
Guidelines for Comprehensive Qualifying Exam (CQE)

A. Student's Qualification:

A PhD student is eligible for CQE only after the successful completion of at least 18 credits of coursework particularly taken for the PhD program (any credits transferred from MS are not counted).

B. Guidelines for the CQE:

1. The format and timeline of the CQE must be determined by the PhD Advisory Committee (PAC) in consultation with the PhD student and the CS Graduate Program Director. The PAC, CQE format and plan must be approved by the CS Graduate Program Director and the CS department chair before the exam is administered.
2. The CQE must be completed under the close supervision of the PAC. The committee members are also responsible for the administration of grading of the comprehensive-qualifying examination.
3. In making the CQE, the Committee should hold a meeting to discuss its contents to make sure that the exam's questions are within the scope and level of the student taking the exam. The Committee may also request other CS graduate faculty who are knowledgeable in the area of the student's background to assist in the exam.
4. The duration of the exam is a maximum of eight (08) hours. The eight (08) hour duration of CQE can be split into two to three sessions over one to three days.
5. CQE must assess the student on three to six topics.
6. A CQE exam, if taken at the later stage (e.g., after the 3rd year) of a student's PhD program, is recommended to include 'research' as a topic with which the student's research achievements and potential will be assessed. Such a CQE may include fewer topics (e.g., four, including research).
7. It is not required to have a one-to-one map between a topic and an academic course, however such a correspondence can be helpful.
8. The materials to be included in the exam are at the senior and graduate levels, which relate to CS graduate courses and relevant topics.
9. The exam can be a closed-book, open-book, or a combination of both. If closed book, data or any other relevant material may be supplied.
10. A single faculty member will examine the student in **NO** more than three (03) areas/topics and **NO** more than 50% of the total grade.
11. Sample questions may be made available by the Committee for the students taking the exam.
12. Each question should specify the relative weight so that the student may properly allot time for each question.
13. As the individual questions are sometimes made up and graded by different teachers, students are advised to start a new sheet for each question.
14. The Committee will hold a meeting to discuss the grading, results, and will prepare a report to the PhD EAS Program Committee (PPC) or Dean of the College of Science and Engineering.
15. The decision on the final result of the exam is to be made only after appropriate discussion with the PPC and all other faculty associated with the exam.
16. If a student fails the CQE for the first time, he or she may attempt a second time within six (06) months.