

KU Psychology Guidelines for PhD Preliminary Examination

All Psychology PhD students are required to pass a preliminary examination to confirm their candidacy for a PhD. The following details the protocol to be followed to manage the process of preparation, completion and the evaluation of the preliminary examination.

It is the responsibility of the primary advisor of the PhD student to initiate, implement and monitor the process in accordance with the following guidelines.

1. Timing

- 1.1. The PhD students are expected to complete the process of preliminary examination within one year after completing their coursework. The department advises the student to start the preparation process at least four months prior to this deadline.

2. Preparation

2.1. Selection of areas

Psychology preliminary exam process consists of two separate examinations, each one on a different area of expertise. The Ph D student will select two areas of expertise for their preliminary examination among those listed in Appendix (within or across domains). These selections will be confirmed by the advisor.

2.2. Committee selection

The student, in collaboration with his/her advisor will propose two committees of 3 faculty members each, who are knowledgeable in the two areas of expertise proposed. The advisor will be one of the members of these two committees. A complete overlap of the two committees must be avoided. The total number of faculty members involved in the two committees must be at least 4 and 2 of these committee members must be outside Koç University.

3. Background literature

- 3.1. The student will prepare a bibliographical list that will constitute the basis for the preliminary examination in each of the chosen areas of expertise. These two bibliographical lists will include publications in peer reviewed journals, chapters in books, or whole books (40 to 50 papers in each list). Other items such as unpublished reports or dissertations may be included with justification. The advisor and the members of the preliminary committee for the corresponding area of expertise will receive the bibliographical list from the student and may provide feedback, suggestions, and may request revisions. Each preliminary committee is expected to approve the final bibliographical lists in the corresponding area of expertise. The calendar governing the preliminary examination procedure will commence when the committee approval is communicated to the student. The first preliminary examination will commence on the first Monday, within 90 days from the final date of approval of the bibliographical lists.

4. Initiation of the preliminary examination

4.1. Each preliminary examination committee may choose to guide the literature review of the student with broad guiding questions, themes for integrating the literature, or may choose to refrain from guiding the review. The advisor of the PhD student will make a recommendation on a particular approach and the committee will make the final decision. This decision must be communicated to the student within 1 week of approval of the bibliographical list. If guiding questions/themes are to be provided, they must be communicated to the student, in writing, at that time.

5. Exam Protocol

5.1. Exam questions

The question(s) for each of the two exams will be proposed by the advisor and will be jointly finalized by the members of the preliminary committee, along with a grading rubric as to how the exam will be evaluated.

5.2. The supervisor, who will be chairing the committee will suggest for the committee's approval a grading rubric modifying the template below. The following will be used as a template.

	Criteria	Notes	SCORE
1	The quality of the response to the question*	<i>Excellent articulated, well supported and highly informed responses to the questions.</i>	
2	Critical evaluation of the literature*	<i>Full grasp of the literature and its critical evaluation. Student points out oversights, inconsistencies, and/or outstanding questions in the literature.</i>	
3	Proposed research design (if applicable)*	<i>The purpose, questions, and design are clear and well-motivated. Described with great detail using rigorous and well-chosen methodology.</i>	
4	Writing quality (15%)	<i>The exam paper is well structured. Writing is clear and concise. Sentence structure and grammar are excellent. Correct use of punctuation is demonstrated with no spelling errors.</i>	
5	Turinitin report		
	TOTAL		

*The grading breakdown of these criteria will be determined by the committee members along with the preparation of the questions.

5.3. Commencement

The preliminary examination will commence at 9 am on Monday of the designated week. The student will have till 5 pm on Friday of the designated week (5 days) to provide a written response to the questions on the first area of expertise. The preliminary examination addressing the second area of expertise will commence at 9 am on Monday of the following week, when the advisor gives the second set of questions to the student (and informs the coordinator of the graduate program as above). The student will have till 5 pm on Friday of the designated week (5 days) to provide a written response to the questions on the second area of expertise. Responses to the examination may be sent to the members of the committee via email.

5.4. The rubrics will be shared with the student along with the questions.

6. Evaluation of the preliminary examination

6.1. The responses to the preliminary examination will be evaluated by the corresponding committees within 2 weeks of receipt.

6.2. The committee will have agreed upon a grading rubric based on the template included in 5.2. The committee members are advised to use that modified table for their evaluation (Appendix)

6.3. A Turnitin report will also be obtained and included in the evaluation sheet.

6.4. The student will have passed the written exam with a passing grade of 75 or higher.

6.5. A majority Pass grade from both committees will entitle the student to proceed to the oral preliminary examinations. For an exceptional performance, any member of the committee may grant a High Pass.

