Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Guidelines for Approving a Preliminary Exam and
Granting a Preliminary Exam Waiver

Guidelines for Approving a Preliminary Exam

The complete list of preliminary exams required by our five specializations ACSC, BIST, MAFI, MATH and STAT is given below.
ACSC 611, 617, 619, 627, 637, 639
Math 601, 603, 605, 607, 617, 621, 625, 627, 631, 641, 661, 681, 683, 685
Stat 631, 635, 641, 701, 721

Whenever one of such courses is offered, the instructor is responsible for preparing the corresponding preliminary exam in that academic year. A graduate student that requires the preliminary exam must let the course instructor know by November 1st in Fall term and March 1st in Winter term.

If the instructor of a course on the above preliminary exam list received a preliminary exam request by the deadline, then the instructor has the following two options in order to accommodate the preliminary exam.

1. The instructor designs the final exam in such a way that it follows the course syllabus and is appropriate to serve as a preliminary exam. Later, a PhD student can use the final exam to request a waiver of the corresponding preliminary exam.
2. The instructor designs a separate preliminary exam following the course syllabus. Only those that need the preliminary exam will take it, within two months of the last class of the corresponding course. The final exam of the course in that academic year can not be used to waive the corresponding preliminary exam.

In either case, the instructor must submit the preliminary exam or equivalent to the Graduate Program Committee three (3) weeks before the exam for approval.

If the instructor of a course on the above preliminary exam list didn’t receive any preliminary exam request by the deadline, then the instructor doesn’t need to submit the final exam to the Graduate Program Committee for approval.

Guidelines for Preliminary Exam Waiver

A PhD student is eligible to apply to the Graduate Program Committee for waiving a preliminary exam if the student received a grade of B+ or higher for the corresponding course the student has taken within the past three (3) years at the time of applying for waiver.

When the Graduate Program Committee receives a request of waiving a preliminary exam, the committee will first ask the instructor of the corresponding course that the student took with to
review the student’s final exam and provide inputs and recommendation. The Graduate Program Committee will review the final exam and the recommendation, and then make the final decision of either granting a preliminary exam waiver or declining the request.

For each preliminary exam, a graduate student will have maximum two (2) attempts to pass it. In case a graduate student applies for a waiver and the request is declined, it will be counted as one attempt.