Evaluation of PhD Thesis Proposal

Student: _________________________________

Date of Presentation: _______________________

Committee Member: ________________________

Please review accompanying guidelines for evaluation and provide your assessment. Please use grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 only (no fractions). Give the completed form to the graduate student at conclusion of the thesis proposal defense, who will then return it to the CHBE Department Coordinator. Alternatively, the completed form can be emailed. The information on this form should be instructive for the graduate student. Also, the information will be used in identifying the Kobayashi Award recipient.

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GENERAL COMMENTS:

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Note: Print one for each committee member
GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

Use the following scale: 5 (Excellent); 4 (Very Good); 3 (Good); 2 (Fair); 1 (Unsatisfactory)

Objective

Excellent (5/4): Compelling statement of objective that demonstrates the challenge of the research and its applications
Good (3): Objective and applications are clearly stated, motivated, and challenging
Fair (2): Objective or applications partially clear and too simple
Unsatisfactory (1): Objective and potential applications are not clear

Literature review

Excellent (5/4): Identifies all relevant results and techniques from the literature and synthesizes them well
Good (3): Cites major works and places them in context
Fair (2): Misses a few major works or places them out of context
Unsatisfactory (1): Fails to cite or assimilate previous work

Research results

Excellent (5/4): Experiments and/or theory, computations well chosen and executed and interpreted fully and correctly
Good (3): Experiments and/or theory, computations are reasonable but some errors exist or interpretation is incomplete
Fair (2): Minimal results but well-motivated and interpreted
Unsatisfactory (1): Minimal results and/or major errors in results or analysis

Proposed research

Excellent (5/4): Well thought out experiments and/or theory to achieve novel results and meet objective; includes potential open-ended developments
Good (3): Good overall plan needing some further development
Fair (2): Plan is actionable but has minor flaws or ambiguity
Unsatisfactory (1): Sketchy outline of future work with few specifics

Written proposal, organization

Excellent (5/4): Logical progression of thought within overall proposal and within each section; figures illustrate main points
Good (3): Occasional portion of reasoning omitted or misplaced
Fair (2): Few important statements are not sufficiently motivated; order of presentation is not always logical or effective
Unsatisfactory (1): Repetition, misplaced items, poor figures hinder reader understanding

Written proposal, quality of writing

Excellent (5/4): Ideas expressed clearly and concisely in fluent prose with minimal typos or grammatical errors
Good (3): Coherent presentation with average style and limited typos, grammatical errors
Fair (2): Some parts difficult to understand, noticeable errors
Unsatisfactory (1): Significant parts difficult to understand, numerous errors

Oral presentation

Excellent (5/4): Engaging, polished presentation with well crafted slides that illustrate key points and emphasize conclusions
Good (3): Solid presentation with coherent narrative, conclusions
Fair (2): Presentation is understandable but not fully convincing
Unsatisfactory (1): Too much or too little detail; goals and directions not clear; order of slides not logical; poor slides; reads directly from many slides

Response to questions

Excellent (5/4): Complete answers that demonstrate deep understanding of research field beyond contents of thesis
Good (3): Competent answers that demonstrate understanding of issues directly relevant to thesis
Fair (2): Answer reveal minor gaps in understanding thesis work or directly related areas
Unsatisfactory (1): Answers reveal significant gaps in understanding thesis work and its context
Preliminary Oral Examination Report
Doctoral Degree

This is to certify that the undersigned, a graduate engineering student,

*Last Name First*

has presented to his chosen thesis committee members his preliminary oral examination for the PhD degree in the field of Chemical Engineering.

We recommend that the results be recorded as (check one of the following):

- ☐ Passed the examination without reservations
- ☐ Passed the examination with reservations
  
  **NOTE:** Within one week of the examination, the committee must send the student a letter that clearly stipulates the reservations and the steps required to remove them. A copy of this letter should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee at chbe@rice.edu.

