CURRENT CATALOG COPY:

Preliminary Examination

The student working toward a doctoral degree must pass a comprehensive preliminary examination. The purpose of this exam is to determine the student’s understanding of his or her major and minor fields and also to assess the student’s capability for research. Students must enroll for a minimum of 3 credits during terms in which they undertake departmental written or oral preliminary examinations.

Written Comprehensive Examination

Most programs require a written comprehensive examination to be taken before the oral preliminary examination. If a written examination is required, it must be completed prior to the oral preliminary examination. The content, length, timing, passing standard, and repeatability of this examination are at the discretion of the major department. The general rules and structure of this examination, however, must be provided in writing to all candidates for this examination and a current copy of these guidelines must be on file with the Graduate School. Copies of the written examination (questions and student’s answers) must be available to all members of the student’s doctoral committee at least one week prior to the oral preliminary examination.

Oral Preliminary Examination

The oral preliminary examination is taken near the completion of the student’s course work. The oral examination is conducted by the student’s doctoral committee, and should cover the student’s knowledge in his or her major and minor subjects. The exam may cover the student’s proposed research topic, although no more than one-half the time should be devoted to specific aspects of the proposal. The examination should be scheduled for at least two hours, and the exam date must be scheduled in the Graduate School at least one week in advance. If more than one negative vote is recorded by the examining committee, the candidate will have failed the oral examination. No more than two re-examinations are permitted by the Graduate School, although academic units may allow fewer re-examinations.

At least one complete academic term must elapse between the time of the preliminary oral examination and the final oral examination. If more than five years elapse between these two examinations, the candidate will be required to take another preliminary oral examination.
Graduate Examination Policies
Students must enroll for a minimum of 3 credits during terms in which they undertake graduate examinations.

Comprehensive Examination

The student working toward a doctoral degree must pass a comprehensive preliminary examination, which may be written, oral or both. (written and/or oral). The purpose of this examination is to determine the student’s understanding of his or her major and minor fields and also to assess the student’s capability for research. The policy regarding the content, length, timing, passing standard, and repeatability of this examination are at the discretion of the major department set by the appropriate academic unit. A current copy of this policy. The general rules and structure of this examination, however, must be provided in writing to all candidates for this examination and a current copy of these guidelines must be on file with the Graduate School. If there were a written component of the Comprehensive Examination, copies of the written examination (questions and student’s answers) must be available to all members of the student’s doctoral committee at least one week prior to the oral preliminary examination. 

Oral Preliminary Examination

The oral Preliminary Examination is taken near the completion of the student’s course work. The oral examination is conducted by the student’s doctoral committee, and should assess the student’s knowledge in their specialty area(s). The examination may cover the student’s proposed research topic, although no more than one-half the time should be devoted to specific aspects of the proposal. The examination should be scheduled for at least two hours, and the examination date must be scheduled in the Graduate School at least one week in advance. If more than one negative vote is recorded by the examining committee, the candidate will have failed the oral examination. No more than two re-examinations are permitted by the Graduate School, although academic units may allow fewer re-examinations.

Final Oral Examination

Students will present and defend their dissertations in a public forum, oral examination. Note that the meeting may be closed to the public when the committee questions the student and deliberates on whether the student has passed the examination. At least one complete academic term must elapse between the time of the Oral Preliminary oral Examination and the Final oral Examination. If more than five years elapse between these two examinations, the candidate will be required to take another preliminary oral examination.