



ECE Doctoral Qualifying Examination Policy

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I. ECE Doctoral Qualifying Examination Policy

A. Introduction

The ECE Doctoral Qualifying Exam (QE) is an assessment of a graduate student's background knowledge and capabilities to do PhD-level research in the fields of Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering or Telecommunications Engineering. The QE consists of two parts: background knowledge (Part 1) and research capability (Part 2.)

Part 1 involves taking and passing any two PhD Dissertation Advisor specified structured graduate courses offered by the Erik Jonsson School with a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses. The constraints imposed by both the [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Submission Timeline](#) and [course offerings](#) should be taken into consideration in specifying the two courses. For admitted PhD students with an MS degree obtained at UTD, or for those with a Bachelor's degree taking 30 hours of graduate coursework at UTD, the Part 1 requirement is met if PhD Dissertation Advisor specifies two structured graduate courses as part of the MS degree completed at UTD or the 30 hours of graduate coursework at UTD, taken or to be taken, with a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses.

Part 2 involves studying a topic as specified by a student's PhD Dissertation Advisor in the submitted [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Application form](#) and giving a public presentation with a public Q&A session. Example topics include, but are not limited to, a student's own published/submitted conference or journal paper, an independent study topic, a literature review, or a technical report. Presentation duration should be similar to the PhD preliminary exam presentation duration (*e.g.*, 30 to 40 minutes).

B. QE Passing Requirements

Students must pass both QE Part 1 and Part 2, in any order, within three long semesters starting from the first semester of admission into the corresponding UTD PhD program (EE/CE/TE) for students with a Master's degree and within four long semesters for students with a Bachelor's degree.

- A pass/fail grading for the first filing of Part 2 is assigned by the PhD Program Committee based on inputs (pass/fail and comments) from the PhD Dissertation Advisor, the faculty members present at the presentation to the PhD Program Committee, and the student's record at UTD.
- Students are given a second chance in each part, *i.e.* a maximum of two application filings is allowed for each part. In the second filing, the PhD Dissertation Advisor specified courses or topic may be stated differently than the first filing. The pass/fail grading for the second filing of Part 2 is done by a faculty committee formed by the PhD Program Committee.
- The pass/fail grading and any comments are documented on a [Doctoral Qualifying Exam, Part 2 Evaluation - First Attempt form](#); if applicable, on a [Doctoral Qualifying Exam, Part 2 Evaluation -Second Attempt form](#).
- The Doctoral Qualifying Examination results are conveyed to students by the ECE Department Head or a designate. Any marginal, rare, unusual, and/or exceptional cases may be brought to the attention of the PhD Program Committee by filing a petition at ecegradprogram@utdallas.edu. All documentations and/or evidence supporting a petition must be submitted as part of the petition to the PhD Program Committee.

II. Student & Faculty Responsibilities

A. Student Responsibilities

- Register for, at least, minimum three graduate coursework hours in the semester taking the QE
- Review both ECE Doctoral Qualifying Examination Policy and [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Submission Timeline](#).
- Secure a PhD Dissertation Advisor: requirement before the [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Application form](#) may be submitted. Please verify that your [faculty advisor](#) is either a full-time or affiliated faculty in your EE, CE, or TE graduate program, respectively.
- Complete the [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Application form](#) according to the PhD Dissertation Advisor's instructions. Obtain PhD Advisor signature and submit it to the ECE Graduate Program Office, ECSN 2.7 Front Desk or email the form to ecegradprogram@utdallas.edu before the deadline (last day of submission is the Census Day of the full-term session of the semester to be presented). If opting for digital signatures, use a UTD computer and the UTD email address must be visible on the signature pane.
- Make a room reservation for QE Part 2 presentation (first attempt or second attempt) during the QE exam period (starting at 25 business days after the Census Day and ending at 5 business days before the last day of weekday classes). Contact the PhD Advisor's Administrative Assistant.
- Submit the [Doctoral QE Part 2 Presentation Details Online](#) (presentation title, abstract, date, time and venue) within 10 business days after the above mentioned application deadline. This information will be posted onto the ECE Department website within 20 business days after the Census Day.
- Complete the student information portion of the [Doctoral Qualifying Exam, Part 2 Evaluation - First Attempt or Second Attempt form](#).
- Take the QE Part 2 as scheduled. The presentation (excluding questions and answers) should be 30 to 40 minutes long.
- Pass with B+ grade or better each of the two structured graduate courses (QE Part 1).

B. Faculty Responsibilities

- PhD Advisors who are ECE full-time or affiliated faculty determine the two structured graduate [courses offered](#) by the Erik Jonsson School for the QE Part 1.
- Assign a presentation topic for the first attempt QE Part 2 (can be in an earlier semester than the QE Part 2 application).
- Sign the [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Application form](#) prepared by the student in accordance with the ECE Doctoral QE Policy and [Doctoral Qualifying Exam Submission Timeline](#).
- After conducting the QE Part 2 (first attempt), submit the completed Doctoral Qualifying Exam Part 2, Evaluation - First Attempt form to the ECE Graduate Program Office, ecegradprogram@utdallas.edu by the last day of the QE exam period.