

Agenda- PhD Committee meeting

March 13, 2018

11:30-12:30 PM

TH 403

1. Updates
 - a. Admissions and first year funding update
 - b. Graduations updates
2. New business:
 - a. Peter Jackson endowment
 - b. Annotation for reading lists – required or up to committee?
 - c. Written exam format- specific format required or up to committee?

2b. Annotation for reading lists

Currently, students are required to create an annotated bibliography that forms the basis of their conceptual and their regional written general exams.

Amongst other places, this is stated in the PhD Handbook on page 32:

- i) The First Written General Examination relates to a student's primary foundational field of interest (i.e. RCC, SMS, PVS, or LRG). The exam is based on a bibliography as agreed upon by the Doctoral Supervisory Committee in consultation with the student. The bibliography, once decided upon, must be annotated by the student, and this document is the foundation of the exam materials.
- ii) The Second Written General Examination relates to a student's principal country or geographical area of interest. The exam is based on a bibliography as agreed upon by the Doctoral Supervisory Committee in consultation with the student. The bibliography, once decided upon, must be annotated by the student, and this document is the foundation of the exam materials.

My understanding is that requirement to annotate the reading list is sometimes and sometimes not implemented by the committees. Every year committees ask the program (Director and GPA) if the annotation part is really required or not. Many committees don't see it as necessary.

Question for our discussion today: Continue to require the annotation? Or, drop mention of annotation in the handbook? That means, we'd leave it up to each committee if they want to require their student to do the annotation of their reading list.

2c. Written exam format

The student handbook does not state the format that the written portion of the general exams must take. Although there is no requirement stated in the handbook, the program advises students and committees that the each of the two portions of the written exam should be comprised of three questions and the student must choose one to answer for each. Some committees have requested a different format. It has also been noted that some students have been allowed by their committees to collaboratively write the questions, while others have not.

As such, we need to decide what the format of the written exams should be. Options that I see are- one format that everyone has to abide by, a few different formats that they can choose from, or a whatever-you-want approach. We also need to decide if students should be allowed to collaborate on writing the questions.

Whatever we choose, we need to decide what is best for the quality of the PhD program as a whole.