**Preliminary Exam Policy**

The first four paragraphs of the Preliminary Exam policy as listed in the Graduate Bulletin (2020-2021, page 86) shall remain unchanged.

**Currently, the fifth and last paragraph of the policy reads,**

“If a student fails the preliminary examination prior to admission to candidacy, a re-examination may be requested, but it must be recommended by the student’s supervisory committee and approved by the Academic Dean’s Office. Students can take the preliminary examination for admission to candidacy only two times. At least one semester of additional preparation is needed before the re-examination. A second failure on the preliminary exam makes the student ineligible to continue in the degree program.”

**The fifth and last paragraph is to be replaced by the following language, as approved by the Graduate Policy Committee on January 11, 2021:**

“If a student fails the preliminary examination before being admitted to candidacy, a re-examination may be offered by the student’s supervisory committee or other relevant decision making body within each department or unit, per that department or unit’s doctoral student handbook. The Academic Dean’s office should be notified of the outcome of any preliminary exam attempt.

Students can take the preliminary examination for admission to candidacy only two times. A second failure on the preliminary exam makes the student ineligible to continue in the degree program. The second attempt at the preliminary exam shall occur no sooner than six full class weeks after the results of the first attempt are shared with the student. For the purpose of this policy, a “full class week” is defined as a week with five days during which classes are held at FSU. Students must be registered separately for their first and second attempt, if necessary within the same semester, and must receive either a “pass” or a “fail” grade for each attempt.

An exception request regarding the timing of the re-examination can be submitted for consideration to the Academic Dean’s Office by either the student or the supervisory committee. Students who allege that academic regulations and/or procedures were improperly applied for the re-examination of their preliminary exam may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. The full preliminary exam policy as listed here must be added to all doctoral student handbooks.”

**Additional Explanations for Discussion Purposes only (not to be included in the Graduate Bulletin):**

“six full class weeks after the results of the first attempt are shared with the student” portion

* *Comment: This count EXcludes semester time before classes start, as well as the weeks including Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas/winter holidays, a partial first-week during spring semester, the week with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, spring break, Memorial Day, Independence Day, final exam week, and any natural disaster weeks such as hurricanes, which shouldn’t be held against students anyway. This does NOT require classes to be held in person.* 
  + *Fall 2020 has 12 “full class weeks” in a 16-week session.*
  + *Spring 2021 has 13 “full class weeks” in a 15-week session (would be 16 if there was spring break).*
  + *Summer 2021 has 9 “full class weeks” in a 12-week session.*
* *This allows students to take it twice in the same semester, which may be needed to avoid a 9-month delay (from early spring semester to early fall semester in units where prelims are not given during the summer). At the same time, it gives students more time to prepare due to the not-full class weeks (helping students who must prepare while also taking and/or teaching courses), or even push the second attempt into the next semester, but not immediately and against their will (as in the December/January case we heard about).*
* *Also note that it specifically states “after results are shared with the student” because it might take a couple of weeks for those results to be determined. For this reason it says “six” and not a higher number such as “eight.”*

**“**if necessary within the same semester” portion

* *Comment: Departments will/may have to change their prelim course coding to be repeatable in the same semester. By working with the Registrar’s office we should be able to do that without syllabus submission. Doctoral programs can indicate to one central person whether they want this changed by a certain date, as we did with the “creative project” track option.*