6.6. The committee members will send their feedback to the student's advisor. Then, the advisor will send the feedback to the student. Student is expected to address the questions during oral preliminary examination.

6.7. If a student fails one of the preliminary examinations, he/she may re-take the preliminary examination in 6 months or earlier with the written consent of the student of the date of the examination that was failed.

6.8. The grades for the preliminary examinations will be sent to the coordinator of the graduate program by the advisor. The date of communication of the grades will mark the date of completion of the written preliminary examination. The coordinator of the program will then inform the Graduate Institute of the status of the students' preliminary examinations.

7. The oral examinations

7.1. In order to be confirmed as a PhC, the student must successfully complete two oral preliminary examinations, following the favorable completion of the written examinations. There will be a separate oral examination for each area of expertise, with all three members of the corresponding preliminary committee present.

However, if all members of both committees and the student (the PhC candidate) agree, the two oral examinations may be consolidated into a single meeting with all members of both committees present.

- 7.2. The committees may ask the student to present future research agenda in a short (10 min) presentation. If such a presentation is required, the student should be informed of this requirement at least two weeks prior to the examination. This is an opportunity for the student to demonstrate a deep understanding of the literature in his/her area of expertise, and to engage in academic discussion that is grounded in a synthesis of the literature. During the oral examination, each member of the committee, including the advisor, will get a chance to ask questions and engage in intellectual exchange with the student.

7.3. Timing

The oral examinations will be completed within 3 weeks of completion of the written preliminary examination.

7.4. Evaluation

The oral preliminary examinations will be graded as Pass/Fail. For an exceptional performance, any member of the committee may grant a High Pass. A majority Pass grade from each of the committees will result in the attainment of the Ph C status.

- 7.4.1. The grades for the oral preliminary examinations will be sent to the coordinator of the graduate program by the advisor. The date of communication of the grades will mark the date of promotion of the student to Ph C status. The coordinator of the program will inform the Graduate Institute of the status of the students' change in status.
- 7.4.2. If a student fails one of the oral preliminary examinations, he/she may re-take that examination after 1 month of the date of the examination that was failed. The grades for the oral preliminary examinations will be sent to the coordinator of the graduate program by the advisor. The date of communication of the grades will mark the date of promotion of the student to Ph C status. The coordinator of the program will inform the Graduate Institute of the status of the students' change in status.

Appendix 1: EXAMPLE TOPICS

Social Psychology:

Aggression and violence
Applications (e.g. health, media, education, law, political behavior)
Attitudes and attitude change
Attributions and biases
Automaticity
Close relationships
Conflict resolution
Emotions
Groups & intergroup relations
Morality
Motivation
Personality and individual differences in social behavior
Prosocial behavior
Self, identity, and culture
Sex roles and sex differences
Social influence and persuasion

Organizational Psychology:

Behavior in small groups and teams
Consulting and business skills
Consumer behavior
Criterion development, performance evaluation, and appraisal
Culture and organizational psychology
Human factors
Human performance, assessment, and feedback
Leadership and management theory
Organization theory and design
Organizational consultation
Organizational development
Personnel selection & training
Training and development
Work family
Work motivation and job attitudes

Cognitive Psychology:

Aging and memory (encoding, retrieval, cognitive control of memory)
Animal cognition
Attention
Categorization
Cognitive control
Conditioning
Consciousness
Culture and cognition
Decision making and reasoning
Embodied cognition
Emotion and cognition
Intelligence

Interference in memory
Language processing
Long-term memory (encoding, retrieval, memory consolidation)
Mental representation
Metacognition
Metamemory
Neural basis of learning and memory
Perception and sensory mechanisms (vision)
Problem-solving
Psycholinguistics
Psychopathology (decision making, conditioning, cognitive processes)
Reading and comprehension (Discourse Processes)
Recognition
Sensory analysis
Situated cognition
Sleep
Temporal and numerical cognition
Working memory (individual differences, WM maintenance, retrieval, and capacity)

Developmental Psychology:

Attachment
Categorization
Causal understanding
Cognitive development & capacities
Conceptual development
Culture (parenting, moral development, adolescent socialization, family, self development)
Development of emotion regulation
Development of executive function
Development of symbolic competence
Developmental behavioral genetics
Developmental psychopathology
Gender role development
Infant cognition
Institutional rearing and child development
Mathematical development
Memory development
Migration contexts and child development
Moral development
Parenting
Peer relations (social development, moral cognition)
Resiliency in adulthood and aging
Scientific knowledge
Temperament (gender, behavior problems, social development)
The self
Theory of mind and social behavior