

Preliminary Examination Information Epidemiology

What is the preliminary exam?

This examination marks the end of the first portion of the doctoral program in Epidemiology. It is used to gauge your ability to retain and synthesize concepts learned in the first several years of doctoral coursework, and further provides evidence that you are ready to pursue an independent research dissertation. Upon successful completion of the preliminary examination, you are formally considered to be a Doctoral Candidate by the Graduate College and can proceed to the dissertation. Students typically take the exam within years two or three of the PhD program.

The preliminary exam covers four sections:

- core concepts and methods (EPID 400/401/402 or EPID 403/404 material)
- advanced methods (EPID 501 material)
- substantive area 1 (student chooses)*
- substantive area 2 (student chooses)

This examination is administered in three parts:

- a written in-class on two pre-set dates
- a written, 10-day take-home exam
- a **2-hour** oral examination. This must occur within 4 weeks of the written parts, but after the take-home is turned in.

The details of the exam itself are outlined below. Please note that the collateral area is no longer a component of the preliminary examination.

NOTE: You need to be registered for credit (either courses or research credit) during the semester in which you plan to take the preliminary examination.

Assembling Your Examination Committee

In conjunction with your advisor, the student selects a committee of five (5) faculty members at a minimum, one (1) from each exam section. Of these committee members, at least two (2) must be tenured and three (3) must be UIC Graduate Faculty with full membership (see the Graduate Catalog for a list of Graduate Faculty). The choice of committee members is up to the student, but it is usual practice to select committee members from the particular course area being examined.

Committee Recommendation Form

Once you have chosen your exam committee, you will need to obtain Graduate College approval of your choice. You must do this by completing a **Committee Recommendation form**. Since this form must be typed, it is easiest to obtain the form from the Graduate College website:

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/grad/gcforms/CommRecForm.pdf>

This is a writeable .pdf form on the website. Fill it out and then give it to your advisor for his/her signature. Then, submit the signed form to the academic coordinator (Dachea Hill-Bryan) for the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies. It will then be forwarded to the Graduate College.

NOTE: The Committee Recommendation Form should be filed at least four (4) weeks prior to the exam (preferably earlier).

1. In-Class Written Examination

- Day 1
 - **AM exam (9am-12 noon)** – Includes materials covered in EPID 400/401/402 or EPID 403/404. Paper and pencil format. Formulae will be provided.
 - **PM exam (1pm-4pm)** – Substantive area 2 exam. Laptop and diskette format.
- Day 2
 - **AM exam (9am-12 noon)** – Substantive area 2 exam. Laptop and diskette format.
 - **PM** – Distribution of take-home examination.

Other important information:

- You, the student, are responsible for contacting substantive area examiners for feedback on how to prepare. Examiners may allow notes or other materials during the exam.
- Your advisor will:
 - Collect all written examination questions from your committee prior to the written exam date.
 - Oversee the administration of your written exam.
 - Collect and distribute the entire written examination to all committee members prior to the oral examination.

2. Take-Home Written Examination

- The take-home covers advanced Epidemiologic methods (up to/including EPID 501).
- Exam is administered on Friday (Day 2) of in-class exam and is due to the examiner or advisor 10 days later (second Monday). Explicit instructions are given at the time the take-home examination is administered.

3. Oral Examination

- The oral exam should be scheduled 2-4 weeks after the take-home examination is turned in.
- The oral exam is approximately two hours in length and addresses the written parts plus any relevant materials not covered in the written exam.

Note: You are required to defend the dissertation no less than **one year** and no more than **five years** after the preliminary examination. Exceptions to this rule are extremely rare and would require the approval of the Division, the School, and the Graduate College. Failure to defend in due time may require re-taking the preliminary examination.

Where to go for additional information:

Review the online Graduate College Catalog section on degree requirements for important information about the doctoral process:

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/grad/archivecatalogs/catalog04.shtml>

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