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| **Criterion** | **Meets Expectations** | **Does Not Meet Expectations** | **Additional Comments** |
| Mastery of the field or problem area | * Adequate statement of thesis * Coherent and clear arguments * Clear objectives * Understanding of subject matter | * Inadequate statement of thesis * Flawed or incoherent arguments * Poorly defined objectives * Limited understanding of subject matter |  |
| Mastery of the secondary literature | * Adequate understanding of the literature * Adequate use of the literature * Adequate documentation of the literature | * Limited understanding of the literature * Limited use of the literature * Limited documentation of the literature |  |
| Mastery of methods of inquiry | * Focused project * Well-organized project * Reasonable plan for analysis and development of ideas | * Not a focused project * Poorly organized project * Confused or ineffective plan for analysis and development of ideas |  |
| Originality and potential for contribution to discipline | * Potential for originality * Builds upon previous work * Potential for theoretical or applied significance * Publication potential | * Lack of originality or originality not demonstrated * Limited extension of previous published work in the field * Limited theoretical or applied significance * Limited publication potential |  |

**Dissertation Proposal Rubric**

**PhD Candidacy Examination Guidelines**

The information below provides general guidelines for reviewing the dissertation proposal. Complete instructions and procedures for completing the PhD Candidacy Examination can be found as well as an outline for what should be included in the proposal can be found in Sections 3.5 and Sections 7.3 of the Graduate Student Handbook.

**Before the Oral Defense**

The completed proposal should be sent to the committee no less than two weeks prior to the defense. *5 days prior to the defense*, committee members must indicate whether the proposal is ready for the defense. To this end, the committee should email the committee chair (but not the student) indicating one of the following:

1. Green Light: There are no serious structural or content related problems in the proposal that would prohibit a successful defense of the dissertation proposal. The committee member indicates with this recommendation that the believe it is reasonable to proceed with the defense. This does not guarantee a pass. The student must demonstrate in the oral defense that they have mastery of the philosophical problem they are addressing, the material they are engaging, and the argument they are advancing. A green light merely indicates there are no red flags in the written proposal.
2. Yellow Light: The proposal has several structural or content related problems that may need to be addressed before the oral defense. The committee member indicates with this recommendation that they have reservations about the project but that the proposal can still receive passing marks if the student’s performance in the oral defense is strong and responds adequately to these issues. The committee member must clearly articulate in their email to the advisor why they have reservations that warrant this recommendation.
3. Red Light: The proposal has several significant structural or content related problems that suggests the proposal is not ready to be defended. The committee member indicates with this recommendation that regardless of how the oral defense goes, it is unlikely that the student will pass the defense.

**Note:** The decision to proceed with the defense is ultimately up to the advisor and the student. However, if the advisor receives a significant number of yellow and red-light responses from the committee, delaying the defense to address these issues is strongly recommended.

**Oral Defense Recommendations**

For additional information about how the defense is to be conducted, see the Graduate Student Handbook.

1. Pass: The student has met the criteria of the proposal rubric in the written proposal and address the questions in the oral defense in a way that demonstrates mastery of the philosophical problem they are addressing, the scholarship they are engaging, and argument they plan to advance in the dissertation. It should also be clear to the committee that the student has a reasonable plan for executing this project and is prepared to complete the dissertation in approximately 1.5 years and in no more than 2 years. A recommendation of pass depends on all committee members concurring with this judgment. Upon receiving a recommendation of pass and completing the necessary paperwork, the student will be a PhD candidate and can proceed with the dissertation.
2. Conditional Pass: The proposal falls short of several of the criteria on the proposal rubric and the oral defense demonstrates that while the project has potential, several problems need to be addressed before moving forward with the dissertation.

Revisions: Upon completing the oral defense and receiving feedback from the committee, students who receive a conditional pass should complete the necessary revisions to the proposal in *no more than 5 weeks from the defense date*. Once the revised proposal is completed, it should be clear that the student has a reasonable plan for executing the project and completing the dissertation in approximately 1.5 years and no more than 2 years. The advisor will determine whether the revised proposal has met the recommendations of the committee and may that the committee review the revised proposal before moving forward. Upon approval from the advisor, the student will become a PhD candidate and may proceed with the dissertation.

Failure to Complete Revisions within 5 weeks will Result in a Non-Pass: Except in special circumstances and with approval from the GPD, students who do not complete their revisions within 5 weeks of the defense will receive a failing mark on the proposal. Revisions should not be so extensive as to require more time than this and if they are, then the proposal should receive a non-pass.

1. Non-pass: The written proposal falls short of many of the criteria on the proposal rubric, the oral defense demonstrates that the student lacks mastery of the philosophical problem they are addressing, the scholarship they are engaging, and the argument they are advance. The project also lacks the potential to become a dissertation that can be completed in approximately 1.5 years and no more than 2 years. In these cases, the student must make significant revisions to the proposal or write a new proposal. In both cases, the PhD examination, including the oral defense, must be completed again. Depending on the direction of the new proposal, the advisor and student may create a new committee. The second PhD examination must be completed within one semester of the first PhD Examination.

Students Must Pass the PhD Examination on the Second Attempt: If the student receives a non-pass upon undergoing a second PhD examination, the student will be deemed inadequately prepared for dissertation research, which may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Failure to Complete the Second PhD Examination within One Semester May Result in Dismissal from the Program: Except in special circumstances and with approval from the GPD, students who fail to complete their second attempt at the PhD Examination will automatically receive a second non-pass, which may be grounds for dismissal from the program.