

**Department of Earth and Space  
Sciences Meeting of the Faculty  
Friday, April 7th, 2:30 pm in JHN 022**

**MINUTES**

**Call to Order - Open Session (2:31 PM)**

**In attendance:** [faculty] Gorman-Lewis, Catling, Walters, Mehra, Stone, Teng, Crider, Buick, Duvall, Bergantz, Condit, Krissansen-Totton, Schmidt, Roe, Fudge, Christianson, Waddington; Steig; [guests] Aikin, Shumway, Aranguiz, Lindquist, DeSanto, Caton, Bernard-Kingsley, Wren

**Announcements**

- GeoClub trip presentation (Mehra)
  - 10 undergraduate students; two graduate students. The undergraduate students are so deeply impressive and knowledgeable. Abby Riley, GeoClub president did ALL logistics, all planning, with input from the students. Visited sites of anthropological and geological significance.
  - High demand from graduate students to go on this trip indicates that trips like this where grads can hone field-based teaching skills are opportunities we should be creating more of and a program to grow our investment in. The high degree of face time between grads and undergrads goes a long way in building interactions in, and strengthening of, this community.
  - Students were from ESS, paleo, Bio, two doing research at the Burke and have never been in an ESS course came to the many Gala talks to learn more.
- Advancement engagement suggestion (Mehra)
  - There are many creative ideas regarding advancement and fundraising. There is a need for a formal structure to talk about advancement (this is currently in the works—Summer and Eric will present advancement plans at first fall faculty meeting)
- UWFT update (Dakins)
  - Eric will send out the deadlines calendar again.
- Exec Session only needed for hiring decisions. Eric will send out a short survey to figure out when.
- Journaux acceptance - signed today!
- Building update
  - Kitchen plans are in the works; roof problems are now “priority” for Facilities, but when that will happen is uncertain.
- Rock prep room

- Students have submitted STF. Two undergrads are at the front of this STF proposal - thank them for this. **Consider taking 30 seconds to go [here](#) to endorse this STF proposal.**
- We have colloquium organizers for next year! We should also plan committees for next year - **Eric will follow up with an email on this.**
  - Akshay Mehra and Harold Tobin for Fall 2023.
  - Brad wrote up google form for suggestions and nominations. Will integrate forms for DLS (check box that they will be DLS nominations)
  - Graduate students would like to have one nominated colloquium speaker a quarter.
- Summer field course
  - Steven, Cailey and Juliet are instructors. June 20-July 28th. 3-4 TAs.

## Standing Committees Announcements

- **Undergraduate Program (Gorman-Lewis) - course requirements / best practices**
  - Syllabi and Grading best practices. See slides for additional information on best practices and guidelines and links.
- **Graduate Program (Teng)**
  - Website page dedicated to student publications. Thinking about how to incentivize students sending publications in (and keeping website as up-to-date as possible. Summer can send emails, but is there a better way?)
- **Admissions (Buick)**
  - Admitted 17, 10 acceptances. 3 of those are deferrals (to do fulbrights). 2 rejections. 5 outstanding offers, no response yet.
  - Committee would like anyone on the fence about another student, or you were rejected, to **please think hard over the next four days about whether you do want to make another admission. We do still have some RA funding from the Provost fund.** This award MIGHT be “use it or lose it”, we don’t know.
- **Curriculum (Crider)**
  - Getting organized. Close look at undergrad curriculum. Expect to hear more about that before end of quarter/summer
- **Promotion, Merit, & Reappointment (Montgomery, Catling) - second year faculty recommendations; merit recommendations (to be discussed further in exec)**
- **Scholarships, Fellowships, and Awards (Condit)**

- Students applying for fellowships or grants need to have a letter of recommendation from faculty (one letter per student; specifically addressing the awards will strengthen the letter).
- Awards deadline extended. Considering applications starting on 17th, week from Monday. Email to ESS assistant email.
- **Policy (Bergantz) - general exam update**
  - See included document.
  - General agreement from faculty and students that the deadline to submit your proposal is two weeks ahead of the examination date. Final version will include this.

**Adjourn to Executive Session (3:32)**

## GENERAL EXAM Scheduling

The [General Examination](#) should be taken in the spring (or earlier) of the 3rd year and no later than Autumn of the 4<sup>th</sup> year. Any deviations from this schedule must be because the Doctoral Supervisory committee has requested an extension from the department Associate Chair for Graduate Programs/Graduate Program Coordinator either in writing or via email.

The Request for General Examination must be completed online no later than three weeks in advance of the date of the exam. Prior to submitting the request for the exam online with the Graduate School, the student must have approval from all supervisory committee members either in writing or via email. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the exam and to apply in a timely manner.

## The Purpose of the General Exam

The purpose of the General Exam is to assess the breadth and depth of a student's knowledge related to the proposed dissertation research. The primary vehicle for the exam is a written dissertation research proposal. During the General Exam the student will defend the significance and impact of the research problem, and demonstrate their mastery of the relevant fundamentals, and the research methods needed to pursue the plan.

