

Summary of the Candidacy Exam (Updated in November 2017)

The CLaSP candidacy exam consists of two steps, namely Step-1 and Step-2 exams.

Step-1 is an oral exam to primarily test course knowledge. The objectives are (1) to assess the student's breadth of knowledge and quantitative skill sets and (2) to identify, if any, weakness(es) in the student's knowledge base and quantitative skill sets and then to recommend a remedy for such weakness. Step-2 includes a research-based written report and an oral presentation followed by an oral exam. The primary objective is to **assess the examinee's research potential and likelihood to successfully finish the Ph.D. program and to become an independent researcher. The student advances to PhD candidacy after passing the Step-2 exam.**

Students are not allowed to take Step-2 until they pass the Step-1.

Phrases with green fonts are where flexible options exist; please see the full proposal for details.

	Step-1	Step-2
Time	Recommended: May of the 1 st academic year. No later than the end of the 2 nd academic year.	Normally in the following year after passing Step-1 (first 2-weeks in each semester is recommended)
Prerequisites	(1) Finish both core courses; (2) Cumulative GPA ≥ 3.3	(1) Pass Step-1; (2) Cumulative GPA > 3.3
Scope	2 core courses + 1 research related course (+ advisor's list of recommended subjects) Remarks: "Skill set" information sheet provided to both students and committee	The research progress made by the time of examination. Written report could be a nearly finalized manuscript, but should at least include a research proposal developing a question and methodology to be addressed during candidacy.
Exam committee	4 members (chair, cognate, 2 members), plus the advisor in attendance as a silent observer (cognate: within CLaSP but from a different field, i.e., climate vs. space)	4 members (chair, cognate, 2 members), plus the advisor in attendance as a silent observer. Same criteria for cognate apply as in Step-1.
Procedure of actual exam	Review of examinee's dossier; 2-minute self introduction; 2.5 hours exam (with a 10-minute break in the middle to refocus and discuss)	Written report due 2 weeks before the exam; Review of examinee's dossier; 2-minute self introduction; 20-30 minutes of uninterrupted presentation ; followed by a 1-1.5 hour oral exam; evaluation sheet completed by each committee member Remarks: Course knowledge can be tested in the oral exam for (1) conditional pass of Step-1 and (2) the core course not in Step-1
Outcome (decided on the spot)	(a) Pass; (b) Conditional pass with further coursework required; (c) Fail with retake (option for first-time taker only); (d) Fail (<i>applies only to exam retakers</i>)	(a) Pass (b) Fail with retake (c) Fail with no retake
Feedback	(a) Official notification letter; (b) (recommended) Meet with individual committee members	