

If the student has submitted their SAP to one or more outside conferences and it was not accepted, but they have reached the end of their third year, they can satisfy the presentation requirement by presenting their project as a poster or talk during the UO Graduate School's Graduate Student Research Forum in their fourth year. As long as the student has made the poster or written the presentation (and the student's committee members have seen and signed off on one of these products), the student will not be considered "behind" on requirements if s/he is just waiting for the actual conference (or Grad Forum) to happen. However, the presentation at an actual conference or Grad Forum must be made before the SAP requirement will be considered fully complete.

- (6) Besides the five options described above, it is possible for the SAP to take other forms, as long as the goals of the requirement (as described above) are met. For example, the student could participate in an internship outside of academia, or play a major role in developing public policy. As with the other SAP options, the project should result in some concrete "product" (e.g., manuscript, presentation, or policy document) that can be used to evaluate the value of the SAP.

Deadline:

To stay on track with the requirements, students should start planning for their SAP as soon as they complete their FYP in the Fall of their second year. The student should also discuss these plans with their Advising Committee during their second year winter advising meeting.

Students may choose whether they wish to propose and complete their SAP or their Prelims first, although it is expected that students will usually be working on both requirements in parallel. Some students may want to complete their Prelims first because, for example, they have a clear idea for follow up studies for their FYP that they want to write up for a fellowship grant application. Other students may want to learn a new method not common in their primary lab, completing the SAP first with the goal to then use that method in their future work.

If the student wishes to focus on the SAP first, it must be proposed by the end of the spring term of the student's second year, and completed by the end of the spring term of their third year. For students completing their Prelims first, the SAP proposal is due by the fall term of the student's third year, with completion of the project by Oct. 15 of the fourth year.

For clinical students, the Supporting Area Requirement must be completed before applying for internship. Clinical faculty will not recommend a student for internship if this requirement has not been fulfilled. Upon completion, the student must submit a completion form, signed by the committee and the GEC chair, to the graduate secretary.

Major Preliminary Examination

The Major Preliminary Examination ("Prelims") provides an opportunity for students to integrate their knowledge of a relatively broad area of psychology (e.g., traditionally developmental, social, clinical, cognitive, or physiological, and more recently developmental psychopathology, emotion, or cognitive neuroscience) and to demonstrate their scholastic competence in this area. Students are ready to Advance to Candidacy after the completion of the SAP and Prelims (and, for clinical students, all clinical coursework and practica).

Each student's Major Preliminary Examination is designed and evaluated by a faculty committee comprised of three faculty members (the Major Prelim Committee). Two of the three committee members, including the chair, must be current tenure-related Psychology Department faculty. All of the committee members must be UO tenure-related faculty. For clinical students, two of the three members must be tenure-related Clinical faculty. The chair of the Major Prelim Committee must be different from the chair of the Supporting Area Committee.

For students entering the doctoral program in Fall 2013 – Fall 2019, please see *Temporary Modifications to PhD Requirements Due to COVID* on [page 24](#).

The major preliminary examination must take one of three forms—a written examination, a review paper with subsequent public presentation, or a grant proposal with subsequent public presentation.

- (1) The *written examination* is designed by the Major Prelim Committee and based largely on a reading list developed by the student in consultation with the faculty committee. In developing the list and constructing the examination, the student and committee should remember that the goal of the Major Preliminary Examination is to demonstrate the student's grasp of a broad area within psychology. (Reading lists and past exam questions are kept on file by the Graduate Secretary and should be consulted by the student and committee members.) The formal examination may be given either in one sitting or as a take-home exam, as agreed upon by the Prelim Committee. The Prelim Committee members grade the answers to the exam questions and discuss whether the exam as a whole is to be graded "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." The Prelim Committee's decision must be unanimous. It is common that the committee asks the student to rewrite individual exam answers if they are not satisfactory for a passing grade.

For the other two options (described below), students should consult with their advisor and/or potential Major Prelims Committee chair (often the same person), as well as other relevant faculty (other advising committee members and/or potential Major Prelims Committee members) and do the following before proposing their project: (a) review the relevant literature; (b) identify a gap in scientific knowledge; (c) discuss the point(s) at which committee members will give feedback on the proposal; and (d) determine the timing of the presentation (e.g., do the committee members need to have approved the written proposal prior to the presentation?).

- (2) The Major Prelims requirement may be satisfied by the completion of an integrative *review paper* that will critically review a focused area or sub-area of a field, ideally in a way that points to knowledge gaps that could be filled with a dissertation project. This will be followed by a presentation about the paper either at one of the departmental brownbags or at a lab meeting. An announcement must be made to the department no fewer than two weeks in advance of the presentation; at least two prelim committee members must be in attendance at the presentation; and the presentation has to be open to any department members who wish to attend. The review paper may undergo several rounds of revisions until the Prelim Committee considers the paper to be "passing." In the presentation, the student is expected to defend their paper and demonstrate their competence within a relatively broad area of psychology. The Prelim Exam is graded on both the paper and the presentation as "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." The Prelim Committee's decision must be unanimous.

