

PH.D. PRELIMINARY EXAM PROCEDURES
Department of History of Art, Bryn Mawr College

Initial Procedure

1. Consult with your proposed dissertation director and three additional faculty committee members to select and develop exam fields and create bibliographies, typically in the third year of the program.
2. After completing this process, inform the History of Art administrator (Migdalia Carrasquillo) of your intention to proceed to the exams. Request a copy of the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination Scheduling Form if you do not already have it.
3. Complete the form in consultation with your committee members and submit to: the administrator for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (Maria Dantis), the administrator for the Department of History of Art (Migdalia Carrasquillo), the Director of Graduate Studies (Hoday King), and, if requested, your dissertation director. Check the website for current staff listings, as administrator and director staffing may change from year to year.
4. The History of Art administrator will work to schedule the oral exam with the committee members and make note of any travel, audio or video conferencing needs. Once a date has been set for the oral, the dates of the written exams should be adjusted if necessary to fit the required time frame, allowing at least one week between the final written exam and the oral exam, with the last possible date for the oral as five weeks from the first written prelim.

Taking the Written Exams

Written exam questions will be distributed by email by the History of Art administrator on the chosen dates.

Faculty are to provide the written exam questions, including any special instructions (e.g., open or closed book, specific formatting requests), no later than three business days prior to the exam. Exam format—including number and choice of questions, expected length and style of response, citation requirements, etc.—is determined individually by each examiner as appropriate to the field of study. Any questions regarding exam format and expectations should be directed to the faculty member supervising the prelim field.

Written exams should be completed within the specified time frame and returned by email to the administrator, who will distribute them to the entire committee.

Taking the Oral Exam

The oral exam lasts 2-3 hours is generally conducted in person in a private room on the College campus. Committee members who are away from campus may occasionally participate by phone or video conference; the candidate may not. Questions might cover additional material from the student's exam lists, closer readings of specific texts or images, follow-up regarding the substance of the written exams, or other topics. Generally, each examiner is given 15-20 minutes to ask questions, although this structure may vary. The outside chair is responsible for setting an order of examiners, keeping time, ensuring that the exam proceeds according to GSAS rules, collecting assessments and signatures, and submitting the form to the GSAS office at the exam's conclusion.

The exam has three possible outcomes: Satisfactory, Partially Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. In the event of a Partially Satisfactory grade, an explanation will be provided about any additional work that must be completed.