

Candidacy Examination: Before advancement to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree, a student must pass the Candidacy (or General) Examination

The Ph.D. general examination in the Department of History serves two central purposes:

- General examinations probe the breadth and depth of a graduate student's knowledge of the literature and/or narrative of the fields of study. It evaluates the student's ability to frame research interests within the context of the existing literature and demonstrates a student's preparedness to teach in the fields of study.
- The General Examination also serves as an opportunity for the student to share his/her dissertation's prospectus with members of the faculty.

Fields

A student will prepare for the Candidacy Examination in *one major field and two minor fields*. The major field and at least one of the minor fields must be in the History Department.

The major field will be the field in which the student intends to write a dissertation. There will be at least two faculty examiners in the major field. The student is expected to develop a broad knowledge of the entire field and specialized competency in particular sub-areas, in consultation with the major examiners.

Given the emphasis in the discipline of history on comparative, transnational, transcultural, and interdisciplinary themes, students would be well-advised to take advantage of the three-field configuration of doctoral study to craft a program that is both coherent and wide-ranging. One of the minor fields should complement the major field thematically, geographically, and/or chronologically. The other minor field should advance the student's thematic, geographical, and/or chronological diversity. To this end, students might consider developing an interdisciplinary minor field—that is, one outside the department, although at least one of the minor fields must be in History. The decision to take a minor field outside of the department should be made in consultation with the advisor and must be approved by the Graduate Studies Chair.

Preparation

Reading lists: The faculty advisor for each field must provide the student a list of items to be mastered at least six months prior to the exam. A faculty advisor may require a student to devise his/her own list (which should then be approved or amended by the advisor). The list should include works regarded as indispensable by the examiner, both contemporary and classic, and also should represent the student's own interests and prospective dissertation research area. Although there may be some small variations among fields, major field lists should normally include no more than approximately 100 items. Minor field lists should normally include no more than approximately 50 items.

It is normally required that students have at least one readings course with each examiner. In addition, advisors and students should hold periodic meetings to review the literature of the field, discuss major themes, and pursue possible areas of questioning. History 7193 provides credit to the student for this purpose (up to a maximum of 9 credit hours). History 9999 may also indicate independent work.

The Examination

The “Doctoral Notification of Candidacy Examination” form can be obtained from the Graduate Studies Coordinator. In agreeing to the “Doctoral Notification of Candidacy Examination” form, faculty committee members are asserting that, to the best of their knowledge, the student is sufficiently prepared to take the examination. After the student has arranged the writing date and scheduled a mutually acceptable date and time for the two-hour oral defense with committee members, the form is returned to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, who will be responsible for obtaining the written exam from the examiner and for scheduling the needed room for the oral defense.

The student must be enrolled in sufficient courses to be considered full time during the semester in which the Oral Examination is held.

The Candidacy Examination consists of

(A) Major field written examination:

The written examination is to be prepared by at least two examiners, the total response being no longer than 5,000 words (roughly 20 double-spaced pages in 12-point font). The student may write the exam in an environment of her/his own choosing, but must complete it within 48 hours. The student also will also provide the examining committee members with a Major Field Portfolio that includes the final papers from 8000-level research seminars, major written work from at least two 7000-level reading seminars in this field, the student’s OSU Advising Report, and the dissertation prospectus. The major field portfolio should be submitted to the examiners at least two weeks before the Oral Exam.

The student should copy the questions and answers and distribute them to the committee members after completion of the written exam. Within one week after the student has completed that examination, the examiners should provide student with feedback concerning whether or not he/she passed the written exam and the exam’s strengths and/or weaknesses. The written and two hour oral examinations must take place within a three-week period. If, based on evaluating the written portion, the advisor or another member of the candidacy examination committee see no possibility for a satisfactory overall performance on the candidacy examination, the student may be advised to waive the right to take the oral portion. The candidacy examination committee may not, however, deny a student the opportunity to take the oral portion. The student and faculty examiners will then determine the approximate date of the second written examination. A student can only re-write his written exams two times.

(B) *Minor field written portfolios:*

Both minor fields will be assessed via the reading list and portfolio. The portfolios should include (1) all 7000 and/or 8000 papers written for courses relating to the fields in question, (2) the reading list compiled by the student and examiner, (3) a list of 6 – 8 historiographical and methodological questions concerning the field, and (4) the dissertation prospectus. At least one of the minor field portfolios should also include a syllabus the student creates for a course that he/she might wish to teach relating to that field. The student must provide a copy of his/her portfolios to each member of the committee at least two weeks before the Oral Exam.

(C) *Oral Examination:*

The two hour oral examination committee will consist of the four Candidacy Examination Committee members. The oral examination will focus on: (a) a review of the written component of the exam if the student has chosen option #1 and (b) a discussion of the reading lists and portfolios presented by the student. Faculty also should reserve some time for a brief discussion of the student's dissertation prospectus. It is recommended that, before the examination, faculty and student agree on the order of the examiners and on questioning procedures.

In addition:

Written examinations will be posted on Carmen. Faculty examiners should supply the Graduate Studies Coordinator with the examination five working days ahead of the date of the examination. Faculty will be asked to submit contact information valid for the day of the examination, in the event that instructions need to be clarified or some unexpected problem arises.

It is possible to utilize teleconferencing for the Candidacy Examination. See the guidelines in Section II of the *Graduate School Handbook*.

Decision: The outcome of the Candidacy Examination is reached in the absence of the student. After discussion, the satisfactory/unsatisfactory decision is reached by means of a vote. Each examiner indicates judgment by signing the Candidacy Examination Report form that must be submitted to the Graduate School **within one day** after the oral examination.

- The student is considered to have successfully completed the Candidacy Examination only when the decision of the Candidacy Examination Committee is unanimously affirmative.
- If the examination is judged unsatisfactory, the Candidacy Examination Committee must record that decision on the Candidacy Examination Report form.
- The nature of the second Candidacy Examination is determined by the Candidacy Examination Committee, but it must include an oral portion. If a second examination is held, the Candidacy Examination Committee must be the same as the original one, unless substitution is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

- No student is permitted to take the Oral Candidacy Examination more than twice.