

How Do I Develop a Custom Exam Proposal?

Steps involved in setting up a Custom Preliminary Exam include:

- Identify two faculty members who have expertise in the proposed exam area and talk with them about the possibility of working together on a custom exam. Select a faculty member to serve as the examination director (Director must be English graduate faculty). For faculty members, working on the exam would mean reviewing and approving a reading list constructed by the student, constructing and evaluating a Preliminary Exam.
- Develop a reading list of 50-60 works. In fields which distinguish between primary and secondary works, the list may consist of up to 30% secondary works, but must have at least 70% primary works. There may be no overlap of works between the individualized list and the list in the standard area the student elects. *Exception: Up to 30% of secondary scholarship may be duplicated between related standard and individualized lists in the fields that make such a distinction. No primary works may be duplicated between such lists.* Consult with faculty members to get their suggestions as you develop your list.
- Draft a one page, single-spaced rationale for the selection of works on the reading list.
- Submit the reading list and rationale to the exam committee for their approval, and complete the Custom Examination Proposal Form. By signing this form, the committee members signal their approval of the reading list and rationale.
- The reading list, rationale, and proposal form should be submitted to the Graduate Program Director who has final approval of the proposal. Approvals should be obtained the semester before a student plans to take exams.
- The works on the approved individualized list will constitute the basis for the Custom Examination.

If you have questions about constructing your proposal, please contact the graduate director or graduate advisor.