Qualifying Exam Instructions

Time: September

Location: TBD

In attendance:
• You
• Your Advisor(s)
• 2-3 Chemical Engineering professors, one of whom is at every qualifying exam

Guidelines:
Your advisor may assist you in your preparation of parts (a) and (b). Forty minutes will be allocated to parts (b) and (c).

(a) A concisely written, one page, typewritten summary of your talk. Please email the summary to Michelle Brunner (mbrunner@stanford.edu) at Student Services three business days prior to the examination. It will be duplicated and distributed to the faculty.

(b) An oral presentation of your research work to date and plans for the future. It will be strictly limited to 20 minutes. (You should practice your talk and use of associated equipment, so that you use this time efficiently.) You may choose the number of slides for your talk. You may write on the whiteboard before or during your talk; you may have backup slides with supporting data; and you may have one sheet of notes. You might consider printed handouts (5) of your talk for the examining committee. The talk should demonstrate a depth of thinking about the research strategy and the fundamental chemical, physical and biological concepts that govern the molecular behavior of the system being studied.

(c) A question and answer period. Following part (b), you will be asked to wait outside the examination room for a short period of time. You will then return for questions pertaining to your research field or the specifics of your project. This period will last approximately 20 minutes. The questions will probe your depth of thinking about the research strategy and the fundamental chemical, physical and biological concepts that govern the molecular behavior of the system being studied.

Frequently Asked Questions
Q: Are supplementary slides allowed?
Supplementary slides on your experimental data are allowed. You can bring a letter-sized sheet with your own notes (front and back)

Q: Do we submit an abstract so faculty can determine which additional exams they would like to attend?
Yes, your abstract should not exceed one page and be a “stand alone” document, i.e. include key information such as purpose (‘qualifying examination for doctoral candidacy’), the date, your name, your research advisor(s)’s name(s), your title.

Q: When should we expect to receive a schedule of presentation order?  
Approximately one week in advance.

Q: How should we prepare?  
You’ll have support from  
- Your research advisor  
- Your ChemE co-research advisor, if any  
- The Action Committee First-Year Mentoring Committee  
- ChemE Student Services  
Do research, collect data, read papers on your research and be aware of any seminal work done/being done in the field. Understand the basics of the field. Talk with upper classmen of your group to understand what material you should study. Participate in practice talks both organized by the Action Committee as well as any talks in your group.