

## **Preliminary Examination (Prelim)**

### **Rules and Instructions**

(Revised 2020)

The purpose of the preliminary examination (Prelim) is to assess the student's competency, knowledge of the fundamentals, and potential for independent research in the Ph.D. program. Ph.D. students in TBSI are required to successfully complete a Prelim in order to progress into their Ph.D. studies.

1. **Exam Frequency:** The Prelim takes place twice a year in mid-to-late April and October, respectively.
2. **Exam Application:** Ph.D. students are required to apply for the Prelim at least one month before the examination date and complete the Prelim within two academic years from admission into the Ph.D. program.
3. **Exam Topics:**
  - a) The Prelim includes two independent tests: major and minor tests. Students must pass both major and minor tests to pass the Prelim.
  - b) Each research area (or lab) provides a reading list of materials at the beginning of each Spring/Fall semester to assist students in preparing for the exam.
  - c) Exam questions are given by each research area/lab and are intended to explore the depth and the breadth of professional knowledge of the students in the selected areas/labs.
4. **Exam Format:**
  - a) In general, each major (or minor) test should be half an hour and can consist of an oral and/or a written part. The language of the exam is English. The exact exam format is determined by each research area/lab.
  - b) The examiners should include at least two TBSI PIs in related areas/labs, or professors with doctoral supervision qualification designated by TBSI PIs and approved by the Committee of Student Education (CSE).
5. **Requirements and Rules:**
  - a) Every student is required to pass the Prelim in at least one major area and one

different minor area.

- b) Students successfully passing their Prelim exams (both major and minor) are allowed to apply for the study and research at UC Berkeley.
- c) Regardless of the testing areas, each student can take the major test at most twice and the minor test at most twice during his/her residency at TBSI. Students who fail the first attempt of either test must apply to retake the test again.
- d) Failure to pass the Prelim before the end of second year or within two attempts, will result in the student being ineligible to complete the program. Ph.D. students without an M.S. degree and Ph.D. students who were a Tsinghua postgraduate student immediately prior to enrolling in TBSI's Ph.D. program could apply to transfer to Master program or dropout; Ph.D. students with an M.S. degree could apply to dropout; Otherwise, a withdrawal process would be started by the Insititute. Special cases would be discussed by Committee of Stududent Education.