4. Examination Process

The content and conduct of the preliminary examination are the responsibility of the faculty of the graduate program and the process should be outlined in the program’s Graduate Student Handbook and applied consistently for all students in the program. The process also must be consistent with the guidelines outlined here.

- Members of the advisory committee must be present (physically or by videoconference) for the entire oral examination. Other graduate program faculty in the program are encouraged to attend and participate in the examination.
- It is at the program's discretion whether additional members of the WSU community (students, staff, faculty) are allowed to attend any oral presentation component of the examination and ask questions. Any questioning from a broader audience should not unduly influence the examination outcome.
- There is no time limit for either the written or oral portions of the examination, but all aspects of the examination (i.e., the evaluation of any written component, the oral presentation, or the balloting meeting) must be completed within 30 calendar days.
- If any advisory committee members, or graduate program faculty intending to ballot, must leave the room or the online session during an oral examination or balloting discussion, the examination or discussion must be recessed until the faculty member returns.

Balloting Meeting

- For oral exams, the ballot meeting must follow immediately after the conclusion of the student's oral exam.
- Only individuals casting ballots or appointed as a representative of the Graduate School are allowed to attend the balloting portion of the exam.
- Advisory committee members must be present at the balloting meeting and must cast a ballot.
- Any graduate program faculty in the program may ballot. Individual programs determine in their bylaws which faculty can participate in the graduate program and thus are eligible to ballot in examinations.
- As a best practice, graduate program faculty choosing to ballot should have participated in the assessment of all components of the student's work being evaluated during the examination (e.g., read the research proposal or literature review).
- Graduate Mentor Academy members, who represent the Graduate School at an exam, do not ballot.
- Ballots must be completed electronically in the GRM module within myWSU. The Graduate School liaison will have access to the completed ballots; while keeping the individual ballots confidential, the Graduate School liaison will announce to the committee whether the student passed. External committee members who are not WSU faculty may not have access to myWSU. Such participants should communicate their ballot recommendations directly to the Graduate School liaison (e.g., text or email). A scan, snapshot, or fax of the paper ballot should be sent to the Graduate School liaison immediately following the exam via confidential fax or emailed as a pdf file, and this ballot should then be submitted electronically to the Graduate School via email to gradschool@wsu.edu.
- The student must be informed of the outcome immediately after the balloting meeting is adjourned.
- The Graduate School liaison is responsible for ensuring that all ballots and the ballot memo are submitted electronically to the Graduate School as soon as possible and no later than five business days following the exam.

Under extraordinary circumstances, on the recommendation of the advisory committee, the vice provost for graduate and professional education may approve alternate arrangements for the examination environment and/or process.