

Preliminary Review of PhD Students

May 2024

Purpose

The purpose of the Preliminary Review is to provide students with a faculty-wide assessment of their progress toward PhD-level research in anthropology early in their studies. The review includes both assessment of work completed during the student's first three semesters in the program, and also guidance on how the student can strengthen their focus and study plans. The intent of the Preliminary Review is to create a constructive engagement between students and faculty that is supportive and productive.

Overall Preliminary Review Process

1. The Preliminary Review occurs in the fourth semester (spring) after PhD students have completed at least three of the following core courses: ANTH 601, 722, 740, and 760.
 - a. It is recommended that all full-time incoming PhD students take at least three core courses (ANTH 601, 722, 740, and 760) in their first year and complete the remaining core course and methods courses (ANTH 606 and 630) by the end of their second year.
2. In consultation with their advisors, students will prepare and submit a "Statement of Progress" (see below) and a short curriculum vitae (two pages maximum) to be signed by both advisor and student and submitted on **March 15** of their second year for an April review date. Should a student wish to complete the review early (during their third semester), the student and their advisor should notify the DGS and ADGS by the end of the spring semester of their first year. The statement and CV would then be submitted by **August 15** for a September review date.
3. The Preliminary Review will include any faculty member who wishes to participate. Participating faculty must commit to reading the statement and CV, and attending the Preliminary Review meeting.
4. Discussions during the Preliminary Review meeting shall remain confidential.
5. During the Preliminary Review meeting, participating faculty will discuss the statement and CV. The advisor will present the student's case and other faculty may provide input on the student's work and progress. The discussion will center on the following areas: *critical thinking, knowledge of subject matter, research strategy, scholarship potential, and professional experience*. The meeting will also include the student's Annual Review, which focuses on identifying broader strengths, areas for improvement, and suggested resources for the student. Should the student complete a fall review, their annual review will still take place during the spring semester. At the end of the discussion, a vote (by simple majority) will be taken by the participating faculty on whether the student "meets expectations" or "does not meet expectations." In the case of an assessment of "does not meet expectations," the student and their advisor will proceed with the Secondary Review Process (see below).
6. Within two weeks of the Preliminary Review meeting, the DGS will send the student a written version of the assessment (with input from the Advisor), including the specific

recommendations from faculty and the overall assessment (meets expectations or does not meet expectations).

Secondary Review Process

1. Upon receipt of a Preliminary Review letter in which the student performance was assessed as “does not meet expectations,” the student shall meet with their Advisor. The student will be given the opportunity to speak to the issues identified in the review letter and provide any additional contextual information (at their discretion).
2. The student and Advisor will then communicate with the DGS to discuss the details of the initial meeting between the student and Advisor (bearing in mind requests from the student regarding confidentiality).
3. The student, Advisor, and DGS will then discuss next steps (e.g., leaving the program, completing the requirements for the MAA degree if relevant, changing advisors, or proceeding with the secondary review) and consult with the Graduate Committee (if desired) to determine whether to proceed with the secondary review. If the original Advisor is unwilling to continue working with the student, then a new Advisor must be identified by the end of the preliminary review semester to proceed with the secondary review in the subsequent semester.
4. If it is determined by the student and Advisor (original or new) that the next step will be to proceed with the secondary review, the student will prepare a statement (in consultation with their Advisor) addressing the issues identified by the faculty and describing a plan for managing them. This statement should be submitted on March 15 or August 15 in advance of the April and September Preliminary Review meetings.
5. The Advisor will then present the case to the Graduate Committee before the April or September review meeting. The Graduate Committee will then make a recommendation to the faculty about whether the student should be allowed to proceed through the program or not.
6. Before the April or September review meeting, faculty will review the student’s statement and the Graduate Committee’s recommendation. The materials (Statement of Progress and CV) submitted during the first preliminary review will **not** be evaluated a second time, as they have already been assessed during the first round of preliminary review. The faculty will then decide (by simple majority vote) if the student is permitted to proceed through the program or not.

Student Statement of Progress Document

The purpose of this document is for students to provide a prospectus of their progress toward the dissertation phase of the Ph.D. program. It should be a five-page, single-spaced statement (about 2500 words) with scholarly references that demonstrates the student’s ability to identify productive research questions and to construct rigorous scholarly arguments. The statement should be developed in consultation with the Ph.D. advisor; both the advisor and the student must sign the statement before it is submitted for review. The statement should address the following:

- What is your preliminary vision of your future research? Please engage and critically assess the relevant literature in your discussion.
- What kinds of data and/or methods do you envision as necessary to support your investigations? How could these contribute to a future research design?
- How have your professional activities to this point contributed to your Ph.D. progress? Please include a short self-reflection section on areas for future development.

Additionally, please include a list of References Cited (in addition to five-page limit/2500 word count above) and a short curriculum vitae (two pages).

Instructions for Students

- Please submit the following materials in ONE PDF to Nadine Dangerfield (nadine@umd.edu) by **March 15** (fourth semester review) or by **August 15** (third semester review):
 1. Statement of Progress (five pages)
 2. References Cited (in addition to the statement)
 3. CV (two pages)