

## Written Candidacy Exam Rules for Graduate Students:

1. The written candidacy exam must be taken by all graduate students enrolled in the Physics PhD program at the earliest time it is offered after they have completed two semesters of coursework. Note: A student who has not been approved for an exception, has received a registration notice, fails to appear to the scheduled written candidacy exam will have forfeited their attempt and must take the next exam as their second attempt at the next offering.
2. The passing grade for the candidacy exam is 50% averaged over all six subjects with the minimum passing score for each subject being 30%.
3. Students are provided with two attempts to pass the written candidacy exam. In case a student fails during the first attempt, the student needs to retake the exam during the earliest available offering of the written candidacy exam. **In this case students be allowed to retake whatever sections they want so that after the retake they must have an overall average greater than 50% and each section score must be above 30%, where if a section is taken twice the highest of the two scores is used to compute the average.**
4. The time granted for the second attempt is  $1.5N$  hours, where  $N$  is the number of the subjects to retake
5. If a student does not pass in the second attempt, the student will not continue in the PhD program and **may leave the program with a terminal MS degree if they qualify for one. In cases of failing the exam for a second time, where pursuing a terminal, non-thesis master's degree is not an option, the student may be dismissed from the program.**
6. To avoid biases, each student will be assigned a written candidacy exam identification number (WCEID) the week after the registration e-mail is sent. The student's WCEID will be assigned and sent to the student via e-mail by the Graduate Candidacy Committee (GCC) support staff person. The student will use their assigned WCEID instead of their name in the written candidacy exam paperwork (and if applicable, in the appeal).
7. If a student is enrolled in the MS program in good standing (a minimum of 3.0 GPA) and wishes to take the PhD written candidacy exam earlier, the student may do so, provided the graduate director approves it. This needs to be documented with justification from the graduate director. This will be counted as the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt for the student.
8. **Exceptions:** A student may request in writing an exception to rules 1 or 2. Requests for exceptions must include supporting documentation, if applicable, and will be reviewed and approved by the physics graduate director and/or the Graduate Curriculum and Affairs Committee (GCAC). Requests for an exception must be received by 2 weeks prior to the exam, except in the case of emergencies. Examples of these exceptions include, but are not limited to:
  - (i) a student wants to take the candidacy exam earlier and move on to research.
  - (ii) a student has been advised not to take one or more of the core courses during their first/second semester due to required additional preparation. This exception should only apply to rule #1.
  - (iii) the student's health requires it; medical documentation is required.
9. **Appeals:** A student may appeal the results of the written candidacy exam. Appeals must include supporting documentation, if applicable, and will be reviewed. Appeals must be submitted within 1 week after distribution of exam scores. In general, research productivity will not be considered as a valid reason to appeal the results of the exam.
10. To appeal the results of the written candidacy exam, a student should:

- (i) Send an e-mail to [soto@ucf.edu](mailto:soto@ucf.edu) with subject title: “Appeal Written Candidacy Exam Results”
- (ii) In the e-mail, include the assigned written candidacy exam identification number (WCEID), and petition (appeal)
- (iii) Include supporting documentation, if any. The student must remove any personal identifiable information (name, UCFID, etc.) and instead, include the assigned written candidacy exam identification number (WCEID) at the top-right-hand corner of each page.
- (iv) Allow the GCAC 10 business days to review and respond to appeal
- (v) After 10 business days from receipt of the appeal, the decision of the GCAC will be communicated in an e-mail to the student.

If for any reason the GCAC is unable to decide about the appeal and/or need additional information/clarification, the student will receive an e-mail request/notification. Once the student provides the additional information/clarification, allow another 10 business days for the GCAC to review and consider the additional information/clarification before a decision is made and communicated to the student. The decision of the GCAC after reviewing an appeal is final.