

# Master of Science Degree in Biological Sciences

Stanislaus State University



## Qualifying Exam

The student must complete an oral exam that is administered by the thesis committee in closed session. Each thesis committee member will have 15 minutes to directly ask examination questions. Following direct questioning, there will be an additional free form session for any needed follow up. The order of the questioners is at the discretion of the committee conducting the exam. Examiner questions should be drawn from these areas:

- Philosophy of science, history of science and scientific method.
- Basic principles of Physics, Chemistry and Biochemistry, as applicable.
- Basic Mathematics and/or Statistics as applicable
- Core Biology principles such as evolution, cell/molecular biology and genetics, ecology and structure/function.
- Any peripheral biological knowledge considered important to the successful completion of the students thesis project.

Following the examination period, the student should be asked to leave the room so that the committee can evaluate their performance. The goal is for the student to display a basic competence in the areas above, but also be allowed to find the current limits to their knowledge base.

## The student should be given one of four outcomes:

- **Pass**-immediate advancement to candidacy.
- **Conditional Pass**-advancement to candidacy with the agreement between committee and student that the student needs additional coursework in a specific area of weakness.
- **Re-test Required:** The student performed at a level requiring additional coursework as outlined by the committee. The student will also be required to take the exam again to pass to candidacy (only one re-test will be allowed).
- **Fail**, student will be removed from the program.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Outcome of Examination\* \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis committee chair:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Signature) (Date)

**2nd committee member:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Vice-Chair if required) (Name) (Signature) (Date)

**3rd committee member:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Signature) (Date)

**Program Director:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Signature) (Date)

\*Committee chair should provide a one-page description of the exam and student performance, as well as the plan for a conditional pass or re-test required (if needed) on a separate page and attach it to this document. This document will be kept on file by the Program Director.