POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets minimum standards for doctoral students to maintain academic good standing and satisfactory progress in their degree programs, and establishes requirements and procedures for the administration and evaluation of doctoral written and oral preliminary examinations. Programs and collegiate units may have additional and/or more stringent requirements.

**I. Requirements Upon Matriculation**

1. Students are responsible for knowing all program requirements of their doctoral program when they matriculate.
2. Upon matriculation, programs must:
	1. Provide each student a current graduate program handbook, specifying the program’s requirements and policies governing successful degree completion.
	2. Assign each student a temporary advisor.

**II. Progress Review**

1. Annual Review
	1. Programs must have a procedure to review the progress of each doctoral student at least once a year and must provide the results to the student in writing.
2. Degree Plan
	1. Doctoral students must have an approved degree plan on file with their collegiate unit prior to taking the preliminary oral exam. It is recommended that the degree plan be filed a minimum of three months prior to the exam date.
	2. If a student intends to complete a minor, the minor must be declared on the degree plan prior to taking the preliminary oral exam.
	3. The degree plan must be centrally archived in the system of record.

**III. Performance Standards**

1. **Continuous Enrollment** Students are required to enroll every semester (fall and spring) from the time of matriculation until degree conferral except for cases with an approved Leave of Absence on the student’s record.
2. **Time Limit for Earning the Doctoral Degree:** All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed and the degree awarded within eight calendar years after initial enrollment to the graduate program or the more restrictive time frame specified by the program.
	1. Students who are unable to complete the degree within the time limits described above may, with the approval of their advisor/s and program DGS, petition the program and collegiate unit for one extension of up to 24 months. Students must submit the petition for an extension prior to the end of the term in which the time limit will expire.
		* If a petition is approved, the student is notified in writing of the expectations for progress and of the expected timeline for completion and award of degree.
		* If the petition is denied, the student is notified in writing that the student will be terminated from the doctoral program.
	2. Under extraordinary circumstances, students may file a second petition for an additional extension of up to 24 months; however such petitions after the initial extension must be reviewed and approved by the student’s advisor/s, program DGS, and Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education. Students must submit the petition for an extension prior to the end of the term in which the initial extension will expire.
		* If a petition is approved, the student is notified in writing of the expectations for progress and of the expected timeline for completion and award of degree
		* If the petition is denied, the student is notified in writing that the student will be terminated from the doctoral program
	3. Students who have been terminated under such circumstances may apply for readmission to the program; however, readmission is not guaranteed.
3. **Minimum Grade Requirements** To remain in good academic standing students must meet the minimum GPA requirement specified by the graduate program or 3.000 (on a 4.000 scale) for courses being applied toward program requirements, whichever is higher. Students who have filed a doctoral degree plan must maintain a 3.000 GPA for courses included on the degree plan. Only courses with grades of A, B, C (including C-) and S may be counted toward the degree. Students who fall below the program's minimum GPA requirement may be terminated from the program.

**IV. Doctoral Preliminary Written and Oral Examinations**

1. Every doctoral student must pass a written examination in the major field.
	1. Students must be notified in writing whether or not they have passed the written examination requirement(s).
	2. Programs must record whether the student has met the written examination requirement(s) in the central system of record. Students who are reported to have failed to meet the written examination requirement(s) will be terminated from the doctoral program.
2. Every doctoral student must pass a preliminary oral examination in the major field. The preliminary oral examination is conducted as a closed examination, attended by only the student and the examining committee.
	1. The oral examination may not take place before the program has certified that the candidate has passed all written examination requirement(s).
	2. The doctoral preliminary oral examination will be graded either pass, pass with reservations, or fail.
	3. If a student fails the exam, the student may retake the examination once, if all committee members, or all committee members save one, approve this option on the Doctoral Preliminary Oral Examination form.
	4. The second attempt to pass the preliminary oral examination must use the same committee members unless an extraordinary or emergency situation necessitates a substitution.
	5. If the committee does not approve a retake, or if the student fails the second attempt, the student will be terminated from the doctoral program.
3. The doctoral preliminary oral committee must consist of at least four members, including the student’s advisor/s. All members appointed to the committee must meet the minimum standards established by the program and college. All members of the committee and the candidate must participate in the preliminary oral examination. Committee members and/or the student may participate remotely as long as all conditions for remote participation in the examination are met.
	1. At least three members (including the advisor) must be from the student's major field.
	2. At least one member must represent a field outside the major. If the student has declared a minor, the outside member, or one of the outside members, must represent the minor field.
	3. Members cannot satisfy the requirement with respect to more than one field.
4. Collegiate deans or their designated representatives at the collegiate level must verify eligibility and approve the members of the preliminary oral examination committee.
5. Voting Requirements for the Doctoral Preliminary Oral Examination:
	1. At the end of the closed examination, the candidate is excused from the room and an independent, non-binding vote is taken before discussion of the examination begins. This initial non-binding vote is intended to represent the independent assessment of each committee member of the student’s performance free from undue influence of other committee members. Following discussion, a final vote is taken and is recorded on the examination form.
	2. The outcome of the preliminary oral examination is recorded in one of three ways: pass, pass with reservations, or fail. The voting proportions necessary to pass the exam are shown in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of committee members** | ***Minimum* number of votes needed to pass (A vote to pass with reservations constitutes a passing vote)\*** |
| Four | Three |
| Five | Four |
| Six | Four |
| Seven | Five |
| \*The outcome is recorded as “pass with reservations” in situations where to achieve the *minimum* number of votes to reach a verdict of pass, any vote of pass with reservations is included. For example, on a four-person committee, if there is one “pass with reservations” vote and three pass votes, the result is pass. If there is one “pass with reservations” vote, one fail, and two pass votes, the result is pass with reservations. |

* 1. Students who do not earn the minimum number of passing votes fail the examination. *A vote to pass the student with reservations still constitutes a passing vote.*