

## Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism

### Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations: Guidelines and Regulations

Ph.D. candidates are required to pass the **Core Examination** and **Field Study** before proceeding to the doctoral dissertation. The Core Examination and Field Study are to be completed during the second year of study. Students must declare their intention to take the examination by May 31 of their first year (Term 3).

#### General

1. The **Core Examination** is to be taken during a designated week in **September** (Term 4) or **February** (Term 5). Candidates have until **May 15** (Term 6) to submit the **Field Study**, and until **June** to have the **Thesis Proposal** approved.
2. Candidates are required to **declare by May 31** (Term 3) their intention to take the core examination in either September or February. Candidates are also required to declare their intention to take the Field Study by May 31. This should be done in writing (including by e-mail) to the Program Coordinator.
3. Any request for an exception to these regulations because of special circumstances (e.g., because of illness) must be put in writing and approved by the Graduate Committee.

**The Core Examination.** A qualifying examination in an area of concentration established by the Centre faculty for all students, to be taken during a designated week in September or February. This consists of a written examination based on a reading list of fifty books or equivalents (chapters/articles). The exam is assigned both a Pass/Fail and a numeric grade, the latter to be recorded only internally within the CSTC. At the Centre, 70% is considered a passing grade, and grades of 85% and over carry the designation "With Distinction." The student is notified of the results of the exam by the Chair of the examining committee. A candidate may fail and retake the Core Examination once (at the next opportunity, one term later). A candidate who fails the Core Examination a second time will be required to withdraw from the program.

1. Candidates will have two sittings of 4 hours each, two days apart, in which to write this examination. This format recognizes the scope and diverse range of the materials covered. No books are allowed in the examination room, however, candidates may bring written notes into the room (see below).
2. During the first sitting candidates will be required to answer eight (8) out of twelve (12) questions based on terms/passages drawn from works by approximately 80 authors (or equivalent). These will be short answer questions.
3. During the second sitting, candidates will be required to answer three (3) out of a choice of five (5) longer, synthetic questions. These will be longer essay-type answers and questions will be sent, via email, one week in advance. Candidates may bring up to three

sheets of written notes into the room (**one per question, single-sided, font no smaller than 10-point**).

4. The resources allowed will be a computer with MS-Word (provided by the program, and without internet access). Candidates may opt to hand write.
5. The examining committee will consist of three examiners, elected by the Centre faculty to serve on a rotating basis. One of these will act as chair. Normally the chair and at least one of the other two examiners will be members of the core faculty of the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism with full SGPS doctoral supervisory privileges.
6. The questions asked in the examination should provide reasonable coverage and depth of the wide and diverse range of materials on the Core reading list. To ensure that the candidates and examiners have a common understanding of what constitutes “reasonable coverage” and “reasonable breadth”, candidates are required to meet with the examining committee in order to discuss the examination and how to prepare for it. This meeting should take place within the time scale outlined below.
7. A candidate may fail and retake the Core Examination once. A candidate who fails the Core Examination a second time will be required to withdraw from the program.

### **Summary of Schedule - Core Exam:**

#### **Step 1**

Date by which candidate must declare intention to take examination

**Year I, May 31**

#### **Step 2**

Date by which the candidate must meet with chair of examining committee

**Year II, November 15**

#### **Step 3**

Core Examination to be taken during designated week

**Year II, September  
or  
Year II, February**

**The Field Study.** An opportunity to define an area of interdisciplinary theory related to the student's dissertation project. It involves submission of a written text, followed by an oral hearing in which this text is discussed with the student by a three-person committee.

Candidates will first prepare and submit a **20-25 page text** based on a list of 25 texts (over and above any texts drawn from the Core Examination list), and selected in consultation with the supervisor and second reader. In addition to this 20-25 page text, the student should include a Bibliography of 25 works, and a **2 page synopsis**. These three components (20-25 page text, bibliography and synopsis) must be submitted **no less than two weeks** prior to the oral hearing.

The text and bibliography will then be discussed with the student at a "field study hearing." The Field Study committee consists of the supervisor, second reader, and a third person chosen by the Director in consultation with the supervisor and student. The Field Study (written submission and oral discussion) is assigned a Pass/Fail. Candidates have until **May 15** of their second year to submit the written components, with the oral hearing to occur within 2-3 weeks of submission. A candidate may fail and retake the Field Study once. A candidate who passes the Core Examination but fails the Field Study twice will be required to withdraw from the Program.

The Field Study bears a close relationship to the dissertation and can be thought of as something like a potential introduction to it, though it may in practice be significantly modified in the process of writing the dissertation. A short, **4-5 page Thesis Proposal** will be due 2 weeks after the Field Study hearing. This document may incorporate the 2-page synopsis, appropriately modified in the light of discussion, but must also contain a chapter or section outline. The student must discuss the proposal with his/her committee prior to submitting it to the Graduate Studies Committee. Final approval of the Thesis Proposal by the Graduate Studies Committee will be understood as the Program's approval for the candidate to proceed with the proposed dissertation project.

The objective of the study is to help Ph.D. candidates define the field within which they plan to develop a thesis project. The purpose is not, therefore, to offer a literature review but rather to stake out, and defend, a terrain that will frame the thesis. Overall, the text and the bibliography should represent four months of work.

### **Summary of Schedule - Field Study and Thesis Proposal:**

#### **Step 1**

Date by which candidate must declare intention to schedule the study

**Year I, May 31**

#### **Step 2**

Date by which candidate must submit the written

**Year II, May 15**

components of the Field Study

**Step 3**

Hearing date, determined by the candidate in consultation with the committee

**Year II, normally 2–3 weeks after written submission**

**Step 4**

Date by which candidate must communicate hearing date to Program Coordinator

**Six (6) weeks before proposed hearing date**

**Step 5**

Date by which Thesis Proposal must be submitted to and discussed with supervisory committee

**Year II, June**  
(2 weeks after Field Study hearing)