## Format of the General Exam

The basis of the exam is a substantial written thesis proposal, which includes a review of the pertinent literature, any preliminary results on the subject of the research, and the proposed research and methodology. The proposal format and submission deadline should be verified with the faculty advisor/committee chair. There are no formal length requirements, but the typical proposal will be ~8 to 15 single-spaced pages.

The General Examination itself normally consists of a presentation of the research proposal followed by an oral examination to assess the student's understanding and mastery of their area of specialization, with emphasis on the subject of the student's intended thesis. The oral presentation will last 25-45 minutes, followed by up to two hours of questioning from the committee. The student and their committee should schedule a minimum of two and a half to three hours to ensure that there is sufficient time for discussion.

Any member of the graduate faculty is allowed to attend both the oral presentation and the questioning by the committee.

Grades earned in courses will not be used as sufficient evidence of eligibility for the PhD degree; they may, however, be used as guides in planning the next steps for a student and as indicators of minimum standards.

## Following the General Exam

Students who pass the General Examination are admitted as candidates for the PhD degree.

If an examination is unsatisfactory, a supervisory committee may recommend that the Dean of the Graduate School permit up to a maximum of two additional reexaminations after a period of additional study.

## Detailed Procedures

Before beginning the General Exam process, please be sure to familiarize yourself with the UW Graduate School's Doctoral Degree Policies: <https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral-degree-policies/>, and the departmental expectations for making satisfactory progress. Satisfactory progress in the Department of Earth and Space Sciences Ph.D. Program up to the General Exam is defined as:

- Successful passage of a Preliminary Exam after the first year, and completion of any recommendations by the Prelim Exam committee.
- Creation of a supervisory committee by the end of the second year.
- Satisfactory progress as outlined by the student's research advisor.
- Annual submission of a [Graduate Student Scholarly Activities \(GSAR\) Report](#).
- Annual meeting with your supervisory committee.
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### AT LEAST ONE QUARTER PRIOR TO GENERAL EXAM

Hold a Doctoral Supervisory Committee meeting to discuss progress towards your exam. It is advisable to provide an outline of proposed format and content (e.g. how many chapters, and provisional titles for those chapters).

Students are also encouraged to meet with Student Services to go over General Exam policies, processes.

Completion of Graduate School requirements for candidacy: <https://grad.uw.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral-degree-policies/general-examination-admission-to-candidacy-for-doctoral-degree/>

Completion of 60 credits (some of these credits may be taken at the same quarter of the exam) including:

- 18 credits of coursework at the 500 level and above
- 18 credits of numerically graded coursework in approved 400-level courses and 400 level courses (excluding 499)
- Any coursework identified by your Preliminary Exam committee at the time of your Preliminary Exam
- Successful passage to PhD program of the Preliminary Exam
- All members of the supervisory committee agree that the student's background of study and preparation is sufficient and have approved the student to schedule a General Exam.
- 3.0 minimum cumulative GPA

Registration maintained as a full- or part-time graduate student at the University of Washington for the quarter in which the exam is taken.

Doctoral Supervisory Committee is approved by the GPC and submitted to the Graduate School.

### AT LEAST THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO GENERAL EXAM DATE

Obtain explicit approval from all supervisory committee members (in writing or via email) that they will attend the General Exam on the date you propose – the quorum for a graduate exam is four (must include chair and GSR).

Approvals must be submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator prior to submitting the Request for General Exam; if approvals are via email, you may forward them to the Graduate Program Coordinator, provided the email explicitly states that they approve your request for the General Exam and will attend on the date you propose.

Schedule a room for your exam if you will be having an in-person or hybrid exam. You can schedule a room using the [ESS room reservation system](#). If the rooms available are not sufficient for your exam, contact Student Services to look at open classrooms across campus. Because General Exams are normally open to the entire department, one of the mid-size classrooms (e.g. Johnson 111, Johnson 026, Johnson 127) is appropriate.

Submit the thesis proposal to the committee.

Submit Request for the General Exam: <https://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/mygrad-program/>

After submitting request form, email the Graduate Program Coordinator and Student Services to confirm submission. Include the date, time and location of exam, as well as the title (for advertisement on the department calendar).

Student Services will email your “Committee Signature Form” as an attachment to both you and your faculty advisor. This can be signed and returned physically or electronically. If you have remote committee members, they can send an email attestation to [noelleon@uw.edu](mailto:noelleon@uw.edu) in lieu of physically or electronically signing the form.

## **AFTER THE GENERAL EXAM**

Return your completed “Committee Signature Form” to Student Services

Student Services will send an announcement to the department accounting successful exam completion.

Follow up with ESS Payroll regarding your [ASE \(TA/RA\)](#) pay increase to Workday Step: Candidate.