

1. During a committee meeting or via email with your committee, inquire about the availability of your committee during the approximate time you would like to do your candidacy (start this process at least a **MINIMUM of 2-4 MONTHS BEFORE YOU WANT TO START**). That timing does **not** mean come up with a single day and time. It means figure out what weeks and/or months your committee is available during your targeted candidacy dates. Keep in mind the committee must meet twice (at the very beginning of the exam and exactly 8 weeks later) and may have to meet a third time (if you fail one portion of the exam (written or oral) two weeks after the 8 week meeting to retake the failed component. Thus prepare to be available over a 10-week period (don't book anything major in weeks 9 and 10). The committee must also be available to receive and review your exam exactly 4 weeks after the first meeting (they have 1 week to review it and then return it to you with comments). Once you have the months or weeks defined, contact the Grad Chair in Biological Sciences. Give the approximate months/weeks that you are targeting for the exam, and also send a short paragraph that describes your thesis research.
2. The Grad Chair or Jaime will then ask the Graduate Studies Committee if anyone can act as Chair and External during the targeted months. Once we have a chair in place, the chair or Jaime will then proceed to book in all the meetings for the candidacy.
3. Two weeks before the initial meeting of the entire committee, you should meet with the Chair of your examining committee to review the procedure and clarify any questions you may have.
4. Prior to the initial meetings you are encouraged to ask to see Discovery Grant proposals from your advisor (or other individuals willing to share their proposals) as guides on how to prepare their own proposals, but need to ensure that they do not: 1) take ideas or wording from these proposals; or 2) pass these proposals on to other individuals without the express permission of the proposal author. Although there is a basic format of an NSERC, do not try to mimic the exact approach of these example NSERCs (they are not templates) as they might not fit your specific discipline or style.
5. You should come to the first meeting with **a minimum of three possible ideas** for your candidacy exam. The final topic will be determined during the first meeting when the entire committee discusses possible topics. At the beginning of the first meeting, the student is encouraged to present a PowerPoint of 1-2 slides summarizing their PhD topic and one slide per possible topics for the candidacy proposal.
6. The committee will most likely ask you to clearly define the topic in a short written paragraph (no more than 300 words, single spaced, 12 font) that should be emailed out **to the Chair** within 48 hours of the first meeting. This paragraph should **not** have details of your hypotheses, but should summarize the topic of the proposal, in a similar way to the Summary of a Discovery Grant (i.e., in that it should be in simple terms, and briefly describe the nature of the topic). The Chair will email the paragraph to the examining committee. You have four weeks **from the first meeting**, to write the proposal (see attached candidacy process document).