



## Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences

**TO:** Students standing for the Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination (ACE)

**FROM:** Randi B. Silver, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean, WCGSMS

To take the Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination, please adhere to the following protocol:

1. At least **three weeks** prior to the oral examination date, inform the Registrar of the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences (445 East 69th Street, Olin Hall, Room 412, (212) 746-6565) of your intention to take the exam. At that time, obtain from the Graduate School office:
  - a. **Regulations for the Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination.**
  - b. **Application for Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination form.** The appointment of the examination committee and chairperson is done by the Program of Study.
2. Complete the Application for Examination form and return it at least **two weeks** prior to the date of the examination to the graduate school office.

cc: Program of Study Directors



# Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences

## **Regulations for the Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination (ACE)**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of the Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination is to demonstrate that the student has attained a breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding commensurate with the high standards of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and that the student is prepared to undertake full time thesis research. Accordingly, this examination should be a rigorous and meaningful determination of the student's ability to employ and interpret information in an area of specialization and in a more general context. The Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination is not to be a detailed exposition of a student's proposed thesis or in any way construed as a preliminary defense of thesis.

### **2. Content of the Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination**

The Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination shall consist of a written and an oral part, both carefully designed to show that:

- a. the student has a thorough understanding of the development, present status and direction of the specific subject under study.
- b. the student has adequate fundamental knowledge of the research topic selected, of research methodology and data, and the ability to interpret results.
- c. the student can process, organize, evaluate and present scientific data clearly. The written and oral examinations are separate vehicles and will be graded independently.

### **3. Examination Timing and Scheduling**

The Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination will be completed by the end of the second year of residence. The date for the examination will be determined by the Examining Committee, in accordance with policies established by each Program.

#### **4. Examining Committee**

The Examining Committee consists of a minimum of 3 examiners and a chairperson. All members of the examining committee are selected by the Program of Study. Neither students nor prospective thesis advisors participate in ACE Committee selection. The ACE Chairperson is also selected by the Program and is not subject to approval by the Dean or Associate Dean of the graduate school. Should a member of the Committee be unable to attend the examination, the Program must designate another individual to participate in the examination.

#### **5. Student Preparation**

Three months before the Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination the student will be informed of the form, content and dates of the written and oral examinations by either the Program Director or a Program designee. Students will consult with the Program Director on appropriate areas of study and methods of preparation. Program Directors will, in consultation with the faculty of the Program, promulgate guidelines designed to aid the student in this endeavor. A study period of approximately 6 weeks is allotted to the candidate to research and prepare the written portion of the examination. Students will distribute the written exam to the entire committee 2 weeks in advance of the examination meeting.

#### **6. Evaluation**

The written and oral examinations are to be graded separately. The grades for each examination are “Pass”, “Table”, “Fail” or “Pass for Master of Science Only”. Candidates must pass the written exam before standing for the oral portion of the exam. A grade of “Pass” on both the written and oral examination is required in order to proceed on to Doctoral Candidacy. The determination of “Pass”, “Table”, “Fail” or “Pass for Master of Science Only” rests exclusively with the members of the Examining Committee. For a student to “Pass” or “Pass for Master of Science Only” on either the written or oral portions of the examination, four votes are required. For a student to “Fail”, a majority vote of the Examining Committee is required. The examination is tabled if the requirements of a vote to “Pass” or “Fail” or “Pass for Master of Science Only” are not met.

Following the oral examination the student is excused, and the Chairperson conducts without discussion a preliminary, anonymous, written ballot with all members of the Examining Committee voting equally in consideration of the student’s performance on the oral examination only. The Chairperson will announce the results of this non-binding evaluation, and then allow the Committee to discuss the student’s performance. Following discussions, a second signed ballot is taken from all members of the Examining Committee for the final grade on the oral examination.

For Tabled exams, deficiencies in either the written or oral examination can be corrected as directed by members of the Examining Committee in consultation with the Program Director and in accordance with the policies of the Program and Graduate School. The student should be informed of the results of the examination and any other actions on the part of the Examining Committee after the conclusion of the Oral Examination. Tabled exams must be retaken within 2 months, and final disposition of the Admission-to-Doctoral Candidacy Examination must be no later than 3 months from the date of the original written examination.



# Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences

## Application for Admission to Doctoral Candidacy Examination

*(Please type or print all information)*

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

### \*EXAMINING COMMITTEE

- |              |       |         |
|--------------|-------|---------|
| 1. Examiner: | _____ | _____   |
|              | Name  | Program |
| 2. Examiner: | _____ | _____   |
|              | Name  | Program |
| 3. Examiner: | _____ | _____   |
|              | Name  | Program |

**Additional Members:** *(If required by Program of Study)*

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson:**

6. \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Program Chairperson or Director:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

**Date of Written Examination:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Oral Examination:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location/Room:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* **NOTE:** The Ace Examining Committee is different from the Thesis Special Committee.

## **Instructions for Application for Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination**

1. As a candidate for the degree of Ph.D., you must successfully complete the Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination. You should consult the Code of Legislation, the Regulations for the Admission-to-Doctoral-Candidacy Examination, and the specific Program of Study regulations for this exam.
2. This document must be submitted to the Graduate School **two weeks** prior to the date of the written portion of the exam.
3. Complete the Name of Student and the Examining Committee sections. No Examining Committee signatures are necessary.
4. Obtain the signature of the Program Chairperson or Director.
5. Complete the bottom two lines, indicating dates for the written and oral examinations and the time and room for the oral exam.
6. Upon completion of this form, submit the Application to the Weill Cornell Graduate School Office for review by the Dean or Associate Dean.
7. The examination will be scheduled and posted by the Weill Cornell Graduate School Office. Any changes on the application must be submitted in writing to the Weill Cornell Graduate School Office.