

Procedures for Petition to PhD Candidacy

Adopted by the Physics Department February 2023

A. First, students wishing to pursue a Ph.D. degree must apply for candidacy by written petition to the Chairperson of the Physics Department ideally within one year of finishing all required courses except for research. This petition should be sent as an email no less than 2 weeks prior to the intended date for the Candidacy examination and it should address the items below. Included as part of the petitioning process should be a statement from the student's research advisor discussing part c below in particular. The Department Faculty will then evaluate the student's readiness and ability to do Ph.D. level research, based on the following considerations:

- a. The student's performance on the preliminary exam, expected to be at or above the PhD level.
- b. The student's performance in graduate course work.
- c. Ability to do independent research. The student's ability to do independent research will normally be judged by his or her performance in Master's degree work or the equivalent.

The department will take one of three actions on the petition:

- a. Approve the petition,
- b. Conditionally approve the petition subject to successful completion of specified requirements,
- c. Disapprove the petition.

Students failing to gain approval will be allowed to complete a Master's degree, subject to the requirements of that program.

B. The second step for admission to Ph.D. candidacy is the candidacy examination. The candidacy examination is taken after completion of most or all of the student's formal course work, and after work on a thesis topic has begun. The examination consists of two parts:

- a. A formal presentation of a dissertation topic (oral),
- b. Testing of the student's knowledge and ability in his or her area of specialization and in related areas. The test may be written or oral at the discretion of the student's committee.

The examination must be taken at least one year before completion of the student's dissertation in order to allow for enough time to complete the required dissertation credits. The exam will be administered by a faculty committee which includes but is not limited to the candidate's Ph.D. advisory committee. The formal talk may be given publically or to just the candidate's committee. If given publically, it may be counted as the required colloquium talk for the Ph.D. if advertised and offered in a public forum accessible to the university community.