

Department of Wood Science & Engineering

Faculty Policy on Wood Science Qualifying Exam

April 2009

(rev May 2018)

(Effective for new students entering Spring Term 2016 and later)

Policy

All Wood Science graduate students (M.S. and Ph.D.) are required to pass a qualifying exam prior to scheduling their final exam. The purpose of the exam is to evaluate a candidate's understanding of basic wood sciences and their ability to identify common wood products.

To meet the graduation requirement, students can take the exam a maximum of three times. A grade of 80% or higher is considered passing. Entering graduate students holding a BS or MS in wood science and technology or similar degree may take the qualifying exam to waive the required core courses, WSE 521 and 522 with the concurrence of their Graduate Committee. The student and major professor should carefully consider this option in light of the benefits of reviewing material, meeting other students, and getting into the culture of graduate work that result from core coursework. The major Professor must petition the WSE Graduate Affairs Committee for permission to take the exam for the purpose of granting a waiver. Approval will not be routinely granted. The student may take the exam only once for purposes of a waiver, and a grade of 90% or higher is necessary for approval. This attempt will count as one of the three attempts to pass the exam to meet the departmental requirement.

Process

The exam will include multiple choice, true or false questions, and other types as appropriate. Students will have prior access to a large database of example test questions as well as a sample exam, but questions will not necessarily be identical to those in the database. The use of calculators and reference materials is not permitted during the exam; students need only bring pen/pencil and blank paper for calculations. A maximum of 3 hours is allotted for completing the exam.

The exam is 100 questions and covers the following competencies in the following proportions:

- 25%: a) Anatomy and biology of wood formation; wood identification
- 22%: b) Physical properties
- 16%: c) Mechanical properties
- 16%: d) Chemical characteristics and properties
- 5%: e) Wood degradation and deterioration
- 16%: f) Composite materials and identification of common wood products

The test will be offered only once each term but may be offered more often if extenuating circumstances arise and the committee notified of such need. Students currently enrolled in WSE 520, 521 or 522 are not eligible to take the exam. The Graduate Affairs Committee will maintain the question database and a member of this committee will administer and grade the exam. The Graduate Affairs Committee will deal with any appeals.