

Therapeutics and Pharmacology Program Candidacy Exam

When?

Petition for candidacy by the end of the second year of enrollment, deadline for applying is Aug 31st. Don't wait until August to do this (it takes around four weeks to get this done, see below)

Who?

Students in good academic standing who have completed three rotations (or gotten waiver), completed [GS21 1017](#) Foundations of Biomedical Research, completed GS21 1051 The Ethical Dimensions of the Biomedical Sciences, completed two online ethics modules (Responsible Authorship and Publication, and Data Acquisition and Management), taken a scientific writing course (GS21 1152, [GS03 1111](#), [GS04 1811](#), [GS07 1092](#)), completed the required TAP course (GS04 1103 Principles of Therapeutics), and taken six credit hours of electives.

How?

STEP 1: Fill out the "Petition for the PhD Candidacy Examination" form found on the [Forms Page](#) – picking a chair and four additional members. Chair has to be from the TAP program for primary TAP students. TAP 2nd ARCs need to have one member from TAP on their committee. If you have a 2nd ARC, be sure to check with that program what their requirements are (usually someone from that ARC needs to be on the committee). If you don't fulfill that program's requirements, you will not be able to fix this later – so do pay attention to this. Your advisor cannot be on the committee; at least two committee members must not have served on your Advisory Committee, and at least one member's research must lie outside your major discipline.

Submit the petition by noon on the first Wednesday of the month to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC), which meets on the second Wednesday of the month to get an answer within two weeks of that meeting.

STEP 2: If you choose to go with the “on-topic” candidacy option, you will prepare a F31-style proposal on the topic of your planned PhD dissertation. You will also choose three topics for the ‘breadth of knowledge’ assessment that are distinct from your dissertation research jointly with your exam committee chair. The chair will then poll the exam committee to solicit some breadth of knowledge questions and will provide you with a question on each of these three areas. Pick one of the questions and set your clock ticking for the candidacy exam. Check out the site [here](#) for helpful tips and sample proposals.

If you choose to go with the “off-topic” candidacy option, then you will provide the Examination Committee a single page of the specific aims of the proposed dissertation project and three abstracts of potential off-topic proposals for the examination. The Examination Committee will recommend one of these three topics for your full proposal, but you have a choice to go with one of the others if you wish. Depth of Knowledge will be assessed from questions related to the proposal and Breadth of Knowledge may address areas of dissertation research.

STEP 3: Schedule candidacy exam and book a room for it. Schedule this for a minimum of two hours (usually last 1.5 hours) and at least six weeks after you have approval from the ASC and have chosen your three breadth of knowledge questions. That gives you four weeks for your two-part preparation (prepare for queries related to the breadth of knowledge question and prepare your on-topic proposal [1-page specific aims, 6-page proposal, ½” margins, Arial 11 font] and two weeks for the committee to review your proposal. Submit the proposal to the committee as well as to Academic Affairs for Turnitin Analysis (send to Bunny Perez). To book a room in the BSRB, use the link [here](#). To book a room elsewhere, inquire with your PI's administrative assistant for more information, if applicable. You can also use the resources of the Experimental Therapeutics Department or the department with which you are affiliated to book a room in your building.

STEP 4: Candidacy exam day – be prepared to present your dissertation and answer questions “on-topic” for the first 2/3rd of the allotted time. During the last 1/3rd of the oral exam, the committee will quiz you on your knowledge of the breadth areas.

Any questions? Reach out to your program coordinator, program directors, or the graduate school.