

Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program
Qualifying Exam Policy
Approved August 30, 2012

The purpose of the Qualifying Exam is to ensure that all students officially admitted into the doctoral program have basic nutrition knowledge (outlined in Table below). The intent of the exam is to identify deficiencies and correct them early in a student's graduate education.

Per Graduate School guidelines, a student must pass the Qualifying Exam to be officially admitted into the doctoral program (<http://gradschool.missouri.edu/policies/doctoral/requirements/qualifying-examination.php>). Each student may have two attempts to pass the Qualifying Exam; the first attempt will occur during the first academic year, as mandated by the Graduate School.

The Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee is responsible for constructing, administering, and grading (Pass/Fail) the Qualifying Exam. The Qualifying Exam will be a written exam comprised of objective questions (multiple choice, matching, true/false) on selected topics from the Core Knowledge for the Discipline of Nutrition identified by the *The Graduate Nutrition Education Committee, American Society for Nutritional Sciences* (J. Nutr. 132:779-784, 2002). In addition, each student must pass an oral exam that will elaborate on material covered by the objective questions. The oral exam, which will be administered by 2-3 members of the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee, should be completed within two weeks of completion of the written exam. The Qualifying Exam will be administered to all eligible students each June. A student may petition the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee to take the Qualifying Exam at another time.

The Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee will determine whether a student passes the exam based on a minimum score of 75% correct on the written portion of the Qualifying Exam and satisfactory performance on the oral portion of the Qualifying Exam. In the event that a student does not pass the Qualifying Exam on their first attempt, the student and his/her advisor will develop a plan to correct knowledge deficiencies for approval by the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee. After completion of the approved remedial work, the student is eligible to take the Qualifying Exam for the second time.

The Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee may also determine that although a student passes the exam, there are particular areas of weakness that should be corrected. In this instance, the student and his/her advisor will develop a plan to strengthen the weak areas and will submit this plan to the Nutritional Sciences Graduate Education Committee for their approval. Upon completion of the plan, the student will notify the Committee.

After the qualifying process is complete and the doctoral committee has been confirmed, the Qualifying Examination Results and Doctoral Approval Committee Approval (D1) form (pdf) should be submitted to the Graduate School.

TABLE 1 Core knowledge for the discipline of nutrition (J. Nutr. 132:779-784, 2002)

1. General Research Skills

- Evidence of and for causality; developing hypotheses

2. Structure and biochemical and metabolic functions of nutrients and other dietary constituents

- Physiological and biochemical basis for nutrient requirements
- Chemical structure and biochemical and metabolic functions of essential and nonessential nutrients (protein, carbohydrate, fat, B vitamins, vit C, vit D, vit A, vit E, vit K, calcium, iron, zinc, sodium, potassium, iodine, magnesium, phosphorous)

3. Food, diets, and supplements

- Food sources of nutrients and factors affecting nutrient bioavailability
- Effect of food processing and handling on nutrient content and bioavailability
- Nutritional toxicology including upper limits of intake; nutrient-nutrient and drug-nutrient interactions
- Planning and assessing adequacy of diets, including under- and overnutrition
- Cultural and social factors affecting food intake and choices
- Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI); food guide pyramid (myplate)
- Nutrient supplements including risk/benefit ratios; life stage issues; component bioavailability

4. Nutritional status assessment

- ABCD: anthropometry, biochemistry, clinical, dietary
- Functional assessments including immunological, cognitive, and pregnancy outcomes

5. Nutrition and disease

- Clinical nutrition
- Interactions of etiologies of chronic diseases with nutrition

6. Nutrition interventions and policies

ASSESSMENT

- Situation assessment including screening, prevalence, at-risk groups, hunger, malnutrition, overnutrition
- Determinants: economic, supply/demand, medical, cultural, care-giving, intrahousehold and community food distribution
- Food supply, seasonality, security, dietary quality, preservation
- Surveillance and monitoring

INTERVENTIONS

- Fortification and supplementation
- Programs of government, nongovernmental, and private sector organizations

Suggested Texts to Review for Qualifying Exam

Human Nutrition I/II Texts

Community Nutrition Text

Diet Therapy Text