

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

LOGISTICS

- The preliminary examination should be taken by the end of the third year of graduate studies. The focus of the examination is on a proposal written by the student based on his/her dissertation project (see format below).
- The student will arrange a time and date with the committee. A Doodle poll is suggested and a reservation for at least three hours is suggested. Once the exam is scheduled, the student should reserve a conference room.
- Note also that the preliminary exam must also be passed at least one academic year (ie. 3 consecutive semesters) before graduation.
- The research proposal must be circulated to the Dissertation Committee at least 2 weeks prior to the examination date.
- The completed, typed REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FORM should be sent to the Graduate School at least 2 weeks prior to the examination date.

FORMAT

- The proposal is to be presented **in NIH RO1 grant format: Specific Aims; Abstract; Research Plan (no longer than 12 pages); Vertebrate Animals (if necessary), Human Subjects (if necessary) and References.**
 - Description of experiments and sub-aims already completed should be included, either as preliminary results within the description of an Aim in the Research Plan, or (if an Aim is essentially completed) as a progress report.
 - If the student already has a publication directly related to his proposed thesis work; this can be included as an addendum
- The Specific Aims page can be viewed and edited by mentor. The mentor can also view and provide feedback on an outline of the Research Plan. However, the mentor should extensively edit drafts of the Research Plan, since this is a part of the preliminary exam that is graded.
- If the committee believes the submitted proposal is incomplete or otherwise unsatisfactory, then the preliminary examination should be postponed. The committee chair must write a memo stating why the proposal is unsatisfactory and outline how it should be revised.
- Examples of RO1 format grants and suggestions for formulating can be found at the following website: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/researchfunding/grant/pages/appsamples.aspx>

EXAM

- The student should prepare a Powerpoint presentation that includes Specific Aims, the major points of the proposal, and key data.
- The major focus of the exam will be the written proposal.
- The student may be questioned on any area of microbiology and related fields.
- The projected goals will normally be discussed.
- The results of the Preliminary Examination will be determined by a vote of the committee as follows:

- Pass - student becomes a candidate for the Ph.D. degree.
- Fail - two dissenting votes constitute a basis for failure. The committee will discuss the following options.
 - Failure – no re-examination. The student will have an option to complete a Masters Degree.
 - Failure – re-examination. This should generally take place within 6 months of the first Preliminary Exam. The committee will decide on the format.
 - The student may be asked to rewrite the proposal, or particular sections, prior to the oral examination.
 - The student may be asked to write a progress report prior to an oral examination.
- A FOLLOW UPREPORT OF PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION Form (typed) must be signed by all committee members. It is then sent to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.
- The committee chair must write up a summary of the preliminary examination and submit to mipgrad@lsuhsc.edu
- The student should register for course credit (Microbiology 299, 3 hours credit) for this proposal **in the semester after** passing the exam
 - The highest grade the student can obtain for the course in the event of a re-write and/or re-examination is a B.