Instructions for Second Year Research Evaluations in Chemistry (SYRE)
(Student and Committee Members)

To the Student:

1. Follow all instructions outlined in the document “Requirements for the M.S. and Ph.D. Degrees.”
2. The exam must be taken prior to the end of Fall quarter in the second year of residence.
3. A written document should be prepared and must conform to the following guidelines: 5 pages in length (including references, figures, etc.), 1-inch margins, single spacing, and 12 point font. No budget or other items are required. The document should introduce the dissertation research problem, outline the goals and objectives, describe the progress to date, and provide a path forward. It must be well written, communicate ideas clearly, and be scientifically sound. The written document must be completely standalone.
4. The written documents must be presented to the committee at least one week prior to the exam.
5. You should have a brief (~15 minute) presentation prepared to introduce your research to the committee; however, you may be asked questions at any time during the exam.
6. PowerPoint slides may be used in your presentation (unless otherwise specified by your subdiscipline); however, you may not use PowerPoint slides as a substitute for your own knowledge. You must be familiar with the details of anything you present on a slide, and the committee may instruct you to explain such details without referring to the slide at any time.

To the Committee:

1. The exam must be conducted in its entirety on one date, and all members must be present for the entire exam. The finding of the committee should be a composite evaluation of the document and oral examination and must be pass, marginal pass, or fail. A Pass signifies that the student is on track for passing the oral qualifying exam; a Marginal Pass signifies that a student is basically on track, but needs to remedy certain deficiencies; a Fail would signify that a student is not on track to pass the oral qualifying exam unless steps are taken to correct severe deficiencies.
2. Committee members should evaluate the written document carefully prior to the exam. The written document must demonstrate a level of writing ability, scientific knowledge, and creative thought that are commensurate with a candidate for a Ph.D.
3. The committee chair will direct the oral exam. Students will prepare a brief presentation to begin the exam. The committee should ask questions which test the student’s knowledge of the general field as well as the related fields and areas of special interest. The advisor may participate in asking questions, but is strongly discouraged from answering any questions posed by the committee or otherwise intervening during the exam (even if the student’s answers grossly misrepresent the advisor’s research). Again, the student should demonstrate communication skills, independent thinking, and scientific knowledge that would be expected for a Ph.D. candidate.
4. The only criterion for determining if the student has passed or failed the exam is their performance during the test.

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