CANDIDACY EXAM PROCESS

Step 1: Consult with your advisor to determine if you are ready to proceed with candidacy.

YES	
	1. Identify members of your Advisory Committee in consultation with your advisor
	2. Contact the selected faculty members to confirm participation on committee
	3. Obtain NGP Director(s) approval of Advisory Committee members

NO	
	Keep communicating with your advisor until you are ready to proceed

!

The Advisory Committee *(refer to section 9 of the NGP Handbook)* **consists of a minimum of 4 faculty members:**

- Your advisor who must be a mentoring NGP faculty member *(must serve as Chair of the committee)*
- Two additional NGP faculty members with Category P Status
- One additional NGP faculty **OR** one non-NGP faculty member at Ohio State with Category P status.
    - Anyone with Category M status may serve on the committee with approval from the NGP Director(s).
    - Non-NGP faculty directly related to the student's research may be appointed, if appropriate, as the fourth Committee member.
- Optional: External Committee Member *(a faculty member that is not currently associated with NGP or another graduate program at OSU)*
    - Submit a Committee and Exam Petition form via GRADFORMS if you have an external committee member.
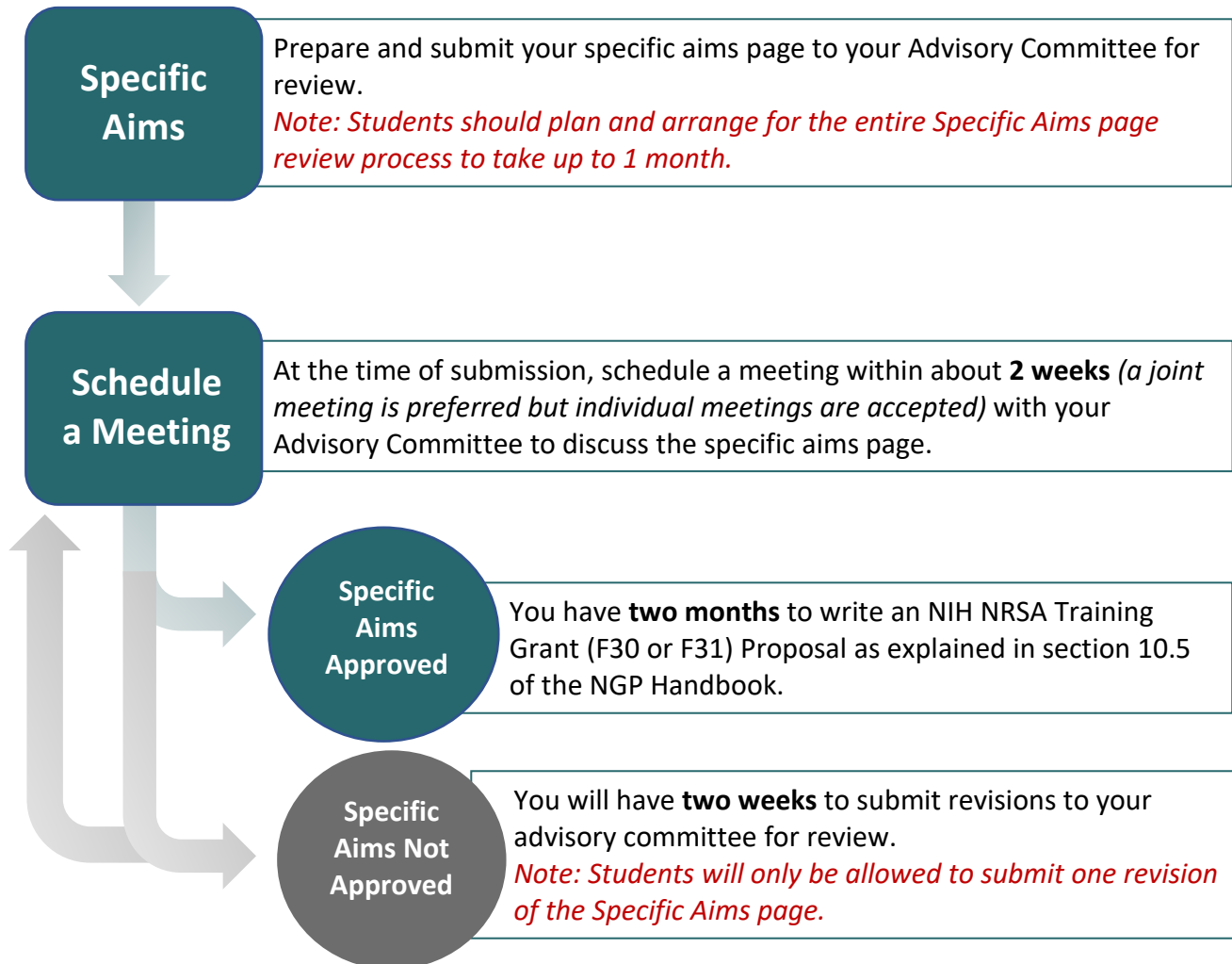
Email the NGP Directors requesting approval of your Advisory Committee:

