Evaluation Form and Criteria (to take effect September 2023)

cc: Graduate Student

PhD Preliminary Examination Evaluation
Graduate Program in Biology

Candidate: ________________________________
Title of Research Proposal: ________________________________
Date of Exam: ________________________________

Examing Committee:
Chair: _____________________________________ (supervisory committee member)
Supervisor: ________________________________ (supervisor cannot be Chair)
Member: ________________________________
Member: ________________________________
Member: ________________________________

Assessment Criteria (Exceeds, Meets, or Does Not Meet Expectations):

1. **Suitability of the proposed research as a Ph.D. dissertation.**

   **Expectations:** Proposed research is feasible; the proposed research has good potential to significantly advance the field and to be publishable in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

   **Assessment:** ☐ Exceeds ☐ Meets ☐ Does Not Meet

   **Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**

2. **Demonstrated ability to conduct independent research and achieve good research progress for a PhD dissertation.**

   **Expectations:** Good quality preliminary results and analyses for at least one part of the proposed research; demonstrates capacity to conduct this aspect of the dissertation with limited direct supervision.

   **Assessment:** ☐ Exceeds ☐ Meets ☐ Does Not Meet

   **Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**
3. Comprehensive and critical literature review of the research topic

**Expectations:** Frames the research topic into an appropriate historical context of past research; identifies important gaps in knowledge and/or methodology; provides critical analysis and synthesis of the literature. If applicable, explains key recent advancements in knowledge/methodologies and highlights conflicting theories and evidence.

**Assessment:** 
- [ ] Exceeds  
- [ ] Meets  
- [ ] Does Not Meet

**Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**

4. Goals, novelty, and significance of the proposed PhD dissertation research

**Expectations:** States the research question within the context of the literature; clearly states the research goals and/or hypotheses and predictions; provides a strong rationale for the novelty and significance of the proposed research.

**Assessment:** 
- [ ] Exceeds  
- [ ] Meets  
- [ ] Does Not Meet

**Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**

5. Understanding of methods and experimental design

**Expectations:** Demonstrates good knowledge of proposed methods and the pros and cons of alternative methods; clearly explains rationale for proposed experimental design; understands the limitations of the proposed methods and experimental design.

**Assessment:** 
- [ ] Exceeds  
- [ ] Meets  
- [ ] Does Not Meet

**Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**
6. Communication skills (oral and written)

**Expectations:** Research talk has good pace with confident delivery and gives a clear explanation of the proposed research and results-to-date; answers questions clearly, concisely and with good understanding and knowledge; research proposal writing style is clear, concise, logical, well organized, and grammatically correct.

| Assessment: | ☐ Exceeds | ☐ Meets | ☐ Does Not Meet |

**Rationale and Key Areas for Development:**

**OVERALL EVALUATION:**

1. Pass without Reservation (Meets or exceeds expectations in **ALL 6 criteria**)

2. Pass with Reservation (One or two criteria do **NOT** meeting expectations)
   - The candidate must complete the Remedial Actions specified below, and be assessed by the Examining Committee as having met or exceeded expectations for those criteria.

   **Due Date (must be within 3 months of this exam):**
   **Remedial Actions Required:**

3. Re-examination (Three criteria assessed as **NOT** meeting expectations)
   - The candidate must complete the Remedial Actions specified below, and undergo a full re-examination within 6 months of the initial examination. Only one re-examination is permitted; if the candidate does not Pass (without or with Reservation), they will be withdrawn from the PhD program.

   **Re-examination Date (must be within 6 months of this exam):**
   **Remedial Actions Required:**

4. Fail (Four or more criteria assessed as **NOT** meeting expectations);
   - PhD candidates will be withdrawn from PhD program; MSc students attempting to transfer to PhD remain in the MSc program.

**Chair of Examining Committee Signature: ________________________________**