**QUALIFYING EXAM PLANNING FORM**

1. **STUDENT INFORMATION**
2. **Student Name:**
3. **Matriculation Date:**
4. **Current Date:**
5. **INSTRUCTIONS**

Please fill out this form to initiate the qualifying exam process. Details about qualifying exams, including expected timelines, can be found in the Student Handbook. This document is meant to start the dialog that will lead to a final topic and review timeline. All tracks have slightly different qualifying exams. Please fill out the applicable section(s).

**Table.** Qualifying exam portions by track

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Track** | **Track-specific portion** | **Integrated portion** |
| Biostatistics | In class test and take home data analysis | Applied data analysis |
| Health and Biomedical Informatics | Complete methods sequence | Mock grant application |
| Health Services and Outcomes Research | Systematized review | Mock grant application |
| Healthcare Quality and Patient Safety | Case study | Narrative review |
| Social Sciences and Health | Systematized review | Mock grant application |

This document is not a substitute for the HSIP PhD Program Handbook. Please be sure to review the handbook for details. As you prepare for your qualifying exam, please plan for some time for some back-and-forth conversation with your track chair and qualifying exam committee. Text in grey italics and track chair comments should be deleted before submission. You are not expected to draft your exam in this application. Succinct and concise responses are appreciated.

1. **Track-specific: In-class test and take-home data analysis (BIOSTAT)**

The BIOSTAT track specific qualify exam consists of two parts: A statistical theory part which covers the contents of the core track specific theoretical courses during the first year, and an applied part which covers the contents of the core track specific applied courses during the first year. The theoretical part will be an in class written exam with up to 6 hours. The applied part will be a take-home exam for up to 4 days that requires programming with statistical software.

1. **Track-specific: Complete Methods Sequence (HBMI)**

No information is required.

1. **Track-specific: Systematized Review (HSOR, SSH)**

Regardless of track, for the Systematized Review, students are required to identify two qualifying exam topics that have a focus in their own track.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time Line** |  |
| **Dissertation Advisor** |  |
| **Dissertation Committee** |  |
| **Tentative Dissertation Title** |  |
| **Summary of Dissertation Project and Aims** | Background and Significance  Aims |
|  |  |
| Proposed Systematized Review Topic #1 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Research Question (PICO format)** |  |
| **Preliminary search terms** | *Indicate the search terms you worked out with the librarian* |
| **Literature size, based on preliminary search** | *Indicate the # returned from the preliminary search* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee. The Committee Chair will select the other committee members.* |
| Proposed Systematized Review Topic #2 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Research Question (PICO format)** |  |
| **Preliminary search terms** | *Indicate the search terms you worked out with the librarian* |
| **Literature size, based on preliminary search** | *Indicate the # returned from the preliminary search* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee. The Committee Chair will select the other committee members.* |

1. **Track-Specific: Case Study (HQPS)**

Only HQPS track students engage in a Case Study for the Qualifying Exam. For the Case Study, students are required to identify two qualifying exam topics that would describe a successful healthcare quality improvement project.

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| --- | --- |
| Proposed Qualifier Topic 1 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Aims** | *Only two aims are required.* |
| **Additional Information to Support Topic Evaluation** | *Use this to describe any special circumstances to support project feasibility. For instance, a private data source you have access to or special relationships you have that are necessary to support the work. This field may be left blank.* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank. The exam committee chair will select faculty. Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |
| **QI Sponsor** | *Name of the faculty member who will help ensure access to the information you need to complete the case study* |
| Proposed Qualifier Topic 2 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Aims** | *Only two aims are required.* |
| **Additional Information to Support Topic Evaluation** | *Use this to describe any special circumstances to support project feasibility. For instance, a private data source you have access to or special relationships you have that are necessary to support the work. This field may be left blank.* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank. The exam committee chair will select faculty. Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |
| **QI Sponsor** | *Name of the faculty member who will help ensure access to the information you need to complete the case study* |

