Oral Qualifying Exam Checklist

The main objective of the Oral Qualifying Exam is to ensure that doctoral students have successfully begun the transition from formal coursework to engagement in research work. The exam consists of a presentation on a topic chosen by the student, in consultation with the chair of the two-person committee. The presentation is expected to reflect careful research of the topic and to demonstrate that the student has understood both critical points and the larger physics context of the topic under investigation. The role of the chair is not to supervise a research project but to be a source of advice and help in studying the topic. While students that are already actively engaged in research will naturally choose a topic within the field of their own research, they should not simply present a summary of their work. An important aspect of the project is that the student consult several research papers in the field, as this is a key element in doing original research.

Completion of this checklist at the time of the Oral Quals helps ensure that these goals are met.

The completed checklist is to be signed by the committee members and returned to the Graduate Program Office (LGRT 1131).

1. The committee will check off that the following items were discussed and that recommendations were provided to the Ph.D. candidate:

   Candidate’s professional aspirations
   - Recommendations (e.g. make an IDP, go to career fairs, conferences in the subject)

   Knowledge of literature in the subject
   - Recommendations (e.g. suggest literature, go to journal clubs, seminars)

   Broader knowledge of physics
   - Recommendations (e.g. suggest literature, colloquium, courses)

   Mathematical/computational/experimental skills (as appropriate)
   - Recommendations (e.g. machine shop course, math course, etc. - grad or undergrad)

   Speaking skills
   - Recommendations (e.g. ESL course, practice talks within group or with other grads, TA)
2. The chair of the committee will provide here a summary of the Oral Quals, including the decision to pass or fail. One or two paragraphs (not exceeding one page) is ideal.