- (3) The Major Preliminary Examination requirement may be satisfied by writing a grant proposal. This will be followed by a presentation about the grant proposal either at one of the departmental brownbags or at a lab meeting. An announcement must be made to the department no fewer than two weeks in advance of the presentation; at least two prelim committee members must be in attendance for the presentation; and the presentation has to be open to any department members who wish to attend. The grant proposal should be written in the actual format of an extramural granting agency that would potentially fund the proposed research and has to be a proposal for a grant that would have the potential to substantially fund the research and/or support the student during the course of the research. Only grant proposals that require the following as part of the application can be used for this prelims option: (a) background/significance for the research topic, (b) a research plan with clearly stated hypotheses, (c) sampling strategy and power analysis, (d) details about measures, paradigms, tasks, and procedures to be employed, (e) plan for data analysis, and (f) timeline for project.

NIH NRSAs are an acceptable grant proposal for this prelims options; guidance from faculty in various areas will be solicited to help decide whether other types of grant proposals are eligible. Proposal formats will be considered by the GEC chair in consultation with faculty in various areas and will be judged on a variety of criteria including the extent to which the proposal is a kind that could substantially benefit the student's career. Students will specify which granting agency they are submitting to when they complete the department's Preliminary Examination Proposal form.

The student is not required to actually submit the grant proposal to a granting agency as part of the prelims requirement (although submission is encouraged). The student could conceivably submit the grant proposal to a granting agency prior to submitting it to his/her prelims committee. However, regardless of the student's decision about submitting it to the granting agency, the student will still have to go through the department's required process for proposing to do the grant proposal option for prelims and would also still need to get his/her prelim committee to sign off on a version of the completed proposal in order to complete the prelims requirement, regardless of the status of the proposal with a granting agency. The grant proposal may undergo several rounds of revisions until the Prelim Committee considers the proposal to be complete. The Prelim Exam is graded on both the grant proposal and the presentation as "pass with distinction," "pass," or "fail." The Prelim Committee's decision must be unanimous.

A "Major Preliminary Examination Proposal" must be submitted to the GEC *before* work on the project has begun – failure to submit a proposal may mean that the student's efforts on the project are wasted if it is later determined that the project does not meet the goals of the Major Preliminary Exam requirement. The proposal is based on discussions between the student and the Major Prelim Committee (in consultation with the GEC, if needed), and it specifies the scope and format of the requirement the student has chosen and includes a preliminary reading list.

All preliminary exams must be based on a reading list approved by the student's Major Prelim Committee. From this reading list are derived either (a) written exam questions, (b) the review paper topic or (c) the core questions for a grant proposal. Completion of the Major Prelim

requirement is documented on the “Completion of Major Preliminary Examination” form, which records date, title, and format of the exam, date of presentation (if review paper or grant proposal option was taken), the grade (“pass with distinction,” “pass,” or “fail”) and includes the reading list and either exam questions or a summary of questions asked at the presentation (in the case of a review paper or grant proposal).

Failure of Prelims: If a PhD student fails his or her preliminary exam (where failure constitutes the prelim committee informing the graduate secretary via the preliminary exam form that the student has failed), the student must form a new preliminary exam committee and complete a new prelims proposal. The members may be the same as the members of the first prelims committee and the reading list and format may be the same, but if the student chooses to take an exam for the second attempt, the questions must differ from those on the first attempt. If the student initially wrote a paper or grant proposal for prelims and the paper or proposal is deemed failing, then the student’s second attempt must be an exam.

Failure to pass the prelims on two attempts is automatic cause for a student to be recommended for termination from the graduate program. What constitutes passing or failure of the prelims is left up to the prelims committee.

Deadlines:

To stay on track with the requirements, students should start planning for their Prelims as soon as they complete their FYP in the Fall of their second year. The student should also discuss these plans with their advising committee during their second year spring advising meeting.

Students may choose whether they wish to propose and complete their SAP or their Prelims first, although it is expected that students will usually be working on both requirements in parallel. Some students may want to complete their Prelims first because, for example, they have a clear idea for follow up studies for their FYP that they want to write up for a fellowship grant application. Other students may want to learn a new method not common in their primary lab, completing the SAP first with the goal to then use that method in their future work.

If the student wishes to focus on the Prelims first, they must be proposed by the end of the spring term of the student’s second year, and completed by the end of the spring term of their third year. For students completing their SAP first, the Prelims proposal is due by the fall term of the student’s third year, with completion of the project by Oct. 15 of the fourth year.

For clinical students, the Prelims must be completed before applying for internship. Clinical faculty will not recommend a student for internship if this requirement has not been fulfilled. Upon completion, the student must submit a completion form, signed by the committee and the GEC chair, to the graduate secretary.

Advancement to Candidacy

To advance to candidacy, all departmental requirements, except for the completion of the dissertation, must be met (i.e., all coursework, the first-year project, passing of the major preliminary examination, and completion of the supporting area project). This should be done by the beginning of the fourth year, or ideally sooner. Students who fail to fulfill the major prelim