

Bioengineering Department Guidance Document for the Preparation of the Written Literature Review of the BioE Qualifying Exam

This guidance is not intended to be prescriptive but rather to provide general guidelines that establish clear expectations in the development, presentation and evaluation of your literature review.

The purpose of the literature review is to establish your contemporary understanding and to elicit critical evaluation of the state of the science within your selected research topic. As such, the literature review should be guided by the following recommendations:

Page Length:

It is not possible to provide a strict limit on the page length for a literature review as some fields of study may be well established and so possess a rich existing literature. Other fields may be new or emerging and so possess only a dearth of available literature. A suitable length should be around 40 -50 pages (double space, Times New Roman 12 or Arial 11font, and 1 inch page margins on all sides) with around 100 to 150 citations.

What should be covered?

The reviewer should strive for a proper balance between breadth and depth of coverage. It is not necessary to review materials that are generally well known in the field and that may appear in standard textbooks on the subject.

What should be included?

An abstract (not a summary) that captures the principal insights gleaned from the review and directs attention to the needed next steps in the field... your proposed research.

An introduction that establishes the context and motivation for the review.

A background that is unique to your field of study, is pertinent for a proper understanding of the research topic and is not widely known amongst professionals in your discipline.

The body of the review that emphasizes a critical evaluation of the literature, with analysis and interpretation of the findings of others, and is focused on the next logical next steps that will form the basis for the scholarly effort of the student.

An epilogue that summarizes the principal findings of the review and sets the basis for your research, setting forth where possible hypotheses to be tested in your research.

Overall:

The student must present the relevant literature for his/her research area.

The student must demonstrate a good understanding of the literature he/she has presented, both written and oral.