

## College of Kinesiology Doctoral Candidacy Assessment

The Doctoral Candidacy Assessment requirements for PhD students who entered the College of Kinesiology PhD program on or after May 1, 2024, are as follows. For students who started before May 1, 2024, they can choose to complete either the Comprehensive Exam or the Candidacy Assessment. See College of Graduate Postdoctoral Studies Policies [here](#).

### Purpose

To pass the candidacy exam, a student must be able to demonstrate to their committee that they have:

- an adequate grasp of the current state of knowledge in the intended field of research;
- the potential ability to conduct advanced original research independently using relevant methodologies;
- the ability to communicate in ways appropriate to their field of research and practice (and, if applicable, other knowledge or skill requirements for the discipline).

### Timing

The student, advisory committee, and academic unit share the responsibility to schedule the oral candidacy assessment within 24 months of initial registration, or within 36 months of initial registration for students who transfer from a master's to a doctoral program.

At least 60 days before the planned oral candidacy assessment, the student and supervisor need to secure committee approval of the written PhD proposal and inform the graduate office in writing of the approval, confirm the completion of course requirements in the program of studies, and provide the name of the chair for the oral candidacy assessment (who can be an advisory committee member). At the same time, the advisory committee must inform the student in writing of the academic unit's procedures, as well as provide preparatory guidance and assessment details specific to the oral candidacy assessment.

The graduate office will help schedule the oral presentation in the KIN990 seminar and the oral candidacy assessment meeting, either on the same day or on separate days, in that order. Unless the student and CGPS are informed otherwise in advance, the assessment committee for oral candidacy assessment will consist of all members of the student's advisory committee.

If an extension is needed, the supervisor and student must contact the graduate office to initiate a request for a policy extension beyond the 24-month period (or 36 months for transfer students). CGPS considers requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis.

### Format

The Doctoral Candidacy Assessment will require the PhD student to:

1. **Prepare and seek advisory committee approval for a written PhD proposal.**
2. **Deliver a proposal presentation in an open-format KIN 990 Seminar.**
3. **Pass an oral assessment of the proposal by the advisory committee.** The oral assessment can be open or closed based on the preference of the committee and the student.

Student will prepare the **written PhD proposal**, adhering to a committee-approved format, with general guidance that includes the following:

- An introduction providing a rationale to a proposed thesis topic.
- A literature review that discusses relevant works, clinical/research problem and justifies the

necessary future research in the area of the proposed topic.

- Research objectives (and hypotheses if tested).
- A description and justification of the selected research design and methodologies to address the research objectives and test the hypothesis (if applicable). This should include the identification of relevant datasets that could be used in the proposed research, or a plan to create or curate such datasets, along with potential measures and outcomes.
- A discussion of how the proposed research fits within the existing literature with an emphasis on demonstrating the novelty of the proposed research.

The advisory committee must **approve the written PhD proposal** before the student can proceed to the oral presentation and oral candidacy assessment. It is up to the student and advisory committee to develop a process and timeline to secure approval at least 60 days before the planned oral candidacy assessment.

The **oral presentation** will be part of the KIN 990 Seminar. The student will give a presentation between 15-20 minutes of their proposed research.

#### Oral Candidacy Assessment

The advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will decide the format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid) and duration (1.5 to 3 hours) of the oral candidacy assessment meeting. During the meeting, the committee will conduct two rounds of questioning to evaluate the student's comprehensive understanding and depth of knowledge in the proposed research area. Refer to the "Rubric: General Template for Scoring Oral Candidacy Assessments".

Committee will use the following criteria for the candidacy assessment:

- whether the student has demonstrated sufficient understanding of the current knowledge of the research frontier in their area of research needed to justify proposed research in the area;
- whether the student has demonstrated rationale for the proposed research questions in the area for their proposed doctoral work;
- whether the student has the ability to satisfactorily defend and justify the proposed methodology for addressing proposed research questions, objectives, or testing the research hypotheses;
- whether the student has shown that the proposed research and anticipated findings would appropriately contribute toward to the field

Any specifications to the assessment need to be discussed and shared in writing with the student 60 days prior to the planned oral assessment.

#### Outcome

The outcome of this oral candidacy assessment meeting is that the doctoral candidacy assessment is either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. A student that successfully completes the candidacy assessment is deemed a Doctoral Candidate (e.g., PhD Candidate). The student's official transcript will note the date when the candidacy assessment was satisfied. After this point, their focus will be on completing the doctoral research and dissertation. It is important to note that the PhD proposal is considered non-binding, and the proposed research can be revised based on feedback.

A student who does not satisfy the requirements of their oral candidacy assessment is permitted a second attempt at the recommendation of the academic unit and with the permission of the Dean of CGPS or designate. The second oral candidacy assessment should be scheduled from one to three months from the date of the first assessment; exceptions will be considered by the Dean of CGPS or designate. A second unsatisfactory outcome will automatically result in a requirement to discontinue from that doctoral program.

An unsatisfactory candidacy assessment or the denial of a second attempt at the candidacy assessment, may be appealed to the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee of CGPS on substantive grounds in accordance with Part IV of the University Council's *Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters*, or on grounds other than substantive academic judgment limited to those outlined in Part V.B.1.

Rubric templates – written PhD proposal and oral candidacy assessment

The rubric template includes general evaluation criteria for the oral candidacy assessment of the PhD proposal and the breadth and depth of the candidate’s knowledge in the proposed research area. As a general guideline, a student receiving an overall average score above 2 (including all committee members’ scores) can be considered to have passed the candidacy assessment. Any specifications or exceptions to the rubric need to be discussed and shared in writing with the student 60 days prior to the planned oral candidacy assessment.

**Rubric: General Template for Scoring Oral Candidacy Assessments**

	<b>Very Good to Exceptional = 3</b>	<b>Adequate = 2</b>	<b>Poor/Failure = 1</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Knowledge in the intended area of research</b>	Demonstrates comprehensive understanding of key concepts, theories, and current research in the area.	Shows adequate understanding of major concepts and theories, with some engagement with current research.	Displays limited understanding of key concepts and theories.	
<b>Rationale for Proposed Research Questions</b>	Demonstrates a clear and logical rationale for the proposed research questions, showing strong alignment with gaps or needs in the current research.	Demonstrates a reasonable rationale for the proposed research questions, but with some areas that lack clarity or full alignment with current research gaps.	Provides an unclear or weak rationale for the proposed research questions, with poor alignment to current research gaps.	
<b>Defense and Justification of Proposed Methodology</b>	Defends and justifies the proposed methodology, demonstrating a strong understanding of its appropriateness and potential challenges.	Adequately defends and justifies the proposed methodology, but with some areas lacking depth or consideration of potential challenges.	Provides a weak or incomplete defense and justification of the proposed methodology, with significant gaps in understanding or consideration of potential challenges.	
<b>Novelty and Contribution to the Field</b>	Clearly demonstrates that the proposed research and anticipated findings are novel and will make a significant contribution to the field.	Demonstrates that the proposed research and anticipated findings are somewhat novel and will make a reasonable contribution to the field.	Fails to demonstrate that the proposed research and anticipated findings are novel or will make a significant contribution to the field.	
<b>Oral Communication</b>	Communicates existing and proposed research effectively, with clarity and logic.	Communicates existing and proposed research adequately in oral form, with some areas lacking clarity or logic.	Communicates existing and proposed research poorly in oral form, with significant issues in clarity or logic.	
<b>Oral assessment score:</b>				