Preliminary Examination for Ph.D.

The Preliminary Examination is given to determine whether a student is adequately prepared to conceive and undertake a suitable research topic. Students may not schedule their Preliminary Examination until after they have passed the Qualifying Examination and submitted their final plan of study. 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.

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. The procedure to be followed in scheduling the Preliminary Examination is outlined in Appendix D of the Doctoral Handbook. The written thesis proposal should be submitted to members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee at least two weeks before the examination.

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.

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.

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. If this deadline is not met, students must request an extension of the deadline. The delay request form is available in the ECE Graduate Office. The reason(s) for the delay in taking the Preliminary Examination and specific actions planned to remedy the situation must be indicated on the form. The form should also include a new proposed date for the prelim, no more than one year past the deadline. The form must be signed by all members of the Doctoral Advisory Committee and the ECE Graduate Coordinator. A completed form is required each semester past the deadline or new proposed date before registration for the subsequent semester is allowed.

Before beginning to write your thesis, you are strongly advised to review the information on the Graduate School Thesis/Dissertation Office website.  
http://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/research/thesis/index.html
SCHEDULING THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

Schedule your Preliminary Examination with your Major Professor, your Doctoral Advisory Committee, and the ECE Graduate Office at least 3 weeks prior to the proposed date of the exam.

Reserve a room for your Prelim Exam:
- Go to https://engineering.purdue.edu/ECN/Resources/Tools/RAT/Entities/ECE
- Select the room you wish to schedule and check the availability of that room
- After confirming the availability of the room, select "Request Reservation"
- Click on Elisheba Van Winkle under the list of managers--you will then be able to submit the request online
- Should the system not allow you to make a request, send the request by email to vanwinke@purdue.edu
- You will receive a confirmation email once the room has been reserved
- 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.

A request to schedule the Prelim Exam is two steps:
1. An electronic request to schedule the exam (Form 8) should be submitted through myPurdue, under the academic tab and the Plan of Study Generator, three weeks prior to the exam date. This request requires approvals from the Graduate Office, the chair of your advisory committee, and the Graduate School.
2. Send an abstract (no more than 250 words) of the thesis research clearly defining the problem and its significance three weeks prior to the exam date, to the ECE Graduate Office (goldenm@purdue.edu).

Follow the steps in the Preliminary Exam Check Sheet to complete the process for requesting the exam.

Please be aware that late requests to schedule your Examination do not allow sufficient time to process your request and adequately publicize your examination date. Any requests to schedule an Examination less than three weeks in advance must be approved by the ECE Graduate Coordinator, and will be approved only in exceptional circumstances.

Your examination is to be held on the West Lafayette Purdue Campus. You and all members of your Advisory Committee are expected to be physically present. The time and location of the Examination will be posted on the ECE Graduate website. University regulations permit visitors to attend the 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 Examination Committee deliberates on its decision.

The Advisory Committee will report the results of the Examination through the Graduate School Web Database.
PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION CHECK SHEET

Please use this form to track the progress of your Preliminary Exam request.

☐ Schedule Exam with your Advisory Committee Members

Consult with all the members of your Advisory Committee to find a suitable date and time to hold the examination. You and all members of the Examining Committee should be physically present for the examination. You and the chair, or co-chairs, are required to be physically present. Prior approval* to conduct the examination must be obtained from the ECE Graduate Office where a member of your Examining Committee on sabbatical or long-term leave could not attend physically. Send request by email to Matt Golden (goldenm@purdue.edu) to obtain approval for a member to not attend physically.

* With prior approval from the ECE Graduate Office, a member other than you or the chair, or co-chairs, could be absent physically, but then you must indicate below the name, reason, and in detail what alternate arrangements you have made with this member of your committee to present your work.

Name of member: ........................................................................................................
Reason why the member could not attend:
........................................................................................................................................
Details of alternate arrangement you made with this member:
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☐ Reserve a Room for the Exam (following the steps above).

☐ Submit Form 8 to officially schedule the Exam

Submit an electronic exam request (Form 8) through myPurdue and submit the abstract to Matt Golden (goldenm@purdue.edu) three weeks before my exam date, following the directions above. Once this request is processed, the thesis title or abstract cannot be altered for the exam announcement.

☐ Deliver a copy of the thesis to all committee members at least two weeks before the exam.