- Copy your advisor and the NGP administrator on the email
- In the body of the email, include the name of each proposed faculty member with a brief statement explaining the research focus of that member and the unique perspective that they bring to the committee
- The Advisory Committee will often become the Final Doctoral Examination Committee. However, changes and additions to the Advisory Committee will be approved by the NGP Director(s).
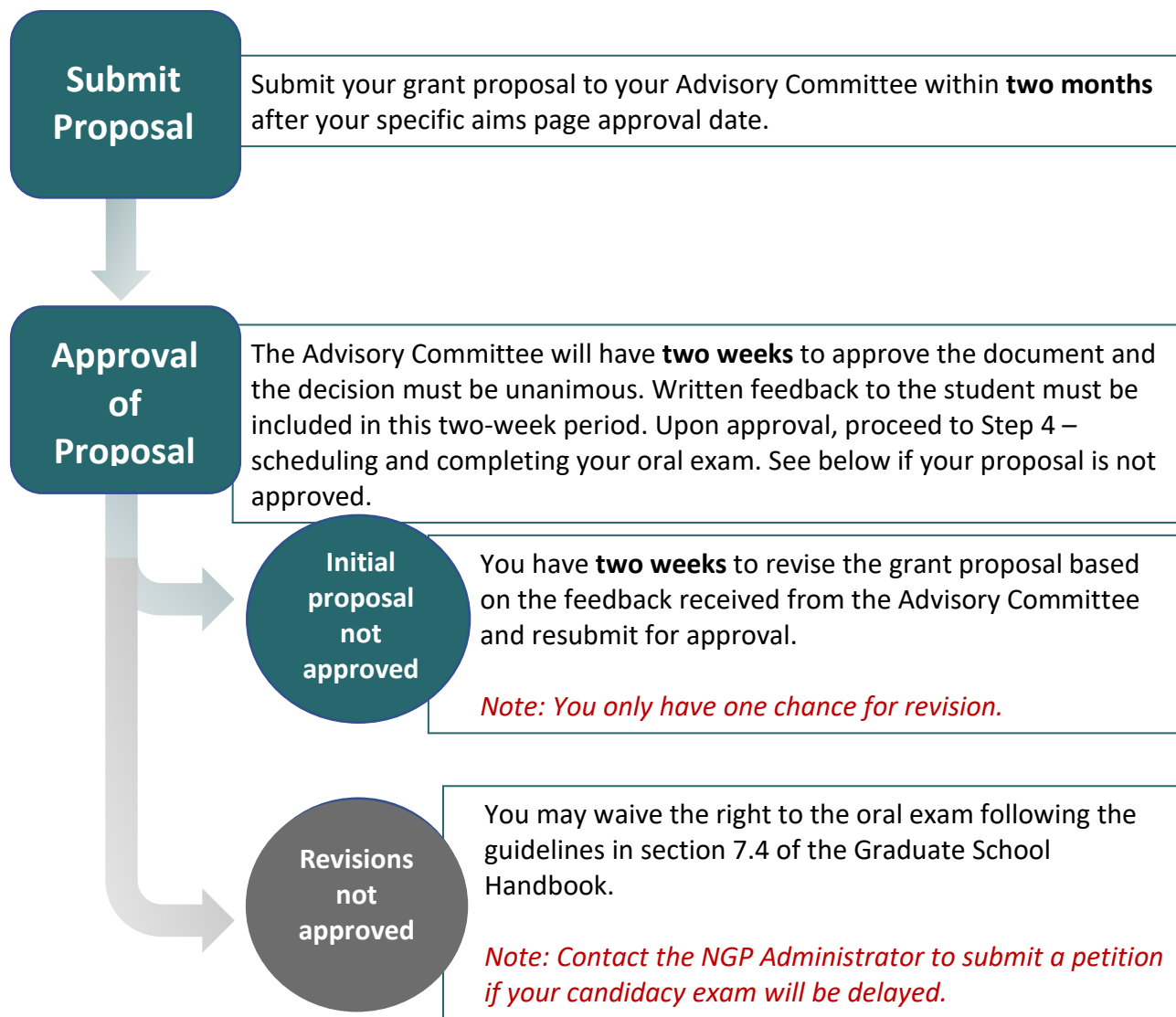
Step 2: Begin the written portion of the candidacy exam.

🚫 **Do not begin the written portion until you have obtained approval of your advisory committee from the NGP Directors. Refer to step 1 for details.**

Specific Aims

Prepare and submit your specific aims page to your Advisory Committee for review.
Note: Students should plan and arrange for the entire Specific Aims page review process to take up to 1 month.

