

Prelim Exams

Multilingual Education

Timing

1. The prelim written exam is taken towards the end of coursework, typically in the 3rd year for a full-time student. Prelim exams are typically taken during the regular academic year. Students may write and/or propose scheduling oral exams in the summer; however, whether faculty are willing to read written exams or participate in oral exams during the summer is at the discretion of individual faculty.
2. Before taking prelims, you are required to take the year-long research seminar (CI 8161 + CI 8162, offered every other year). If circumstances warrant, it may be possible for you to take prelims concurrently with the seminar.
3. The time frame to complete your written exam varies and is negotiated with your committee member, but is ideally 4-6 weeks.
4. Once you submit the written exam to the committee member who assigned the question, the committee member reads it and informs you and your adviser of the outcome (in writing, usually via email) within 2-3 weeks. Your advisor will inform you of your results: 'pass', if 'revisions are required', or 'fail'. Readers usually give general feedback in a response paragraph. The length of time allowed for revisions is stipulated by the committee member, typically within one month. If you fail one or more exams on the second chance, you will not be allowed to continue in the program.
5. Once you pass all of the written exams, the advisor then informs the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), and you should then schedule a two-hour meeting for the oral exam by contacting all committee members and arranging for a room (through the GPC). We encourage you to schedule the orals as soon as possible after you pass your written exams.

Written Exam

For Multilingual Education, the prelim process is both forward-oriented and cumulative. The prelims are an opportunity to move towards the dissertation by integrating past work and synthesizing additional work (rather than simply summarizing topics covered in coursework). The purpose of the exam is an opportunity for you to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the scholarly work related to the dissertation topic (as well as the broader field of multilingual education), analytical thinking, and academic writing skills, such that completing the dissertation is possible. Students are expected to draw from high quality research literature, including both classic/foundational and current/recent work.

Oral Exam

Assessing knowledge of the field and the preparation/readiness needed for successful completion of dissertation. Technically the preliminary oral exam can include questions about the written

exams and past coursework, but typically the focus is on assessing knowledge for the dissertation (using the written exams as the springboard for the discussion). If the oral exam progresses well, the last 30 minutes or so typically focus on specific plans for the dissertation.