# Quick Reference Guide to Preliminary Exams

For more details about policy and expectations see Graduate Handbook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Requirements</th>
<th>Expected Variation</th>
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<td>Testing over student-declared areas of expertise (2-3 areas)</td>
<td>Development of reading lists; Relationship among coursework and declared areas.</td>
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| **"Meeting" semester before exam**  
Advisor leads coordination of exam; exam co-developed among all committee members  
Meeting decides terms of exam, types of questions, probable timing, etc. | Exact date of meeting; Virtual/digital meeting vs. face-to-face; Individual student meetings (in addition to, not as a substitute for, advisor coordination of the exam). |
| **Research Essay (Written A)**  
Journal quality submission (or equivalent)  
Complete academic argument (not a dissertation proposal methods chapter, proposal, or lit review)  
Student=first/solo author | Extent of writing and revision required before submission to exam committee; Mentor of the writing process; Word count of research paper; Whether or not the paper has already been submitted and/or accepted for publication. |
| **"Traditional" In-house, Take-home, or Combo Questions (Written B)** | 3-4 questions; Word count of answers; Weight of each question; “Type” of question; Extent of student involvement in writing and/or knowledge of specific question |
| **Timing & Administration**  
Taken semester after or last semester of coursework (not during orientation week; not same day as proposal defense)  
Exam clock begins when student “turns in” Research Essay (Written A) to Silvia (to be distributed to committee with Written B, when completed)  
10 days for completion of in-house/take home questions  
21 days total from start of exam to oral defense  
Exam administered through Silvia; **SIGNED Preliminary Exam Administration Form due to Silvia at least 1 Month before beginning of exam** | Exact dates; Take-home or in-house time allotments for questions; “Breaks” in between questions. |
| **Oral Exam**  
Over Written A and B, as well as further development of theory/method issues related to dissertation if needed.  
Pass or Fail (majority including chair necessary for Pass)  
Usually about 90-120 minutes | Opening presentation; Q&A procedure; opportunities to revise written portion with or without an additional oral portion of the exam. Ora |