Exam format

The preliminary examination questions are written by the student's dissertation advisor, with input from and the approval of the other two committee members.

 The questions fall into the following two categories:

Question 1: analysis of a 'big' question in SLA;

Question 2: analysis of an issue that reflects the student's specific research interests.

The student's response to each question should be in the form of a paper of approximately 20 pages, double-spaced, not including references. Strategically placed subheadings that facilitate the reader's comprehension of the paper's structure are encouraged. Papers are to be prepared in APA style, include a complete list of all works cited, and clearly indicate cited work as such.

The student may consult non-human resources, including those in print, on the internet, and in databases. During the period of the exam, students may not receive help with writing the responses from or discuss responses or exam questions with anyone, including students and faculty in the program, in related fields, or in related programs.

Procedure

The student receive the two questions from his/her advisor and then has two weeks from the time when s/he receives the questions to write and submit response papers. The precise deadline is included with the questions.

The papers should be submitted together and in electronic format to the SLA program coordinator, who forwards the papers to the members of the student's prelim committee.

Each committee member reads and rates each paper independently, then submits ratings of either 'pass' or 'fail' for each of the two questions to the student's dissertation advisor. A final assessment of 'pass' or 'fail' on each paper is determined by majority ratings.

The prelim committee members have two weeks from the date on which they receive the papers from the program coordinator to evaluate them and to submit their ratings of either 'pass' or 'fail' to the faculty advisor.

The advisor conveys the results to the student and to the SLA graduate coordinator.