think.
☐ Read over your cheat sheet or study notes. Reinforce key topics rather than learn new ones.
☐ Remember that your committee wants you to pass! It is their job to ask questions and test your knowledge, so try to create thoughtful conversation and don’t get defensive.

AFTER PASSING THE EXAM

☐ Meet with your major professor to form a dissertation committee. A dissertation committee consists of your major professor (committee chair) and 2 additional faculty members for a total of 3 members.
  *If desired, it is optional to add a 4th or 5th committee member. This sometimes occurs if several broad areas of expertise are needed to guide the student’s project.
☐ Fill out Grad Studies- Application for Advancement to PhD Candidacy form, obtain all required signatures, and then take to the UC Davis Cashier’s Office to pay the cash fee of $90.
The following people are available for any and all questions related to PTX academics and the QE:

1. Your **major professor**.
2. Your assigned **academic advisor**.
3. **PTX Chair**: Dr. Laura Van Winkle  
   lsvanwinkle@ucdavis.edu
4. **CEP Chair**: Dr. Mary Horne  
   mhorne@ucdavis.edu
5. **PTX G Coordinator**: Katharine Moffat  
   kmoffat@ucdavis.edu
6. Your **PTX Peer Mentor**.
7. **Student CEP Representatives**  
   *If you would prefer to reach out to a student, please contact Katharine Moffat for contact information of the current CEP student reps.*

**Important Note**: This checklist was prepared by the PTX Committee on Educational Policy as a guide for students. Specific timelines may vary between individuals and all students are required to consult with their major professor before proceeding with major actions.

**All forms are available on www.ptx.ucdavis.edu/resources/forms**