

ECE PhD Preliminary Examination Checklist

Complete?	Step <i>(See below for details)</i>	Timing
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Schedule the final examination with your advisory committee members.	At least 3 weeks before the desired date of the exam
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Reserve a room for the final examination.	After #1 is complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Submit Form 8 in myPurdue to officially schedule the final examination.	After #1 is complete
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Provide a copy of your thesis proposal to all committee members.	At least 2 weeks before the exam

About the Preliminary Examination

Purpose: The preliminary examination is given to determine whether a student is adequately prepared to conceive and undertake a suitable research topic.

Format: The preliminary examination may include a written exam component, if the doctoral advisory committee so requires, but normally it is an oral examination primarily associated with a written thesis proposal.

Before beginning to write your thesis, you are strongly advised to review the information on the [Graduate School Thesis and Dissertation Office website](#).

During the preliminary examination, the student is typically expected to exhibit:

- A clear understanding of the research problem
- An awareness of pertinent background literature and current efforts in the research area of interest
- Some initial progress toward solving the research problem
- A plan to execute the remainder of the thesis research

Timing: Students may not schedule their preliminary examination until after they have submitted their final plan of study.

Students must complete the preliminary examination at least two academic sessions/semesters (counting summer sessions) for which they are registered before taking the Final Examination. Since one goal of the preliminary examination is to provide research direction and feedback, it should be taken early enough to allow the doctoral advisory committee to make an effective contribution.

To ensure timely academic progress, the preliminary examination is to be taken by PhD students with an MS after no more than six semesters in the PhD program and by direct PhD students after no more than eight semesters in the program.

Delays: If this deadline is not met, students must request an extension of the deadline. The delay request form is available from Elisheba VanWinkle (vanwinke@purdue.edu) in the ECE Graduate Office. The form must include:

- The reason(s) for the delay and specific actions planned to remedy the situation.
- A new proposed date for the preliminary exam, no more than one year past the deadline.
- Signatures of the major professor and all members of the doctoral advisory committee.
 - Once submitted back to the ECE Graduate Office, the form will be reviewed and approved by the ECE Associate Head for Graduate and Professional Programs.

A completed form is required each semester past the deadline or new proposed date before registration for the subsequent semester is allowed.

Exam results:

- **If you pass** the preliminary examination, the doctoral advisory committee certifies that you have passed the examination by signing the “Report of the Preliminary Examining Committee” (Form 10) through the Graduate School Web Database.
- **If you fail** the preliminary examination, at least one academic session (fall, spring, or summer) must elapse before a re-examination is permitted.

Scheduling the Preliminary Examination

Important! Complete Steps 1-3 at least 3 weeks before the preliminary examination date.

Step 1: Schedule your preliminary examination with your advisory committee members.

At least 3 weeks before the desired date of the preliminary examination, consult with all the members of your advisory committee to find a suitable date and time to hold the examination. Your examination should be held on the West Lafayette campus or may, with the approval of your doctoral advisory committee, be held virtually.

Step 2: Reserve a room for the preliminary examination.

Once you have established the date of your preliminary examination, reserve a room:

1. Go to the [Resource Allocation Tool](#).
2. Enter the desired date and select a room.
3. Click **View Calendar**.
4. Scroll down to see the calendar.
5. After confirming the availability of the room, select **Request Reservation** in the left-hand navigation.
6. Select the room and enter a date and time; click **Continue**.

7. In the **Select an Administrator** list, select Elisheba Van Winkle.
8. Select a reason for the reservation (thesis defense) and then click **Request Reservation**.
 - You will receive an email confirmation.

If you are unable to reserve a room using the instructions above, send the request by email to Elisheba Van Winkle (vanwinke@purdue.edu).

On the day of the exam: If the room is locked, see an area secretary for a key. If the area secretary is not available, see the ECE Graduate Office (MSEE 140).

Step 3: Submit Form 8 in myPurdue to officially schedule the preliminary examination and submit an abstract.

Follow these steps to submit Form 8 and submit your abstract:

1. Log into [myPurdue](#) and go to the **Plan of Study Generator** under the **Academics** tab.
2. Complete and submit the Form 8.
 - This request requires approvals from the Graduate Office, the chair of your advisory committee, and the Graduate School.
3. Send an abstract (250 words or less) of the thesis research clearly defining the problem and its significance to Matt Golden (goldenm@purdue.edu).

Late requests: Please be aware that late requests to schedule your preliminary examination do not allow sufficient time to process your request and adequately publicize your examination date. Any requests to schedule a preliminary examination less than three weeks in advance must be approved by Matt Golden and will be approved only in exceptional circumstances.

Examination posting: The time and location of the preliminary examination will be posted on the [ECE website](#). University regulations permit visitors to attend the preliminary examination. Such visitors are permitted to ask questions of the candidate after having been recognized by the major professor, but they may not be present while the committee deliberates on its decision.

Step 4: Provide a copy of your thesis proposal to all committee members at least 2 weeks before the preliminary exam.

Results: The doctoral advisory committee will report the results of the preliminary examination through the Graduate School Web Database.