Schedule a Meeting

At the time of submission, schedule a meeting within about **2 weeks** *(a joint meeting is preferred but individual meetings are accepted)* with your Advisory Committee to discuss the specific aims page.

Specific Aims Approved

You have **two months** to write an NIH NRSA Training Grant (F30 or F31) Proposal as explained in section 10.5 of the NGP Handbook.

Specific Aims Not Approved

You will have **two weeks** to submit revisions to your advisory committee for review.
Note: Students will only be allowed to submit one revision of the Specific Aims page.

Step 3 - Obtain approval of your grant proposal from your advisory committee.

Submit Proposal

Submit your grant proposal to your Advisory Committee within **two months** after your specific aims page approval date.

Approval of Proposal

The Advisory Committee will have **two weeks** to approve the document and the decision must be unanimous. Written feedback to the student must be included in this two-week period. Upon approval, proceed to Step 4 – scheduling and completing your oral exam. See below if your proposal is not approved.

Initial proposal not approved

You have **two weeks** to revise the grant proposal based on the feedback received from the Advisory Committee and resubmit for approval.

Note: You only have one chance for revision.

Revisions not approved

You may waive the right to the oral exam following the guidelines in section 7.4 of the Graduate School Handbook.

Note: Contact the NGP Administrator to submit a petition if your candidacy exam will be delayed.

NGP encourages all students to submit a federal or private foundation pre-doctoral grant proposal early in their tenure (for example, an NIH NRSA-F31 grant, if the student is eligible). The written portion of the candidacy examination may form the basis of such a submission.

Step 4 - Schedule and complete your oral exam.

Do not schedule your oral exam in GRADFORMS until you have emailed the NGP Directors, copying the NGP Administrator and your advisor, to notify them of your plan to take the oral exam.

Notify NGP Directors

- Email the NGP Directors, copying the NGP Administrator and your advisor, to notify them of your plan to take the oral exam.
- Send the email prior to submitting the Application for Candidacy Exam in GRADFORMS.

Schedule Oral Exam

- Schedule your oral exam **up to one month after aproval of your grant proposal**.
- Log into GRADFORMS.OSU.EDU to submit an Application for Candidacy Exam.
- After you submit your application, notify your advisor to to log into GRADFORMS to approve the application.
- *Note: The Graduate School requires Applications for Candidacy Exams to be submitted and approved at least two weeks prior to the exam date.*

Take Oral Exam

- The oral exam **must be completed by the end of autumn semester of Year 3**. Exceptions may be requested by submitting a petition to the NGP Committee. Contact the NGP Administrator for more information on submitting a petition.
- Oral exams may be held in-person, virtually, or a hybrid of both. For an in-person exam, you will need to reserve a room and A/V. For a virtual exam, create a Zoom meeting link to send to your advisory committee members.
- The oral exam will last approximately two hours. Note: at the discretion of the Advisory Committee, the student may present a brief (~10 minute) summary of the specific aims.
- At the conclusion of the exam, the student will be excused and the Advisory Committee will decide the outcome of the exam (both written and oral).

Results of Oral Exam

- The Report on Candidacy Exam will become available in GRADFORMS to your Advisory Committee at the time of the exam *Note: All committee members must log into GRADFORMS.OSU.EDU to report the results of your exam prior to leaving the room.*
- Satisfactory - Congratuations you are now a candidate for the PhD!
- Unsatisfactory - The Advisory Committee must decide if you will be permitted to take a second examination. This decision must be recorded on the Report on Candidacy Exam. Refer to section 7.6 of the Graduate School Handbook regarding a second exam.

You Are Now a PhD Candidate – Step 5

What to do now that you are a PhD candidate.

Apply for a Master's Degree

- When: The semester after completing candidacy (This can be done the same semester as your exam, but be aware that it pushes up your deadlines!)
- Submit an Application to Gradaute with a Master's Degree with Candidacy via GRADFORMS
- The deadline to submit is the 3rd Friday of the semester

Course Registration

- Each semester you will enroll in a maximum of 3 credit hours. *Note: Advisor approval is needed for more than 3 credit hours.*
- Seminar Course NEUROGS 7887 - 1 credit hour each autumn and spring until Year 5.
- Research Credit 8999 - 2 credit hours each autumn and spring (3 credit hours in the summer).

Meet with Advisory Committee

- Students are required to meet with their Advisory Committee at least once per year to discuss research plans and receive feedback on proposed research and progression.

References:

Graduate School Handbook
https://gradsch.osu.edu/handbook

Neuroscience Graduate Program Handbook
https://ngsp.osu.edu/about-ngp/ngp-handbook

GRADFORMS
http://gradforms.osu.edu