

Preliminary Examination Guidelines *Integrative Review Paper*

Following successful completion of the Master's Portfolio, students will complete an integrative review paper. This paper will serve as the comprehensive examination for advancement to doctoral candidacy. The goal of the paper is for students to thoroughly investigate the literature on a focused topic of interest and demonstrate competency in effectively analyzing and synthesizing a literature on the topic. These skills, such as analyzing and synthesizing a literature, critiquing methods, using empirical evidence to support arguments, discussing implications for diverse/marginalized groups, developing future directions, and writing clearly and concisely, are critical for completing a dissertation and being a successful researcher. Although the topic of the prelim review paper does not have to match your dissertation topic, this paper can serve as the basis for your dissertation project and other research.

Prelim review papers will be due four months after notification that the portfolio has been approved by the clinical faculty. Typically, the paper will be due in March or April of a student's third year. For students entering with a Master's degree, the date will be established with the Director of Clinical Training.

Students will work with their mentor to develop a topic for the paper. The scope and quality of the paper should be typical of what is published in journals such as *Psychological Bulletin*, *Clinical Psychology Review*, or a similar caliber journal appropriate to the area of research or scholarly activity. Once the topic has been agreed upon, students will review the literature and submit an annotated bibliography of their literature review to their mentor for approval. The mentor approval and the bibliography will then be sent to the DCT for program approval **no later than 2 months before the due date of the final paper.** There is no required format for the bibliography or specific number of articles to include, but students should coordinate with their mentor to identify the optimal format for their topic/paper. In general, bibliographies include brief summaries of articles relevant to the different sections of the prelim review paper, with a particular emphasis on the elements of the articles that will help the student convey particular points/information in the paper.

Once the topic and bibliography are formally approved, the student may not consult with anyone on the paper. The timeline is constructed to reflect that the literature review is the foundation of the paper, not the completed product. The more difficult aspect of the paper will come after the literature has been reviewed. This is the critique, integration, and conceptual work of the review.

Papers must be typed, doubled spaced, in APA format. Margins must be 1" all around. The paper cannot exceed 40 pages (excluding references and tables/figures). Font must be 12-point Times New Roman or Arial. The paper is submitted via e-mail to the DCT and Graduate Program Assistant. Two reviewers will be selected; the primary reviewer will be the student's mentor, with the second appointed by the DCT.

Review criteria:

For each item below, each reviewer will indicate whether the threshold was or was not met. See the Preliminary Examination Rubric for specific definitions for each rating for each item.

1. Focus/Purpose of the paper (topic)
2. Contribution to the literature
3. Critical methods evaluation
4. Synthesis and integration of the literature
5. Breadth of the literature covered
6. Empirical evidence
7. Diversity, equity, and inclusion discussion
8. Discussion of future directions
9. Overall quality of the writing in the paper, including flow, grammar, and format

Following submission of the paper, two readers (the mentor and a second reader appointed by the DCT), will independently read the paper and each complete the Preliminary Examination Rubric within approximately two weeks of submission. Feedback will be distributed to students by the DCT. Students will then revise and re-submit their prelim based on the feedback and re-submit the paper within four weeks (Official Submission #1). Students may consult with their readers for clarification of feedback: students may meet with each reader for up to one hour for each meeting. These meetings should be scheduled as quickly as possible to clarify and discuss the written reviews early in the revision process.

Faculty readers will then independently review the revised submission, complete the Preliminary Examination Rubric within approximately two weeks of submission, and make a recommendation regarding the outcome of the paper. Any differences in votes will lead to a third faculty reader completing a review. The clinical faculty will vote to approve the readers' recommendations. Discussion among faculty will be held until consensus is reached. The vote will be: pass or revise and resubmit/attempt failed. After these votes, results will be communicated in writing to the student by the DCT. Successful completion of the review paper will begin the Graduate School's 4-year rule for completion of all degree requirements.

Should a student not pass, they will be permitted a second submission of the paper, Official Submission #2 (or preparation of a new topic) which will be due four months from notification of results of the first. The Graduate School permits only two attempts to pass comprehensive examinations. The initial submission and its revision (Official Submission #1) will be considered the first attempt; students not passing after this attempt will be allowed a second re-write constituting the second submission (Official Submission #2). Students with any questions or concerns about the process can consult with the DCT and/or Department Chair.

Preliminary Exam - *Sample timeline of tasks*

Note: Specific dates below for illustrative purposes only

Prior to start of prelim: Work with mentor to finalize topic; find and read articles; generate reference reading and tracking systems; develop outline

December 1: Prelim clock starts

- Write bibliography
- Work on prelim paper

February 1: Mentor-approved bibliography due to DCT and Graduate Program Assistant

- DCT will reply with bibliography approval or follow-up questions
- Write prelim paper
 - Once the topic and bibliography are approved, the student may not consult with anyone on the paper

April 1: **Prelim due** to DCT and Graduate Program Assistant (*Initial Submission*)

April 1-20:

- DCT distributes prelims to faculty readers
- Faculty readers review papers and submit completed rating forms to DCT and Graduate Program Assistant

April 20: DCT distributes reviews to students and their mentors, which starts students' one-month clock for the prelim revision process.

- Meet with each faculty reader for up to one hour each to discuss feedback
- Revise prelim paper and address all feedback/suggestions
- Prepare response letter that summarizes the changes you made based on your readers' feedback and suggestions

May 21: **Revised prelim (Official Submission #1) and response letter due** to DCT and Graduate Program Assistant

May 21-June 8:

- DCT distributes revised prelims to faculty readers
- Faculty readers review papers and submit completed rating forms to DCT and Graduate Program Assistant

After June 8: DCT distributes reviews to students and their mentors

- Students that pass the prelim can begin to work on their dissertation proposal
- Students that did not pass the prelim will start a new four-month clock for **Official Submission #2**. This attempt is the last opportunity to pass the prelim (i.e., there is no revise and resubmit after this attempt). Students should meet again with both readers to devise a plan for this submission.

Resources that may be helpful in preparing the review paper:

1. Prior review articles in student's area of research, published in quality journals.
2. Pan, L.M. (2003). *Preparing literature reviews*. Los Angeles: Pyczak Publishing.
"A literature review is a *synthesis* of the literature on a topic. The process of synthesizing involves interpreting, evaluating, and integrating individual pieces of literature to create a new, original work...it is clear that a simple string of summaries of the works of others is a product that should *not* be called a 'literature review'" (p. 1).
3. Bem, D. J. (1995). Writing a review article for *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 172-177. (also available in Kazdin's (1998) *Methodological issues and strategies in clinical research* (2nd ed)).
4. Cooper, H., & Koenka, A. C. (2012). The overview of reviews: unique challenges and opportunities when research syntheses are the principal elements of new integrative scholarship. *American Psychologist*, 67, 446-462. doi: 10.1037/a0027119
5. The faculty has compiled a library of preliminary examinations that are good exemplars. These are available by contacting Ms. Maggie Leahy.
6. Literature search resources
 - PSYC Info: see [here](#)
 - Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>
 - Research Rabbit: <https://www.researchrabbit.ai/>
 - Elicit: <https://elicit.org/>
7. Citation managers
 - Endnote: <https://library.louisville.edu/endnote/download>
 - Zotero: <https://www.zotero.org/>