

Qualifying Exam

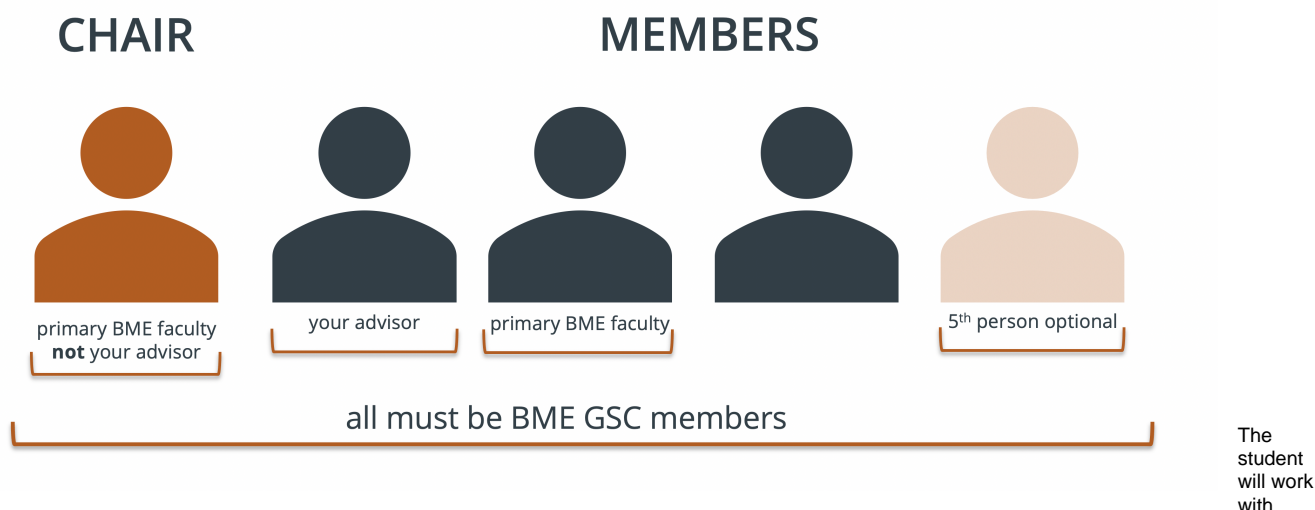
The Qualifying Exam takes place at the end of the first year of the program. The last day to complete the exam is August 31. In the spring semester of their first year, students attend a seminar presented by the Graduate Studies Committee Chair and the Graduate Advisor dedicated to explaining the process, providing necessary paperwork, and answering student questions.

Students who need to request an extension of the qualifying exam deadline can [do so here](#).



Beginning in 2022, we encourage students to begin scheduling qualifying exams in person again. The Graduate Studies Committee believes presenting in person develops stronger presentation skills and will offer students richer interaction with their committee members. Students may request a virtual exam if they have a health-related reason that prevents in person participation in the exam.

Choosing a Committee



their supervisor to build their qualifying exam committee. The committee must consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of five BME GSC faculty members, including the student's supervisor. The supervisor must be a member of the committee, and will participate in pre- and post-exam discussion but will refrain from questioning or commenting during the exam and will not be a voting member. The student is encouraged to meet with potential committee members during the selection process. At least two primary BME faculty members must participate on the committee. A primary BME faculty member other than the student's advisor must serve as the committee chair.

Written Component

The written component includes a research report, a teaching report, an academic report, and an individual development plan. The research report follows the NIH R21 format and is up to six pages in length plus references. The teaching report (1 page maximum) should include a list of courses for which the student has served as a Teaching Assistant (TA) and courses the student is interested in being a TA for in the future and why. Any guest lectures the student has given and other teaching related activities should also be included. The academic report should include the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), which is composed of the completed/current and planned coursework charts. The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is developed using myIDP (<http://myidp.sciencecareers.org>).

All first-year students are required to attend a seminar on the IDP in the fall and a seminar on the Qualifying Exam in the spring. Students can [review more specific information about the IDP](#), including an introduction to the Individual Development Plan, an IDP template and examples of completed IDPs. The IDP used at the Qualifying Exam will be requested at the proposal exam as well to track professional development and progress.

Oral Exam

For the oral exam, the student should have a detailed understanding of the field in which they are performing/proposing research and relevant techniques, and have thought about their specific design, including potential pitfalls and alternatives. The oral exam is a 20-minute presentation based on the written report and includes two parts: research and academic development. The student spends 15 minutes on research, and 5 minutes on the coursework, teaching, and development plan. Students may use slides and the presentation on research can follow the structure of the written report. The committee can ask questions during or after each part of the presentation. Questions cover the approved exam subject areas, completed coursework from the student's personalized learning plan, and items on the faculty rubric.

Students can find the qualifying exam information packet and the Intent to Qualify form in the [Qualifying Exam box folder](#). The information packet contains more robust instructions than are explained here and a helpful checklist. [Click here to access](#) the Intent to Qualify in DocuSign for easier signature collection.

After the Exam

Students who pass the exam [advance to candidacy](#). Students who pass the exam with conditions must resolve the conditions by the end of the next long semester before advancing to candidacy. Students who fail the exam must retake the exam by the end of the next long semester. Students who fail the exam twice will not be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program and may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to remain in the program as a master's degree seeking student.