

Guidelines for Ph.D. Qualifying Examination in Transportation Engineering

The Departmental Qualifying Examination is the first of three examinations that a doctoral candidate is required to pass to complete the Ph.D. degree. The exam may be taken toward the end of an M.S. degree, prior to seeking admission to the Ph.D. program, or within the first two semesters of full-time graduate study in the Ph.D. program. This examination is intended to determine the candidate's ability to successfully pursue a research project at a level appropriate for the doctorate. The examination will be used to evaluate the student in two distinct areas: (1) knowledge pertaining to the student's field of study and (2) the student's independent research abilities. The Transportation Engineering Qualifying Examination consists of both a written and an oral component. It is administered by three faculty members in the transportation group. The written examination will be a treatise on a topic assigned by the faculty and will provide the basis to assess the student's ability to formulate a hypothesis and design an experiment to test the hypothesis. This treatise will be reviewed by all members of the examining committee. The oral exam will follow completion of the written component and will be conducted by all three members of the examining committee. Although students are not required to take particular courses in preparation for the oral examination, the scope of the examination will be associated with several of the transportation graduate courses offered by the department. The candidate can develop a sense of the level of knowledge expected to be demonstrated during the examination by studying the appropriate syllabi and/or discussing the course content with faculty experienced in teaching the courses.

At the discretion of the committee, the student may be allowed to retake the qualifying examination once at a date specified by the committee.