UNIVERSITY QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

You should begin defining and preparing for your thesis research as soon as you have passed the Ph.D. Preliminary exam. You should plan on taking the University Qualifying Examination about one year after passing the preliminary exam. UCSD does not permit students to continue in the graduate study for more than four years without passing this examination.

The University Qualifying Examination is an oral exam in which you present your thesis proposal to a university-wide committee. After passing this exam, you are “advanced to candidacy”.

**Passing the University Qualifying Examination by the end of your third year of study is highly recommended**

Scholarship Requirements

☐ You must have a GPA of 3.0 or above in upper division and graduate coursework, with a total of no more than eight units of “F” and/or “U” grades.

EXAM PROCEDURES

Appointment of the Doctoral Committee

1. Your doctoral committee conducts the qualifying examination, supervises the preparation of and approves the dissertation, and administers the final examination.

2. Discuss with your research advisor your plan to take the qualifying exam. Selection of a committee, which consists of five faculty members, needs to be made in close consultation with your advisor, who will chair the committee. Selection of members should be from faculty who have similar research interests to you, and who will understand the research and be able to make positive contributions to it.

3. The standard committee consists of three members from ECE and two from outside ECE who shall represent academic specialties that differ from your chosen specialty, including one tenured, outside member. At least five of the committee members shall be officers of instruction and no fewer than four shall hold professional titles of any rank.

4. Any number of additional members can be added to the committee.

5. Once your exam committee is formed, you should consult an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor at least four weeks prior to your qualifying exam. The Advisor will then submit an Appointment of the Doctoral Committee form to the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). This form must be submitted to OGS at least two weeks prior to your qualifying exam.

6. A qualifying exam may not be held until ECE receives approval of your doctoral committee from OGS.

7. For a variety of reasons, your doctoral committee may need to be reconstituted. To request a reconstitution of the membership of your committee, you must consult an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor. The Advisor will then submit a Request for Reconstitution of Committee Membership form to
OGS, with the reasons for requesting the change. This form must be submitted to OGS at least two weeks prior to your qualifying exam.

**Initial Preparation**

1. Once your exam committee is formed, you must liaise with the members to decide upon a date and time for your examination. Try to set a date and time for your exam six weeks in advance. Faculty members are very busy and are frequently out of town, especially during summer months. Keep this in mind when planning to schedule your exam.

2. You would normally take the qualifying exam during a regular quarter. You may, however, schedule the exam during the summer or between quarters to accommodate the availability of faculty.

3. Remember that a qualifying exam may not be held until ECE receives approval of your doctoral committee from OGS. Keep in mind that it takes at least two weeks to obtain committee approval from OGS.

4. You should consult an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor at least four weeks prior to your qualifying exam. You will be required to provide the following information relating to your exam:
   - Date and time of exam
   - Names of your exam committee members (including co-chairs, if applicable)
   - Title of your research presentation

5. Once you’ve provided this information to an ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor, the following arrangements will be made for your exam:
   - Room booking
   - Preparation of required forms
   - Preparation of your file for the exam committee
   - An exam confirmation will be sent to you via email once initial arrangements have been made for your exam
   - An exam announcement will be sent to you and your exam committee via email two weeks prior to the exam
   - An exam reminder will be sent to you and your exam committee via email two days prior to the exam

6. Prior to your exam, obtain a key for the examination room and the projector cabinet (if applicable) from the ECE General Administrator, who is located in EBU1 2806.

**Exam Format**

1. All committee members must be present during the exam, and the exam is closed to the public.

2. The qualifying examination is about 2 hours in duration. You should be prepared to answer questions from the committee both during and following the presentation. It is expected that the presentation will include your research accomplishments to date and your thesis proposal. Your research topic for this exam needs to be related to what will eventually become your dissertation topic. You will be evaluated on whether or not your topic is suitable for a dissertation.

3. Plan to give a practice talk to your advisor and/or fellow students at least one week before your exam. This allows you plenty of time to make revisions and helps to strengthen your advisor’s confidence in you.
Results of the Exam

1. The committee will decide if the work and proposal has adequate content and reasonable chance of success. They may require that you modify the proposal and may require a further review.

2. You will be informed of the outcome following the end of the exam.

3. The ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor will notify you via email when your forms are ready for collection.

4. After collecting the following forms from the ECE Graduate Student Affairs Advisor, you must pay a candidacy fee to the cashier before submitting the forms to OGS by the last day of the quarter in which you will receive your C. Phil. degree:
   i. Report of the Qualifying Examination and Advancement to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy; and
   ii. Graduate Degree and Diploma Application

Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy and Award of the C. Phil. Degree

1. The Candidate of Philosophy (C. Phil.) degree will be awarded on the last day of the same quarter that you pass your qualifying exam and file your advancement to Ph.D. candidacy form (except for exams taken during the Summer or between quarters, for which the degree will be awarded on the last day of the following quarter). NOTE: You must be registered in the quarter in which the degree is awarded.

2. Shortly after submitting your forms to OGS, you will receive a letter confirming that your application for candidacy for the Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering has been approved.

3. Your diploma will be mailed 3-6 months after the end of the quarter. The diplomas are mailed directly to your permanent mailing address. Therefore, you must check your address for accuracy on TritonLink (http://tritonlink.ucsd.edu/) to avoid delays in delivery. The award date on your C. Phil. will be the last day of the quarter. The actual date of your exam will be recorded on your academic record.

4. The advancement date will be listed as the date that you submit your forms to OGS. If you take the qualifying exam between quarters, the advancement date will be recorded as the first day of the first quarter of enrollment following the exam.

5. The in-candidacy stage is devoted primarily to independent study and research and to the preparation of the dissertation. A minimum interval of three quarters of academic residence must elapse between advancement to candidacy and final defense and submission of the dissertation.

6. Students who are advanced to candidacy may register for any ECE course on an S/U basis.

Non-Resident Tuition for Students in Ph.D. Candidacy

1. If you are a California non-resident or an international student, you will receive a 100% reduction in nonresident tuition beginning with the first quarter following advancement to candidacy and ending three years later. After three years, if you continue to enroll, you will be charged the full nonresident tuition rate. The fee amount will be assessed automatically. NOTE: Non-resident doctoral students will be eligible ONLY if they file their paperwork with OGS on or before the first day of instruction; otherwise, the reduction will begin the next quarter.

2. Campus policy to extend the time for up to three quarters of approved leave of absence. There will be no further extensions or exceptions granted.