- ☐ Failed the examination
  
  **NOTE:** One retake is permitted only by unanimous consent of the examining committee. Each committee member must indicate whether a retake is approved.

Committee members must indicate their vote by signing their name in the appropriate column below:

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<tr>
<th>EXAMINING COMMITTEE</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Pass With Reservations</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Approve Retake?</th>
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As stated in the department policy (sect. I.5) the Thesis Proposal is a written document which describes in detail a proposed research project. An oral presentation should be held by July 1\textsuperscript{st} of the fourth semester in residence.

The proposal should contain the following:
- Abstract (no more than 250 words)
- Background and literature survey
- Problem statement including scope and significance
- Research plans and methodology
- Preliminary results
- Possible pitfalls and alternative strategies
- Timeline
- Portions of manuscripts or reports to sponsors may be incorporated into the proposal
- Students must always follow the Rice University Policy No. 334, Research Misconduct which details instances of “fabrication, falsification or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or in reporting research results”. The plagiarism document can be found here.
- Failure to meet the presentation deadline of July 1\textsuperscript{st} will result in termination of the student’s stipend for one pay period. Extensions requests must be sent to the GSC by email (chbe@rice.edu). The committee will notify students of the extension request decision and revised deadlines for submission and oral presentation.

As the student prepares for their exam a thesis committee must be selected. The committee will judge the proposal and determine a grade of pass or fail. Student must follow the Rice General Announcements (ga.rice.edu) guidelines for choosing a committee.

The thesis committee general guidelines are as follows:
- A student must have at least three committee members
  - Two faculty (including the committee chair) must be members of the student’s department faculty
  - One faculty member must have his/her primary appointment in another department within the university
  - Tenure or tenure-track members of the Rice Faculty
Research faculty holding the rank of assistant research professor, associate research professor or research professor

Qualified individuals who have been certified as thesis committee members by the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies

Phd students must give an electronic copy of the thesis proposal to each member of their committee at least one week prior to the oral presentation exam date.

Students must submit to the Academic Program Administrator by May 15th:
- A single pdf file of the thesis proposal
- The names and email addresses of the thesis proposal committee members
- The date for which the oral presentation is scheduled (all committee members must agree on the presentation date)
- Note: If May 15th falls on a weekend, proposals will be due the following Monday
- **Failure to meet the May 15th deadline will result in termination of the student’s stipend for a minimum of one pay period. If the proposal is not submitted by June 15th, no stipend will be paid until the proposal has been submitted.**

Exam Date and Assessment Information:

- Students must bring the downloaded *Evaluation of PhD Thesis Proposal Form* for each committee member and the signature page
- Committee members will evaluate the proposal and give a grade of 1 (Unsatisfactory) up to 5 (Excellent)
- Evaluations will be judged on:
  - Objective
  - Literature review
  - Research results
  - Proposed research
  - Written proposal, organization
  - Written proposal, quality of writing
  - Oral presentation
  - Response to questions
The exam assessment and the student’s pass or fail will be determined by the exam/thesis committee. A statement of whether or not the committee considered the proposal and presentation satisfactory will be recorded on the form.

- For a pass with reservations the student will be given by their committee, within one week
  - A letter that clearly stipulates the reservations and defines the steps required to remove them
  - A copy of this letter should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Committee at chbe@rice.edu
- If the written proposal and/or oral presentation are judged unsatisfactory by the thesis committee, the committee can either
  - Fail the student and transfer him/her to the MS degree program, or
  - Request a revised proposal which must be submitted by October 1st.
- A second failure will result in automatic transfer to the MS degree program. For students who are transferred to the MS program, continued funding will be decided according to the guidelines on financial support in the CHBE policies (sect. V). The MS program must be completed by May 15th of the following year. Students who successfully complete the requirements for an MS degree under these terms, may reapply to the PhD program if they desire. Readmission to the PhD program is not guaranteed.
- The student must submit the original evaluation form to the department but may request a copy be sent via email.