1. **Integrated: Applied Data Analysis (BIOSTAT)**

For BIOSTAT track students only, students are required to adapt and apply the knowledge learned to carry out appropriate statistical analyses for addressing research questions related to one of the other HSIP tracks. The student, in collaboration with the integrated qualifying exam committee, shall identify an appropriate dataset and research questions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plan** |  |
| Title |  |
| Background |  |
| Research questions |  |
| Data description |  |
| Analysis plan |  |
| Anticipated results |  |
| Suggested committee member | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank. The exam committee chair will select faculty. Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |
| **Secondary HSIP Domain** | *Indicate the secondary HSIP track for this topic.* |
| **Timing** |  |
| Discuss plan |  |
| Submit form |  |
| Begin work on proposal |  |
| Present proposal |  |
| Begin exam |  |
| Submit written document |  |
| Complete exam with oral presentation |  |

1. **Integrated: Mock Grant Application (HBMI, HSOR, SSH)**

Regardless of track, for the Mock Grant Application, students are required to identify qualifying exam topics that have a focus in their own track, as well as a secondary domain. The topic of the mock grant proposal should not be identical to the dissertation. More details can be found in the handbook.

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| --- | --- |
| **Qualifying Exam**  **Time Line** | Submission of Initiation Qualifier Application: [Date]  Finalized Qualifier Topic: [Expected Date]  Development of Written Qualification Proposal: [Date Completed] |
| **Dissertation Advisor** |  |
| **Dissertation Committee** |  |
| **Tentative Dissertation Title** |  |
| **Summary of Dissertation Project and Aims** | Background and Significance  Aims |
|  |  |
| Proposed Qualifier Topic 1 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Aims** | *Only two aims are required. For HBMI, they should clearly articulate a domain advancement and an informatics advancement. The domain advancement and informatics advancement do not have to be in separate aims.* |
| **Secondary HSIP Domain** | *Indicate the secondary HSIP track for this topic.* |
| **Domain Innovation**  **(for HBMI only)** | *How are you advancing the generalizable knowledge of the domain of your topic?* |
| **Informatics Innovation (for HBMI only)** | *How are you advancing generalizable knowledge in the field of health and biomedical informatics?* |
| **Additional Information to Support Topic Evaluation** | *Use this to describe any special circumstances to support project feasibility. For instance, a private data source you have access to or special relationships you have that are necessary to support the work. This field may be left blank.* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank. The exam committee chair will select faculty. Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |
|  |  |
| Proposed Qualifier Topic 2 |  |
| **Title** |  |
| **Background & Significance** | *This section should establish the significance of the problem and articulate the gaps in knowledge that your proposal will address* |
| **Aims** | *Only two aims are required. For HBMI, they should clearly articulate a domain advancement and an informatics advancement. The domain advancement and informatics advancement do not have to be in separate aims.* |
| **Secondary HSIP Domain** | *Indicate the secondary HSIP track for this topic.* |
| **Domain Innovation**  **(for HBMI only)** | *How are you advancing the generalizable knowledge of the domain of your topic?* |
| **Informatics Innovation**  **(for HBMI only)** | *How are you advancing generalizable knowledge in the field of health and biomedical informatics?* |
| **Additional Information to Support Topic Evaluation** | *Use this to describe any special circumstances to support project feasibility. For instance, a private data source you have access to or special relationships you have that are necessary to support the work. This field may be left blank.* |
| **Suggested qualifying exam committee members** | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank. The exam committee chair will select faculty. Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |

1. **Integrated: Narrative Review (HQPS)**

For HQPS track students only, for the Narrative Review, students are required to identify two qualifying exam topics that have a focus in their own track, as well as a secondary domain.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Plan** |  |
| Question or topic |  |
| Disciplines covered (should include one track that is not student’s “home” track) |  |
| Literature search strategy  (include search terms and databases) |  |
| Agreed approx. number of references for which to aim |  |
| Reference citation style  (e.g., JAMA, etc.) |  |
| Suggested committee member | *Northwestern faculty with expertise in this area. May be left blank* *Your PI or PRA are not eligible to serve on the committee.* |
| **Timing** |  |
| Discuss plan |  |
| Submit form |  |
| Begin work on proposal |  |
| Submit proposal |  |
| Present proposal |  |
| Begin exam |  |
| Complete exam |  |