

BSCI Grant Format Candidacy Exam

Students may either take the exam using our existing procedures, or they may elect to write a grant proposal. The guidance committee, with the consent of the student, should decide the format of the exam. The proposed procedure is as follows:

- The written portion of the exam will consist of a grant proposal written by the student, with no input from faculty members. The format of the proposal will be the NIH NRSA fellowship or a NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, and consist of three parts: the Specific Aims (NIH) or Project Summary (NSF) (1 page max), the Research Strategy (NIH) or Project Description (NSF), and Literature Cited.
- The topic of the proposal may **NOT** be the student's area of research, but may be in a related field.
- The student and the committee will meet 6-8 weeks prior to the due date of the candidacy exam to have a preliminary discussion of potential topics. The student will then look into these topics and report back to the committee (can be via e-mail) on the topic they have selected. The committee members must then approve the topic. The student should have approximately 5-6 weeks to write the proposal.
 - The faculty advisor can provide guidance on the "nuts & bolts" of grant writing, but not on the science.
- The committee will then evaluate the proposal to judge the student's knowledge of the background material and the logic of the scientific approach. If they are satisfied, the exam will proceed to the oral portion of the exam. During the oral portion of the exam, the committee members can ask questions about the proposal or background material to ascertain the student's depth of knowledge on the topic, and ability to justify his/her experimental approaches.
- If the written proposal is judged to be unacceptable then the guidance committee can decide whether or not to give the student a second chance.
- Outcomes include Approved admission to candidacy, Disapproved, or Suspension of the exam.