

Taiwan International Graduate Program
Molecular and Biological Agricultural Sciences Program

Regulations of Qualifying Examination for the Advancement
to the Candidacy of Ph.D.

I. Format

The qualifying examination requires the submission of a research proposal with the consent of the student's thesis advisor(s). This includes a written proposal and an oral defense.

II. Eligibility

The student must have finished the lab rotation and passed items 1 + 2, as described in the following to apply for the qualifying examination in the next semester.

1. Complete a minimum of two core courses and gain six academic credits or more scored at 70 or above.

Core course name	Course credits
Molecular and Cellular Approaches for Biotechnologies	4
Advanced Plant Biology	3
Advanced Animal Biology	3
Advanced Microbiology	3

2. A total of three credits of elective course(s) and a score(s) of 70 or above.

III. Clauses

The student needs to take the first qualifying exam before the end of the second academic year and pass the qualifying examination before the end of the fifth semester.

1. Application information: There are two deadlines to apply for the qualifying examination each year- March 31st and October 31st
 - A. Proposal abstract: The student has to submit one abstract related to a research theme of the MBAS program to the Student Qualification Committee for review. The proposal can be the thesis project, the subject related to the thesis, or not related to the thesis.
 - B. Application submission: The student has to submit the following documents to the MBAS program through the online application:
 - (1) Thesis advisor's consent form (PDF format)
 - (2) QE application form (signed by thesis advisor(s)) (PDF format)
 - (3) Proposal abstract (Word format)
 - (4) CV (PDF format)
 - (5) Report of grades for courses (PDF format)

- C. The MBAS office will announce the application result after the Student Qualification Committee completes the reviewing work. If the result is “approved”, the student can proceed with the preparation of the written proposal and oral defense. If the result is “not approved”, the student needs to follow the committee’s comment to submit a new or revised abstract for the second review. The oral defense will be scheduled by the MBAS office after the application is approved.
2. The ad hoc committee of the student’s qualifying exam: an ad hoc committee composed of six to seven members will be called by the Student Qualification Committee. The student’s thesis advisor(s) must be included in the ad hoc committee list according to the policy of NCHU. The student’s advisor(s) can recommend up to three potential committee members, however, the final members will be decided by the Student Qualification Committee. The student’s thesis advisor(s) needs to assess the academic integrity and originality of the student’s written proposal as stage 1 of qualification (by conducting Turnitin software. Please refer to III.-3.-B.) and must be excused from the oral defense.
3. Evaluation of the written proposal’s academic integrity and originality:
- A. The student’s written proposal should be organized into “Title”; “Abstract”; “Objective and Specific Aims”; “Background; Rationale and Significance”; “Relevant/Preliminary Data” (optional); “Hypothesis”; “Research Design and Methods”; “Anticipated Results”; “Pitfalls”; and “References” for clarity of reading. The proposal should be single-spaced, font size “12”, and the content including figures and tables should be no more than 20 pages.
- B. Stage 1: The student’s thesis advisor(s) needs to use Turnitin software to do the similarity check on the written proposal and to sign their names on the receipt page of the Turnitin report to verify the academic integrity and originality of the written proposal is satisfactory.
- C. The student submits 1) the written proposal and 2) the Turnitin full report signed by the thesis advisor(s) in PDF format to the MBAS office at least a week before the oral defense day. Only after the office receives two documents the student can move on to Stage 2 and proceed oral defense evaluation.
4. Evaluation of oral defense:
- A. The oral defense of the qualifying examination will be held within six months after the application deadline. The student should prepare an oral presentation about 30 minutes. Evaluators of oral defense are the student’s ad hoc committee members except the student’s thesis advisor(s). During the oral defense, each oral-defense evaluator needs to give comments and mark the student’s performance based on:
- (1) The student’s understanding of the concept of the proposed research plus scientific knowledge in their area of interest.
- (2) The integrity and feasibility of the proposal.
- (3) The student’s research ability to identify a problem, ask appropriate research questions, use appropriate methods to analyze data, and summarize results.
- B. Each oral defense evaluator will grade the exam as “Pass” or “Fail”, based on both the written proposal and the oral defense. The examination will be recognized as a Fail if 1/2 (contained) or

more members grade “Fail”. The committee chair will collect the results and announce the conclusion to the student. If the student fails the first oral defense, the committee chair needs to inform the student’s thesis advisor(s) about the exam result and the student’s condition.

- C. Only one makeup examination is permitted if a student fails the first examination. The make-up examination will be scheduled by the ad hoc committee. If the student changes the title of his/her proposal, he/she has to re-apply for the qualifying exam. The student’s thesis advisor(s) has the option of sitting in the 2nd oral defense. The thesis advisor(s) cannot vote or answer/ask questions unless the oral-defense evaluators make the request. The student needs to complete the whole defense on their own.
5. The student’s ad hoc committee members including the thesis advisor(s) need to sign the NCHU PhD-Candidate Qualification Notification Form after the student passes the evaluation of the written proposal’s academic integrity, originality, and oral defense. The student is also eligible to continue the study of the Ph.D. dissertation. A student who fails both the initial and the makeup exams will be immediately disqualified from the program.
6. The MBAS office will report to the Student Qualification Committee about the progress and results of each student’s qualifying exam.