

Specific Information for the Qualifying Examination in Animal Biology

Introduction

The goal of the qualifying examination is to evaluate the student's eventual ability to pursue independent research. Evaluative questions based on coursework and on the proposed area of research are appropriate. Student should demonstrate mastery of the breadth and depth of animal biology. Student will choose at least two disciplinary areas of animal biology to defend in depth. Statistics is not an acceptable choice of disciplinary area in this context. The graduate advisors as a group will have final approval as to appropriateness of these two areas or potentially determine that the initial choices are not sufficiently distinct. Students should also demonstrate independent and creative thinking and the ability to synthesize broad concepts with critical evaluation.

Committee membership

The qualifying examination committee consists of five members, at least four of which are to be members of the UCD Academic Senate. Three to four members are typically members of the Animal Biology Graduate Group and one to two members are not members of the Animal Biology Graduate Group. The major professor is not to be part of the qualifying examination committee but other members of the mentoring committee may be members of the qualifying examination committee. The student discusses potential members with the mentoring committee and forwards names of at least eight potential members of the qualifying examination committee to the graduate advisor. The graduate advisors as a group meet briefly with the major professor to discuss rationale for choices. The graduate advisors as a group will determine the five members of the qualifying examination committee to be forwarded to the Graduate Dean as the nominees from the Animal Biology Graduate Group. Typically, this list will include at least three of the student's choices. The selection of initial names needs to be forwarded by all students by the end of winter quarter (5th quarter) to the graduate advisor. This will allow organized assignment to QE committees. This should be sufficient time for the final list of names can be forwarded to the Graduate Dean during the sixth quarter of residence, allowing the student to take the examination during or before the seventh quarter. Students planning to take the qualifying examination earlier need to initiate the process earlier such that potential nominees can be forwarded to the Graduate Dean the quarter preceding the quarter of examination.

Examination format

Students should meet with each member of the qualifying examination committee individually prior to the examination. The typical examination will be approximately 3 hours in length with half of the examination addressing integrative animal biology in the general context and no more than half focusing more on the individual research proposal and area of research. The chair of the qualifying examination will determine the order of questioning. Student should expect to leave the room for a very few minutes at the beginning of the examination. Student will give a brief research presentation (15 minutes) generally without pre-prepared visual aids. To facilitate examination of integrative abilities and critical reasoning related to the research proposal, student will provide a written research proposal (3-5 pages) at least one week prior to the examination.

This information is in addition to UC Davis Graduate Council Policy on Doctoral Qualifying Examinations (GC2005-02).

The following link may provide helpful information in preparing for your qualifying examination
http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/qualifying_exam.html