RPC Exam Committee Member Instructions

Purpose: The purpose of the RPC is to evaluate the student's ability to engage in independent research and to enforce a minimum standard of quality in the PhD program.

Content: The examination aims to test the student's ability to comprehend, present, explain, and discuss an original piece of research described in their selected paper; and to infer, extend and discuss new research based on the paper and their training. Keep in mind that limited originality is likely required given that these are first year students with sometimes limited exposure to research and sometimes straight out of undergraduate studies.

Format: The student presents using a PowerPoint presentation for 20 min (sharp, if uninterrupted, else prorate accordingly); then is questioned by the committee on conceptual subject matter related to the paper. The student can bring notes and reference material. At the end of the exam, the student may leave, and the committee submits evaluation form online (preferred) or the paper version to the PhD program manager's office. **The committee does not tell the student the outcome of the exam, but may provide the student informal feedback.**

Faculty Preparation: Read or at least **skim the report** and <u>read the student's</u> paper. If faculty have not read either before the exam and it is obvious to the student from the questioning, then students may view this non-reciprocity as a reason to advise future students to spend less time on it, which would be detrimental to the quality of our program. There is no requirement for the committee to deliberate after the exam. It is each individual committee member's responsibility to submit his/her evaluation form in a timely manner.

Logistics: You are responsible for showing up at the times/Zooms provided in your email notification. The email notification will have the exam research paper, student's paper, and evaluation form, one per committee member. The examination evaluation should be returned electronically on the exam day.

Pass/Fail: The final pass/fail determination will be made by the PhD Graduate committee based on your scoring. Since every student performance will be discussed, it is important to also **provide notes on strengths and weaknesses on the grading sheet**.

On Presentation Day

- Students are instructed that faculty will have read their paper (please do).
- Students are allowed to bring notes and reference materials.
- Presentation length should be ~ 20 minutes uninterrupted, full exam is expected to take 1 ½ hours. Questions during the talk should be of clarifying nature and follow up after the presentation.
- Report format: 2 page report + figures and references.
- You can give students feedback after the exam, but no pass or fail decision
- Evaluations should be completed online using the link provided in the email notification. Comments are very helpful (in addition to the score)
- Advisors are not allowed to attend the RPC presentation.

Thank you for your participation and supporting our PhD program!

For details on the RPC format, please refer to the "RPC Format Overview" leaflet that was shared with the students, which provides details on the RPC exam.