The Department of Statistics and Probability supports our students with disabilities. A student with a disability that substantially limits a major life activity can register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) and may be eligible to receive accommodations for the preliminary examination(s). Upon determination of a reasonable accommodation, RCPD will issue a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA). The VISA is the primary method of documentation that enables a student to communicate their accommodations. The student is responsible for sharing their VISA with the chair of the preliminary examination committee after receiving the document from their RCPD Ability Access Specialist. The chair of the preliminary examination committee will facilitate implementation of the accommodations outlined in the VISA consistent with RCPD’s policies and guidelines.

Important Notice - Students needing accommodations for the preliminary examination(s) are encouraged to register with RCPD as soon as possible to ensure there is adequate time to
determine and coordinate appropriate accommodations. Accommodations are not retroactive, meaning they begin on the effective date of the VISA moving forward.

Other student concerns or issues

If a student has concerns or issues related to the exam(s) (e.g., illness, death of a family member, etc.), or requires assistance for reasons other than a disability, the student should inform the GD at least four weeks before the exam(s) is(are) given or, in extenuating circumstances, as soon as possible. Such concerns or issues should be addressed and clarified before the student takes the exam(s). The GD will work with the student to determine whether the requested assistance is appropriate and if so, will communicate with the preliminary examination committee chair who will be responsible for implementing the assistance.

Prior to the exams

Each student will be assigned a unique number by the graduate program coordinator (Ms. Tami Hankey). Students should only put their assigned number in their exam solution sheets. The number and name matching is kept confidential until after the vote is done (see Post exams) in the Committee of the Whole (CW) meeting following the exam(s).

The examination committees are responsible for administering the examinations to all students, including writing and proctoring the exams.

Post exams

The students’ solutions should be graded by multiple members of the examination committees independently and then discussed in order to limit any potential bias present in grading. A (scanned) copy of each graded exam should be kept for 6 months. The exam committees present the results of the grading along with a pass or fail recommendation to the faculty members of the CW, which then votes on each recommendation. A recommendation is adopted by a majority vote of the faculty members of the CW, which ultimately determines which students should pass the examinations. Each exam committee will provide a brief exam summary, including the difficulty level of the exam to justify their recommendation.

Students’ identifies (i.e., names) are kept confidential before the vote. Discussions about a committee’s recommendation are welcome before the faculty vote. The pass/fail decision should be based on the CW vote.

The two committee chairs will inform the students of the exam results either verbally or through email after the CW meeting. A formal pass/fail letter will be sent to each student through the graduate office.

A student, after the examination results are made known, may request a breakdown of the points awarded on each sub-question on the examination, as well as the cutoff used for
passing, and an explanation of the errors that resulted in lost points on any of the examination sub-questions. A member of the examination committee will provide an explanation either verbally or in writing. If a student, after receiving this explanation, believes that one or more errors were made in grading, the student first will consult with the examination committee, which will re-examine the disputed parts of the examination and determine whether a change of grade is warranted. If, after this process, a student still believes that one or more errors remain, the student may appeal to the graduate director, who will make a determination based on input from the student and the examination committee.