

ADVANCED EXAM PROCEDURES (Governing both Students and Faculty)

After completing and passing the qualifying exam, graduate students will take the advanced exam (AE) before beginning their Ph.D. thesis. The qualifying exam is normally taken at the end of the student's first year at Brandeis, consisting of successfully completing the first year graduate courses in Quantum Mechanics, Statistical Mechanics and Electromagnetic Theory in addition to an oral examination. The rules for the advanced exam are as follows:

1. At the beginning of the summer following the first year, a student selects an AE advisor and topic area. The AE advisor and student then form an AE committee consisting of the advisor and two other faculty members. The AE committee then agrees on an AE topic and expected goals, which are presented to the student in writing. The scope of the AE should be such that the student is reasonably expected to complete the AE by the January 15 deadline below.
2. The above written agreement must be submitted to the department office by August 1 preceding the student's second year in the PhD program. If a student does not submit the written agreement by this date, the department chair will work with the student, and the faculty to select an AE advisor. In unusual circumstances, the department will take other action regarding the student's ability to continue in the PhD program. The department will provide the student with a written explanation of its actions.
3. If in the course of working on the AE, the advisor feels that there should be substantive modification of the AE, then the AE committee reconvenes to revise the AE, again in writing.
4. Before January 15 of the student's second year, the AE advisor must convene the AE committee for the purpose of determining if the student passes the requirements of the AE. An AE advisor who elects to postpone the AE beyond the January 15 deadline is responsible for supporting the student from grant funds starting the following summer. If the AE is postponed and the student doesn't pass, the AE advisor is responsible for supporting the student for at least two months (if the student has no other support) to give him/her time to seek other support.
5. If the AE is delayed, it must be completed by mid-May. Near the end of May, the department must certify with GSAS that a student is continuing in the Ph.D. program. **A student who has not passed their AE will not be certified as continuing, and will therefore have to leave the program.**
6. The AE committee insures that the AE topic and goals are not vague and that the decision to pass or fail a student on the AE is made on an objective evaluation reasonably close to the perimeters of the AE presented to the student.
7. If during the preparation for an advanced exam, it becomes clear that the student will not continue as a Ph.D. candidate with the AE advisor, the student must find a thesis advisor prior to taking the AE, After discussion among the student, the AE advisor, and the thesis advisor, the student may elect to take the AE with the thesis advisor added to the committee or begin a new AE with the thesis advisor as the AE advisor.

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