

Summary of the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam (Updated in January 2019)

The CLaSP Ph.D. qualifying exam consists of two steps, namely Step 1 and Step 2 exams.

Step 1 is an oral exam designed to test course knowledge and synthesize knowledge within three individual courses. The objectives are (1) to assess the student's breadth of knowledge and quantitative skill sets and (2) to identify any weakness(es) in the student's knowledge and quantitative skills and recommend a course of action to address these weakness(es).

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, likelihood to successfully finish the Ph.D. program, and ability to become an independent researcher. **Passing the Step 2 exam marks advancement to Ph.D. candidacy.**

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

Text in green font indicates where flexible options exist; please see the full procedures 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 year after passing Step 1
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 Remarks: Skill set sheets for each course will be provided to students and committee	The research progress made by the time of examination. Written report could be a nearly finalized manuscript or a research proposal with preliminary results.
Exam committee	4 members (chair, cognate, 2 members), plus the advisor in attendance as a silent observer. The cognate should be in 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 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 as defined under (a) Conditional Pass specifications from Step 1, and/or (b) skill sets from a core course NOT examined in Step 1
Outcome (decided on the spot)	(a) Pass; (b) Conditional pass; (c) Fail with retake (option for first-time examinee only); (d) Fail (<i>applies only to exam retakes</i>)	(a) Pass (b) Fail with retake (c) Fail with no retake
Feedback	(a) Official notification letter from Graduate Programs Chair and typed report from committee chair	