

PROPOSAL FOR ADDITION TO THE GENERAL EXAMINATION GUIDELINES
Approved at the Doctoral Sub-committee meeting
December 7, 2007

“In lieu of a third or fourth exam, namely the special field exam, a doctoral candidate for either the PhD or ThD may submit a paper between 20 and 30 pages in length. Intent to write such a paper, with a bibliography and brief description, should be submitted together with other General Exam bibliographies six months prior to the exam period. An updated bibliography should be submitted with the paper. The chosen topic should anticipate the expected focus of the dissertation. This option may only be exercised with the approval of the student’s academic advisor, and the paper should be developed in consultation with the advisor. It must be original work prepared for this purpose; work previously submitted for any other purpose (including a course, colloquium, or presentation) is not acceptable.

The paper must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. to the program administrator at the Study of Religion offices in the Barker Center, not later than one month prior to the first exam date (e.g., if the first exam would have been given on April 21, the paper would be due by March 21, or the nearest day to that date on which the office is open.) This is a non-negotiable deadline. If a paper is not submitted by the deadline, the student must sit for the exam based on the original bibliography. The submitted paper will be copied and distributed to the general examination readers and discussed at the oral examination along with the other three exams.

This option has been approved in the past on an ad hoc basis for a number of students. Most have found it to be an excellent way to begin work on their dissertation topic, receive meaningful feedback from a number of faculty at an early stage in this process, and often to curtail the ‘lag’ time after generals and before submitting the prospectus by providing a strong intellectual link between these stages in the program.”