

ELPA PhD Exam Sequence

1st Exam - ELPA Qualifying Exam

Purpose

The main purpose of the qualifying exam/paper requirement is to assess the extent to which each ELPA Ph.D. student has achieved mastery of core Departmental content, as related to strand and specialization, and to gauge students' readiness for future doctoral study. Evidence of mastery enables the student and dissertation committee to proceed with confidence to the dissertation phase of their program. The results also inform faculty about features of the program that are satisfactory and that need attention.

Paper Option

If you plan to meet the qualifying exam requirement using the paper option, you should have a conversation about it with your advisor early in the program. Most students who choose the paper option are engaged in research as a project assistant or through their work, or have access to data or experiences conducive to data collection for research through their work or volunteer activities. The qualifying paper can be developed through elaboration of a course assignment, although the paper typically requires significantly more investment than a typical research paper for a course.

Some students develop a pilot study or significant literature review (such as is published in the *Review of Educational Research*) related to their dissertation for the qualifying paper. In any case, students interested in the paper option should talk to their advisor early in the program about pursuing this option, and should work with faculty in the program to define the parameters of the study and be sure to understand expectations for successful performance on the paper option.

Qualifying Exam Eligibility

After completion of a minimum of 18 credits of ELPA course work and in consultation with faculty advisor.

Can be completed at any time during the academic year.

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2nd Exam – Preliminary Exam (dissertation proposal)

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The preliminary examination is a significant milestone in a doctoral student's academic career. It is given to assess knowledge of areas within the academic discipline. Passing of the preliminary area exam, obtaining approval of the minor if the major program requires it, and completing all the major course requirements culminate in admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

Students have 5 years from the date of passing their preliminary examination to take their final oral examination and submit their dissertation. Failure to complete their degree within this 5-year period may result in their having to retake the preliminary examination and be re-admitted to candidacy.

During the fall and spring term, all preliminary Ph.D. exams and final oral Ph.D. exams must be scheduled between the first day of the semester through commencement. During summer, preliminary and final oral Ph.D. exams must be scheduled during the eight-week summer session (typically the third Monday in June through the first Friday in August). See the summer timetable for exact dates. Scheduling exam requires 3-week notice.

Eligibility

Pass the qualifying exam. Completion of or expect to complete the research requirements during the semester in which the preliminary exam is taken. The student's program plan, research requirement plan, and minor option plan must have been approved by the Department prior to taking the preliminary examination.

Preliminary Exam Committee – Minimum of 3 Members *

- 1) ELPA faculty advisor (can also have a co-advisor)
- 2) ELPA graduate faculty
- 3) graduate faculty OR faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the executive committee (or its equivalent).

3rd Exam – Final Oral Exam

The Ph.D. final oral exam must be passed as a partial and final requirement for completion of the degree. The student must have completed or expect to complete ALL program requirements during the semester in which the final oral examination is taken.

Certification of program completion must have been obtained from the Departmental Chairperson prior to scheduling the examination.

During the fall and spring term, all preliminary Ph.D. exams and final oral Ph.D. exams must be scheduled between the first day of the semester though commencement. During summer, preliminary and final oral Ph.D. exams must be scheduled during the eight-week summer session (typically the third Monday in June through the first Friday in August). See the summer timetable for exact dates. Scheduling exam requires 3-week notice.

Final Oral Exam Committee – Minimum of 4 Members *

- 1) ELPA faculty advisor (can also have a co-advisor)
- 2) ELPA graduate faculty
- 3) ELPA graduate faculty OR faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the executive committee (or its equivalent).
- 4) UW-Madison graduate faculty

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*Graduate School Policy - PhD Committees

After September 1, 2017, the Graduate School requirements for graduate committees are as follows:

1. The chair or co-chair of the committee must be Graduate Faculty from the student's program. The UW–Madison Faculty Policies and Procedures 3.05B stipulates that "the faculty of the Graduate School includes all university faculty defined in 1.02 holding professional rank (professor, associate professor, assistant professor or instructor) in any department with graduate program authority, including those with zero-time appointments in such departments." Committee members who have retired or resigned from the University automatically retain Graduate Faculty status for one year; after one year they are permitted to serve as co-chair or other non-Graduate Faculty committee member. The co-advisor/co-chair will be designated on dissertation documentation.
2. Doctoral committees/final oral examination committees must have at least 4 members representing more than one graduate program, 3 of whom must be UW-Madison graduate faculty or former UW-Madison graduate faculty up to one year after resignation or retirement. At least one of the 4 members must be from outside of the student's major program or major field (often from the minor field).
3. At least 3 committee members of all doctoral/final oral examination committees must be designated as readers.
4. The required 4th member of a doctoral committee/final oral examination committee, 4th member of an MFA committee, or 3rd member of a master's thesis committee, as well as any additional members, all retain voting rights. They may be from any of the following categories, as approved by the program executive committee (or its equivalent): graduate faculty, faculty from a department without a graduate program, academic staff (including emeritus faculty), visiting faculty, faculty from other institutions, scientists, research associates, and other individuals deemed qualified by the executive committee (or its equivalent).