Preliminary Examination

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 (counting regular semesters and 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. 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; and
- 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” furnished by the ECE Graduate Office. 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 using a form 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 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 before registration for the subsequent semester is allowed.
SCHEDULING THE FINAL AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS

Schedule your Preliminary and Final Examinations 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. The Final Examination must be completed before the semester deadline (approximately one week before the last day of classes) as indicated by the Graduate School, but we strongly recommend you do not wait until this late date. Check the Graduate School website or in the ECE Graduate Office for the specific deadline. Those who are registered for “Exam Only” must complete their Final Examination by the eighth week of classes (fourth week of a summer session).

To reserve a room for your Preliminary or Final Examination:
- Go to https://engineering.purdue.edu/ECN/Resources/Tools/RAT/;
- 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 Angela Rainwater 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 asrainwater@purdue.edu.

A request to schedule the Preliminary or Final Examination should be sent by e-mail to the Graduate Program Administrator at goldenm@ecn.purdue.edu. Please complete the Preliminary/Final Exam Check Sheet – attached to this document – before sending in your request to the Graduate Program Administrator.

When making your request to schedule an examination, please supply the ECE Graduate Office with the following information:
- Your full name;
- Thesis proposal title or thesis title;
- Your Primary Area;
- Names of Advisory Committee members, with the Major Professor identified;
- Faculty identifiers and areas—in case of faculty outside of the School of ECE, please supply the person’s department and email address;
- Date, time and place of the examination;
- An abstract (no more than 250 words) of the thesis research clearly defining the problem and its significance;
- The completed “Preliminary/Final Exam Check Sheet”.

After receiving your scheduling request for the Final Examination, the ECE Graduate Office will seek approval from the Graduate School for your Doctoral Advisory Committee to conduct the examination. Please be aware that late requests to schedule your Final Examination do not allow sufficient time to process your request and adequately publicize your examination date. Any requests to schedule a Final Examination less than three weeks in advance must be approved by the ECE Graduate Coordinator, and will be approved only in exceptional circumstances.
FINAL/PRELIMINARY EXAM CHECK SHEET

Before you submit your examination request via email (goldenm), please fill out this check sheet, sign it, and bring it to the ECE Graduate Program Office.

☐ I have reserved a room for my examination, following the directions as above.

☐ I have consulted with my advisory committee, and have found a date and time for my examination that is acceptable to all. In addition, all committee members intend to be physically present for the examination.

◆ In case a member of your examination committee is on a long-term absence from campus (such as sabbatical leave), you may hold your examination in their absence, if you make alternate arrangements for that committee member to examine your work. If this is the case, please explain the reason your committee member will be absent, and indicate in detail what arrangements you have made to present your examination. Please note: This request must be approved by the Graduate Office before your examination request will be processed. CHAIRS OR CO-CHAIRS MUST BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT FOR YOUR EXAMINATION.

☐ I will deliver a copy of my thesis to all committee members at least two weeks before the exam.

☐ My thesis should be kept confidential.

☐ I understand that I must send an electronic exam request to Matt Golden (goldenm) three weeks before my exam date, following the directions as above. I also understand that once this request is processed, I cannot alter my thesis title or abstract.

Exam Date____________________

Name as it will appear on Thesis

_______________________________________________________________

Please Print

_________________________________ Date____________________

Your Signature