Exam in Hebrew Language and Literature

The qualifying exam in Hebrew language and literature is two-and-a-half hours in length. Students are allowed to use an unmarked Hebrew Bible (hard copy). Dictionaries are not permitted.

Passages that appear on the exam are chosen from sections of the Bible that students identify and prepare in advance, in each of these categories:

1. A book of the Pentateuch or the Former Prophets (i.e., a work of standard Hebrew prose), or a continuous section of approximately 30-50 chapters from those books.
2. About 30-40 chapters from the Latter Prophets. Students may combine continuous portions from one of the Major Prophets (e.g., Isaiah 1-12 plus 40-66), or several books of the Minor Prophets.
3. Half of the Psalter, either Psalms 1-75 or Psalms 76-150.

For the exam itself, students are asked to offer a translation that is transparent to the Hebrew while also making sense and reading smoothly in English. For the prose passage, questions will be posed about the morphology and/or syntax of selected words and phrases. Brief answers will suffice. For the poetic passages, students will also be asked to comment succinctly on elements of poetic form and style, as well as specific literary devices (e.g., rhythm, verbal repetition, assonance and alliteration, notable modes of expression).