Peabody Ph.D. Student Qualifying Exam Policy for Advancing to Candidacy
Approved 10/2020

Peabody College requires all PhD students to pass a qualifying exam as part of the general requirements to complete the PhD degree. The qualifying exam must be passed within four years of being admitted in the program. Each department is responsible for determining and conveying its qualifying exam guidelines. However, these guidelines cannot be in conflict with any college or Graduate School requirements. A one-year extension may be granted to complete this requirement, but a written petition to the Graduate School is required. Upon successful completion of this requirement, the PhD committee recommends to the Graduate School that the student be admitted to candidacy for the degree.

Number of Attempts: Students are allowed two opportunities to successfully pass the qualifying exam. Members of the student’s committee determine whether the student has passed, based on the stated requirements of the department.

Results: Committee members and the director of graduate studies are responsible for signing the qualifying exam results form and forwarding it to the Graduate School immediately after the examination. Each department is responsible for providing written notification to students of their results. If a student’s second attempt at passing the qualifying exam is deemed unsatisfactory, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Appeals: It is within the purview of the student’s committee and department to determine whether the student has passed the qualifying exam. If students believe their academic performance has not been judged reasonably or fairly, they should discuss the matter with the director of graduate studies and/or department chair. If the concerns cannot be resolved at the department level, students can request further review of the issues in question by the associate dean of graduate education. If the concerns remain unresolved at the college level, students may appeal the outcome to the Graduate School.

For detailed information regarding the stages, requirements, and timeframe for completing the PhD degree, please refer to the Graduate School Catalog (https://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/documents/graduate.pdf).