

Spring 2023 – Research Preparation Criterion (RPC) Exam Overview

The primary objective of the RPC examination is for students to demonstrate their ability to read, understand, and discuss contemporary research literature. The RPC exam consists of a written report and an oral presentation based on the content of a peer-reviewed paper in the student's area of research interest. Successful reports and presentations will convince the faculty committee that the student can understand, analyze, verify correctness, and/or extend the research reported in the selected article. This requires being familiar with the relevant literature in the field (i.e., the scope is broader than the paper itself).

Important Dates and Deadlines for RPC exam for first year students

RPC	ACTIONS
2/10	PhD Students Submit Paper Selections
2/24	PhD Students Notified of RPC Paper Choice
4/30	Written reports due
5/15-5/19	RPC Examinations
5/24	Doctoral Committee Review RPC results and Final Decision

Paper Selection

The student proposes, in consultation with his/her research or academic advisor, three peer-reviewed articles to the Doctoral Committee. Do not use a review paper, a paper from a group the student was previously affiliated with, or any BU group.

The Doctoral Committee will select one of the articles for the student to prepare for the RPC exam, or will iterate with the student if none are judged to be satisfactory choices.

Written Report

The student prepares a written report. See guidelines for the report format.

Oral Presentation

The exam is allotted 90 minutes and begins with a 20-minute oral presentation by the student followed by questions from the RPC committee on the presentation and the broader subject area. The emphasis should be on conveying main concepts and key insights. **Demonstrating the ability to read, understand, and discuss research literature is the primary examination objective.**

The largest portion of the RPC exam is the discussion following the oral presentation. Questions asked by the committee will address the presentation, general field knowledge, and associated technical background in depth.

Doctoral Committee Review

The Doctoral Committee will review the input from the RPC Exam committees to determine high pass, pass, conditional pass, or fail. Students who do not pass on their first attempt may take the exam once more before mid-August.