

Division of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics

Scientific Research Qualifying Exam (SRQE)

Every PhD student in Biostatistics must pass an oral examination, which constitutes the Scientific Research Qualifying Exam (SRQE). This exam is typically taken towards the end of Year 2 or early in Year 3. *(Please note that this exam is different from the PhD advancement exam).*

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

Instructions

We encourage you to attend your peers' exams so you can support them and get familiar with the format. Please follow the instructions below to plan your SRQE:

1. Choose a topic in biomedical sciences that interests you. Previous presenting students have been inspired by projects they worked on during a *FMPH 241-Biostatistics Rotation* or their GSR research. You are encouraged to discuss a potential topic with your academic advisor and/or GSR mentor (if applicable).
2. Form a Scientific Research Exam Committee comprised of three (3) faculty members: two (2) from Biostatistics and one (1) faculty member from outside the Division of Biostatistics who is an expert on the relevant biomedical domain. One of the biostatistics faculty will serve as Committee Chair.
3. Set up the date and time for your SRQE presentation with your Committee members.
4. Draft a short (100-250 abstract) for your SRQE that can briefly outline your research problem and objectives, your methods, key results or arguments and your conclusion.
5. Let the Graduate Program Coordinator know your date and time and provide your abstract with enough warning (*at least 10 days*) so they can secure a room, set up a Zoom if applicable and share a presentation invitation to the Division
6. Prepare a 30-minute presentation and be prepared to answer questions from your Committee and the audience.

Evaluation Criteria

The purpose of the exam is for you to:

- i. Demonstrate competence in the biomedical domain area
- ii. Communicate clearly the statistical approach and results to the relevant scientific (non-statistical) audience
- iii. Demonstrate an ability to answer questions on the scientific or statistical aspects of the project.

[Information for Committee members on next page]

INFORMATION FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Thank you very much for supporting our education program and PhD students and for agreeing to serve on a Scientific Research Qualifying Exam Committee. Below is information on evaluation criteria and format. *(Please note that this exam is different from the PhD advancement exam).*

Evaluation Criteria

The purpose of the exam is for the student to:

- i. Demonstrate competence in the biomedical domain area
- ii. Communicate clearly the statistical approach and results to the relevant scientific (non-statistical) audience
- iii. Demonstrate an ability to answer questions on the scientific or statistical aspects of the project.

Exam Format and Evaluation Reporting

The format of the exam is as follows: the student will give a 30 min presentation, followed by 15 min of questions from the audience. Then non-committee members will leave the room*. The Committee can choose to ask additional questions of the student if they wish. After this, the student leaves the room*, and the Committee confers.

The Committee Chair will then send the Graduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate Program Director a one-paragraph evaluation on how the student performed on items i - iii above, and an assessment of **Satisfactory** or **Unsatisfactory** performance. The Chair will also convey the committee's feedback to the student.

**Adapted instructions would be provided if the exam has to take place remotely due to extenuating circumstances that have to be pre-approved by the Graduate Program Director*