

## **CPE Comprehensive Exam: Summary of GSC Discussion Document**

### **Assignment**

- Topic independent from thesis topic, but may be in a related area.
- Assigned by advisor with approval of the committee.

### **Written Report**

- 1-2 page problem statement with 1 reference as a starting point.
- Follow NSF, NIH, DOE individual investigator format; 15 single spaced pages maximum, excluding references.
- Due 30 days from receipt of statement to submission to committee.
- Oral defense held only if the committee finds the written report adequate for defense.
  - If rejected, the process may start over at a new date defined by the committee.
  - A second rejection of the written proposal results in dismissal from the PhD program, with an option for a terminal MS degree.

### **Oral Defense**

- Oral defense no sooner than 2 weeks after submission of the written report.
- 20 – 30 minute presentation to the committee.
- 3 hour maximum for the exam.
- Questions may be submitted to the student via the committee chair during a 2 week period prior to the defense, or they may be asked following the presentation.
- Committee Decision Options:
  - Pass with Honors/Pass/Fail (with or without option to repeat one time).
  - Honors awarded only for exceptional performance on the written proposal and the oral defense.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- Ability to define an important research problem based on literature and knowledge of the field (single-investigator scope).
- Ability to define a hypothesis and to develop a logical method to test it.
- Ability to use fundamentals and prior knowledge to evaluate theory and data creatively.
- Demonstration of good written and oral technical communication skills.
- Ability to answer questions on both fundamental and broader impact of the research.

### **Other considerations regarding student work during the examination period**

- If the conditions of the student's stipend do not allow work on an unrelated topic, the Graduate Standards Committee as well as the thesis committee must approve the problem statement given the student as an adequate substitute.
- Ownership of intellectual property developed by the student during the exam will be determined by KU guidelines. This may vary depending upon whether the student is sponsored by a contract, grant, fellowship or unsupported by KU (academic credit only).

Accepted by unanimous faculty vote (10: 0) at the CPE faculty retreat January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010 subject to the following additions

- The Comprehensive exam will normally be held in the third year of graduate study.
- The oral defense of the Comprehensive report will normally be held within 2-4 weeks of the submission of the report.