

Department of Anthropology: Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Guidelines

Revised and approved by faculty vote 8/23/24 and 1/17/25

The Qualifying Exam provides a student with an opportunity to demonstrate their training in one or more subdisciplines of anthropology and a mastery of theory, literature, and research methods relevant to their intended dissertation project. The exam consists of two components: a written component followed by an oral component. In completing the written and oral portions of the exam the students will synthesize their understanding of that scholarship in relation to their own project as well as broader contributions to anthropology.

The written component consists of essay responses to four different questions developed from the student's bibliographies.

- Before or during the dissertation proposal defense meeting, the student, in consultation with the committee, will decide on the student's areas of scholarly focus.
- The student will develop a set of four bibliographies that represent these areas of scholarly focus. The student will collaborate with their committee to determine what is a reasonable yet comprehensive amount of reading for the bibliographies. The bibliographies will be reviewed and approved by the committee.
- Drawing on the bibliographies, the student will be given four sets of questions during a timeframe agreed upon by the student and their committee members. The timeframe between the student receiving the questions and the due date for the answers cannot be shorter than eight consecutive weeks.
- The content and number of questions is the decision of the student's advisory committee. The essay responses to the four sets of questions should be submitted no later than the thirteenth week of the semester and no later than two weeks before the scheduled oral exam. In order to meet this deadline, it is recommended that the student work with their advisor to develop a series of separate deadlines for each essay response.
- The student will submit a written response to these questions that comprises a constellation of ideas and arguments that supports their answer(s) and requiring synthesis of the literature in each of the bibliographies. The responses should be comprehensive and will vary in length from 5,000-8,000 words.

The oral component consists of a two-hour period during which the committee members discuss with the student the essays from the written component as well as other relevant topics. The oral component is normally scheduled two weeks after the deadline for turning in the written essays.

Procedures:

Students should plan to take their Qualifying Exam no later than the Spring semester of their third year. Per Graduate School policy, students are required to take the exam within five years of entry into the program. Before scheduling the qualifying exam, the student must successfully defend the dissertation proposal and submit bibliographies to the advisory committee for

approval. Students should register for ANT 767 and complete the online scheduling procedure within the first six weeks of the semester during which they plan to take their Qualifying Exam. The oral component cannot be given until the DGS has received approval from the Graduate School. The advisor must obtain the signatory card from the DGS and bring it to the oral defense.

Occasionally an advisory committee may determine that an otherwise passable written component or oral component is not adequate in some particular respect. In this case, the student may be asked to submit a written document (to be determined by the committee) within five days of the date of the oral exam for final approval. Once final approval is obtained, the signatory card will be completed and turned into the Graduate School. If a student fails their exam, the advisory committee will determine the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. Per Graduate School policy, the minimum time between examinations is four months. A second examination must be taken within one year after taking the first examination. A third examination is not permitted.

Students with a DRC accommodation should notify their committee chair in advance of the written component during the time when the bibliographies are submitted for approval. The committee chair, in consultation with the student and the DRC, will develop an exam structure in accordance with the student's accommodation plan.