

**Implementation Guidelines for the Ph.D. Candidacy Examination (CE)
Materials Science and Engineering (MSE)
School of Science and Engineering (SSE)
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen (CUHK(SZ))**

According to the *Principles of the Ph.D. Candidacy Examination* approved by the Graduate Panel, the following guidelines are proposed for implementation of the CE.

- **1. The Written Examination**

The Written Examination should be taken before the Oral Examination, and is scheduled twice a year:

- The first examination is held in March.
- The second examination is held in August.

- **2. Evaluation of Written Examination**

2.1 If student gets grade B + in any two lecture courses, the written examination can be exempted.

2.2 If a student receives a grade of B+ in only one lecture course, they are required to take the exam for MSE6001 Advanced Materials Science and Engineering. The passing mark is 5 out of 10. If the B+ grade is in MSE6001, the student must take the exam for an additional lecture course, also with a passing mark of 5 out of 10. The student will have 3 hours to complete the exam, and whether it is open-book or closed-book depends on the course instructor's requirements.

2.3 If student does not get any lecture course equal with or above grade B+, student needs to take the exam of course MSE6001 Advanced Materials Science and Engineering and choose another exam/paper from the courses offered in MSE programme most relevant to the thesis work. The passing mark for each designated area is 5 (the full mark is **10 for each course**).

- **3. The Oral Examination**

The oral examination should be arranged two months before the student's pre-candidacy due date. The oral examination should normally be taken within six months of passing the written examination, but in any case, as one part of the candidacy examination, **MUST NOT** exceed the maximum period of pre-candidacy, which is 24 months of full-time study for students entering the programme with a research master's degree, and 36 months for those without, as stated in clause 5.5 of the Code of Practice.

If the student meets the requirement 2.1 and gets approved by the relevant parties given in the application form. Her/his Oral Examination should be taken at least **SIX** months after the approval of his/her exempted application but cannot exceed the maximum period of pre-candidacy. If the student meets the requirements 2.2 & 2.3, the Oral Examination should be taken within a maximum period of pre-candidacy after passing of the Written Examination.

The maximum period CANNOT be exceeded unless extraordinary circumstances occurred, e.g., medical or family emergencies. In such cases, the maximum period can be further prolonged for **1** month, but an approval must be obtained from Board of Graduate Studies (BGS) WITHIN the pre-candidacy period the BGS. If otherwise, the student will receive a Fail for the Oral Examination. The Oral Examination can only be taken once.

The student needs to first prepare a Thesis Proposal and then give a presentation on the Thesis Proposal, the Thesis Proposal is required to be written in at least 3,000 words in English or 4,500 characters in Chinese (as dictated by the nature and requirement of the programme), with reference not included, and monitored by Graduate Panel, and may additionally include questions on general topics similar to the written examination but conducted in an oral format. The Thesis Proposal should contain at least the purpose of the Thesis and a survey of the related research field, and can also contain other contents, such as the research plan and possible research outcome.

The Oral Examination is examined by an Examination Committee which should be nominated by the student's supervisor(s) and approved by the Graduate Panel. The Examination Committee must consist of the supervisor and at least **2** faculty members. The supervisor cannot be the Chair of the Examination Committee and the **2** faculty members are suggested to be members of the Thesis Defense Committee. All members of the oral examination committee must hold the rank of Assistant Professor (AP) or higher. The chair of the committee is responsible for organizing the CE oral exam, coordinating the schedule, collecting evaluation forms, and rescheduling exams if necessary.

The student should give a **30** minutes presentation (with a minimum of 20 minutes) , which is followed by a **20** minutes question/answer session open to anyone, and then a maximum of **10** minutes question/answer session open to only the Examination Committee. During the Oral Examination, the members of the Examination Committee may ask the student questions relating to his/her presentation and Thesis Proposal, and also the topics chosen by the student in his/her Written Examination.

- **4. Evaluation of Oral Examination**

For the Oral Examination, the Examination Committee should evaluate the student's performance based on the oral presentation, the written thesis proposal, and the performance in the question/ answer session. After discussions, the Examination Committee makes a recommendation for the student: Pass (no revisions required or minor revisions within two weeks), Conditional Pass (requires resubmission of the proposal and retaking the oral exam within one month, depending on the committee's decision), transfer to MPhil, or Fail (Discontinue). If the student failed the Oral Examination, the student will not be allowed to take a second attempt.

- **5. Declaration to Take CE and Withdrawal from CE**

5.1 The student must declare his/her intention to take the CE 30 days before the CE written

exams.

5.2 The student who are is qualified to exempt the written exam or exempt one lecture course, s/he must submit the application 30 days before the CE written exams.

5.3 The student must fill out the form “MSE Candidacy Examination-Written Examination Application Form Intent to Participate in Ph.D. Candidacy Examination”. In the form:

- The student must declare **1/2** designated areas that they plan to take in the Written Examination (in the case of no course can be exempted).
- The student must declare the exempted course codes and attach the transcripts (in the case of any courses can be exempted)
- Members of the student’s Examination Committee must be nominated.
- The form has to be signed by the student’s supervisor(s).

5.4 For the Oral Examination, the student the student must fill in the “Candidacy Examination-Oral Examination Application Form” and must submit a Thesis Proposal **two weeks** before the Oral Examination. If otherwise, the student will be automatically withdrawn from the Oral Examination. Once the Thesis Proposal is submitted, the student CANNOT withdraw from the Oral Examination unless extraordinary circumstances occurred that prevent them from taking the examination, e.g., medical or family emergencies. In such cases, an approval must be obtained from the Head of the Graduate Panel. If otherwise, the student will receive a Fail grade for the Oral Examination.

5.5 If the student passes both the Written Examination and the Oral Examination, then the Examination Committee makes a recommendation for the student to pass the CE.

*The Graduate Panel of the SSE holds the final right to interpret the policies in this document.

THE END