

ECE Qualifying Examination (QE) Guidelines

Background

- The qualifying examination (QE) will assess the ability and background of the student for the enrolled PhD programme.
- Each faculty/institute will define the form and operation procedures of the qualifying examination according to its own needs.
- A PhD student must pass the qualifying examination within 2 years after his/her initial registration.
- A PhD student who fails the qualifying examination on the first attempt may take the examination again. If the student fails the examination a second time, his/her study will be discontinued from the relevant PhD programme.
- The Advisory Committee of PhD or other doctoral degree programmes is intended to provide additional academic advice to the student during the coursework period, for the qualifying examination, and for the preparation of the thesis proposal.
- The new format will be effective from AY2023/2024 (students admitted in / after AY2023/2024). Other students may choose to use the old or new formats.

Objective

The qualifying examination (QE) will focus on the breadth of a PhD programme. It is aimed to train up a PhD student with solid academic and research background before a PhD student concentrates at his/her research topic with depth analysis. The fundamental assessment will have a major impact on a PhD student in a lifetime. This is a long-term goal with the impact of nurturing outstanding PhD graduates to be world-leading researches as well as world-class scientists.

Format of the Qualifying Examination (QE)

Written Qualifying Examination (QE)

1. Duration: It is a closed-book written exam lasting 3 hours.
2. Schedule/Announcement: There is one exam per semester; the exam time will be announced at least one semester in advance. (last working day of April and Nov. each year, e.g., 30 April 2024, 29 November 2024, etc.)
3. The Departmental Panel (DP): The DP consists of a minimum of three members (who hold the rank of Assistant Professor or above). The composition of the DP may be revised on a semester basis.
4. Research Streams: The DP identifies the research streams. The instructor in each stream provides one or two questions for the exam.
5. Textbook: The list of textbook information will be provided (by the course instructor or the DP) to the examinees for preparation.
6. Stream Selection: Each PhD student must choose three different streams, as advised/approved by their supervisor or thesis advisory committee.
7. Evaluation: The exam papers will be evaluated by the DP, with the results categorized as either "Pass" or "Not Pass."
8. Scoring: Each stream in the exam carries a weightage of 40 points. To achieve a "Pass" grade, a minimum score of 60 out of 120 is required from the selected three different streams.
9. If a student fails the QE on the first attempt, they have a second chance to take the QE examination. The student must pass the QE within the first two years of Ph.D. study.