

Oral Exams (Erste Staatsexamensprüfung)

Information Sheet

Fundamentals:

- Contact your examiner to discuss potential topics at least one month before you are admitted to the exam.
- You pick your own topics; we do not assign them.

Form:

- Your oral exam is 60 minutes long, comprises two disciplines (e.g., Linguistics and *Landeswissenschaften*), and is divided into two sections of 30 minutes each.
- Two examiners will be present, one for each discipline.
- You choose both of your examiners.
- If you are majoring in English Lehramt L2 or L3, the segment *Landeswissenschaften* consists of two 15-minute units that cover two distinct topics.
- Before the exam begins, you will be asked whether you feel physically and mentally capable of taking the exam.
- Language requirements: English is mandatory for the first half of the exam and optional for the second half.
- Minutes will be taken.

Preparation:

- Pick your topics in consultation with your examiner, and pick them wisely. Don't go too big (e.g., "industrialization" or "the Cold War"). Rather, try to settle on a topic that is focused, manageable, and suited for a conversation over roughly 15 minutes (e.g., "Gender and Youth in Edwardian England" or "The Stonewall Riots in History and Memory").

- The two exam topics you pick have to be sufficiently distinct from one another. Overlaps are possible, but settling on, let's say, "Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement" and "Malcolm X and Black Nationalism in the 1960s" would not work for lack of distance.
- As you search for topics, we recommend that you build on the knowledge you have acquired in the seminars and lectures you attended in our Fachgebiet. You may consider your examiners' areas of specialization for inspiration.
- No later than two weeks before the exam, please submit to your examiner two short bibliographies via email, one for each topic. Each bibliography should contain 8-10 titles (monographs, essays, articles) that reflect the state of research that is relevant for the topic you picked. The purpose of these bibliographies is to "map the field" and alert the examiner to the kind of themes and questions with which you are going to familiarize yourself.

The Exam:

- Do not confuse the exam with a quiz. The oral exam is not set up as a simple question-and-answer routine during which the examiner wants you to recite facts and numbers pertaining to your topics.
- Instead, we want you to think of the exam as a learned exchange between two scholars. The questions will be asked in a manner that give you the opportunity to demonstrate that you not only have a good command of your subject but are also capable of critically analyzing and contextualizing historical information.
- The following three historical thinking skills form the basis of the evaluation: (1) knowledge of historical events, actors, and transformations; (2) developing and defending your own interpretation with historical evidence gathered from sources and/or the literature; (3) drawing connections between your interpretation and important trends or controversies in the larger scholarship.
- Simply put, the more successful you are in demonstrating your historical thinking skills, the higher your grade will be.

For more information, please consult the website of the Hessische Lehrkräfteakademie at

<https://lehrkraefteakademie.hessen.de/lehrausbildung/erste-staatspruefung/pruefungsteile>