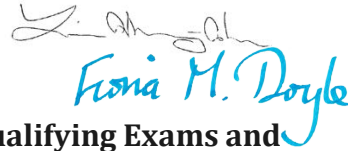


Date: March 8, 2016
To: Deans, Chairs, Graduate Advisors, Graduate Student Affairs Officers

From: Lisa Alvarez-Cohen, Chair, Graduate Council
Fiona M. Doyle, Dean of the Graduate Division



Re: **Revisions to Graduate Council Policies for Qualifying Exams and
Dissertation Committees**

In spring 2015, the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate formed a subcommittee to consider various aspects of the qualifying examination and dissertation review process, and the variety of practices across campus. The goal of this effort was to recognize the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of our research while decreasing the difficulty that graduate students sometimes have in identifying appropriate committee members. The subcommittee consulted with faculty in a wide range of academic disciplines.

Following the subcommittee's recommendations, the Graduate Council approved changes to Sections F2.6, F4.7, F4.8, and F4.9 of the *Guide to Graduate Policy*, which deal specifically with the purpose and composition of the qualifying exam, as well as the composition of higher degree committees (i.e., Qualifying Exam Committee, Dissertation Committee, and Master's Thesis Committee). These changes are intended to increase the flexibility in forming committees in light of increased interdisciplinary research on campus. They are not expected to introduce any new restrictions to degree granting programs that are following the current policies.

Minor changes focus on simplifying language, using consistent terminology, and avoiding repetition. Major changes include:

1. Removal of the terminology "inside" and "outside" members.
2. Renaming of the "Outside Member" to the "Academic Senate Representative" and clarifying this member's role on committees.
3. Allowing 0% joint appointments in a department to serve in the role as Academic Senate Representative.
4. Allowing Graduate Group Faculty and Affiliated Faculty to serve as the Academic Senate Representative for one student in a graduate group while also serving in other committee roles for other students.

These changes will apply for all new committees. Committees that have already been constituted should remain unchanged, so as not to delay the progress of students through their programs.

The full policy language is found in Section F at <http://grad.berkeley.edu/policy/degrees-policy/>.