EE PhD Qualifying Exam (QE) Policy

- The QE consists of two parts: background knowledge part (Part 1) and research capability part (Part 2). Passing of QE requires passing both parts in any order within 3 long semesters starting from the first semester of admission into the UTD EE PhD program for students with MS degree and within 4 long semesters for students with BS degree. The QE application form for each part should be submitted to the EE Graduate Office by the Census Day of the full-term session of a long semester.

- Part 1 involves taking and passing any two PhD dissertation advisor specified structured graduate courses offered by the Erik Jonsson School with a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses. The constraints imposed by both the above stated QE timeline and course offerings should be taken into consideration in specifying the two courses.

- Part 2 involves studying a topic as specified by PhD dissertation advisor in the submitted QE application form and making a public presentation with a public Q&A session scheduled anytime during the period starting at 5 weeks after the Census day and ending at one week before the last day of weekday classes. Students are required to send an email to the EE Graduate Office providing the title, abstract, date, time and room for their QE presentations within two weeks after the Census day. This information will be posted onto the EE Department QE presentation website by the 4th week after the Census day. Presentation duration should be similar to the PhD preliminary exam presentation duration (e.g., 30 to 40 minutes). Example topics include but not limited to student’s own published/submitted conference or journal paper, an independent study topic, a literature review, or a technical report. A pass/fail grade of the first filing of Part 2 is assigned by the PhD Program Committee based on inputs (pass/fail & comments) from the PhD dissertation advisor, inputs provided by the faculty members present at the presentation to the PhD Program Committee, and the student’s record at UTD.

- Students are given a second chance in each part, i.e. a maximum of two application filings is allowed for each part. In the second filing, PhD dissertation advisor specified courses or topic may be stated different than the first filing. The pass/fail grading of the second filing of Part 2 is done by a faculty committee formed by the PhD Program Committee.

- For admitted PhD students with MS degree obtained at UTD, or for those with BS degree taking 30 hours of graduate coursework at UTD, the Part 1 requirement is met if PhD dissertation advisor specifies two structured graduate courses as part of MS degree completed at UTD or 30 hours of graduate coursework at UTD, taken or to be taken, with a grade of B+ or better in each of the two courses.

- Filing of the QE application form requires having a PhD dissertation advisor.

- The QE results are conveyed to students by the EE Department Head or a designate.

- Any marginal, rare, unusual, and/or exceptional cases can be brought to the attention of the PhD Program Committee by filing a petition. All documentations or evidence supporting a petition must be submitted as part of the petition to the PhD Program Committee.

- Students who entered the EE PhD program before Spring 2015 can choose either this QE format or the previous QE format and must inform their choice in writing to the EE Graduate Office at least one week before the Census day of Spring 2015 so that they are able to file the new QE
application form. Students who choose the previous QE format are bounded by the timeline of that QE format. For students who choose the new format, the QE timeline is allowed to start in Spring 2015.