Mr./Ms. J. Doe  
OSU Department of Physics

[Date]

Dear John/Jane Doe:

Your Advisory Committee proposes the following topic for your Doctoral Candidacy Examination:

**“Physics Topic”**

Please prepare a double spaced 10–20 page paper on this topic (with references, figures, and tables counted separately, formatted as in a regular publication, e.g., using RevTeX with the “preprint” option). This paper is to be completed and given to your Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee by **[Date].**

You should consider the following aspects of the topic1:

1. [Focus area #1]
2. [Focus area #2]
3. [Focus area #3]
4. ...

[Optional supplementary material or instructions related to the topic provided by advisor and committee]

As you prepare your paper you may freely use all of the resources of the University, including discussions with faculty, postdocs, and students. Particularly fruitful discussions should be acknowledged in the paper. You should review a draft of the paper with your advisor, however the paper must be your own work. Members of the Committee reserve the right to not answer every question, but you should feel free to *ask* any questions, especially questions of clarification. General principles of how to ensure compliance with the rules of academic integrity can be found at https://oaa.osu.edu/coamtensuggestions.html. You are *not* expected to present original research, but to demonstrate the ability to digest the literature and synthesize a coherent picture and understanding of your specific topic and its broader context. You should make sure you understand the core concepts of your paper very well. This understanding is not expected (but also not forbidden) to be at the detailed level of a front-line researcher working on this problem, but your paper should be useful and understandable to a graduate student interested in this area. Do not attempt to cover too much material, and make sure you understand and can explain everything you include in the paper.

The oral portion of the exam will be given on **[Date]** at **[Time]** in **[Room]**. For the oral exam you should prepare a 15-20 minute presentation of your paper. You should review a draft of your slides with your advisor, however the presentation must be your own work. You should practice the presentation with a group of students who have taken the candidacy exam in a similar research area. The Committee will ask you questions during and after your presentation. These questions may diverge from the specific subject matter of your paper at the discretion of the members. The Committee will try to ensure a deep understanding of the core concepts underlying your topic. More detailed information about the Doctoral Candidacy Examination can be found in Graduate School Handbook at xxxx and in the Physics Graduate Program Handbook at <https://physics.osu.edu/candidacy-exam-info>.

Good Luck!

Sincerely yours,

Prof. X  
Advisor, for the Advisory Committee

cc: Profs. Y, Z

1Alternatively, the student can be asked here to select relevant subtopic(s) themselves, but it must be clear that a focused discussion is necessary.