
Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Rules

1. A student entering the Ph.D. program must start taking the qualifying exams from the first long semester they are in the program. Qualifying exams will be normally administered in each long semester right after the final exams period. Only the Fall and Spring semesters are classified as a long semester.
2. To become a candidate for a Ph.D., a student must pass the qualifying exams for at least three M.S. core courses. Three courses must be selected from the following subset of M.S. core courses:
 - 6329 - Object Oriented SE
 - 6352 - Performance of Computer Networks
 - 6360 - Database Design
 - 6362 - Software Architecture and Design
 - 6363 - Computer Algorithms
 - 6364 - Artificial Intelligence
 - 6367 - Software Testing, Validation & Verification
 - 6371 - Advanced Programming Languages
 - 6375 - Machine Learning
 - 6378 - Advanced Operating Systems
 - 6390 - Advanced Computer Networks
3. A student will receive either a failing or a passing grade for each exam he/she takes. There is no other intermediate grade.
4. First attempt on each of the three exams must be made in the first two semesters. Any failing grade from the first two semesters must be converted into a passing grade in the immediately following long semester. A student, therefore, has at most three semesters to pass the three qualifying exams.
5. A student must receive a passing grade in the exam of a given course in at most two attempts. A student cannot attempt an exam for a particular course, fail in it, and then decide to abandon it in favor of taking an exam for another course.
6. The departmental Ph.D. committee or student's Ph.D. supervisor may ask a student to take additional exams in specific areas in later semesters. The departmental Ph.D. committee or student's Ph.D. supervisor can also restrict the courses that a student can choose for his/her qualifying exam.
7. M.S. students: There are no time constraints imposed on an M.S. student, however, he/she has only two attempts to pass each of the three qualifying exams. A failing grade remains on the record and is not removed upon admittance to the Ph.D. program; it can be removed only if the student passes that exam in their second attempt. Performance in the qualifying exams (if any) taken by an M.S. student may also be used for making admission decisions if the student applies
8. Part-time Ph.D. students: The above timing rules apply to full-time students only. For part-time Ph.D. students, 1 long semester is added in all scenarios.