

Graduate Handbook

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Preface

The Department of Philosophy is part of the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Maryland, and as such is bound by all of the rules and policies of these bodies. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about these rules and policies, which are summarized in the University of Maryland Graduate Catalog, available on the web at <http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/requirements.html> and also to be informed about the rules and policies of the Department of Philosophy, which are contained in this Handbook.

Throughout this Handbook, expressions such as “the Department,” “students,” “the faculty,” “the University,” and the like are to be understood as referring to the Department of Philosophy, graduate students enrolled in the Department of Philosophy, faculty members of the Department of Philosophy, the University of Maryland, and the like, except as explicitly noted otherwise. Furthermore, “completing” a course should be taken to mean completing that course with a grade of B-minus or better.

The faculty is the official interpreter of the rules and policies set forth in this Handbook, which delegates the power in the first instance to the Graduate Director. The Department retains the right to modify, alter, overrule, or change any of the rules or policies set forth in this Handbook, in accord with its established practices for doing so.

The PhD program: Basic requirements

Course Requirement

In order to satisfy the Course Requirement, each student must complete twelve courses, or a total of thirty-six hours of credit.¹ As detailed below, two of these courses must be Core Courses. The expectation is that the other ten will be graduate seminars offered by the Department, but substitutions, including undergraduate courses offered by the Department, or courses offered by other departments, are allowed with permission of the Graduate Director.

Core Course Requirement

Each year the Department will offer the following two graduate courses, known as Core Courses, specifically designed for students beginning their graduate careers:

- Core Analytic Philosophy
- Core Ethics

¹ Since the requirements of the PhD program subsume those of the MA program, PhD students are welcome to collect an MA once they have completed the requirements detailed below.

These Core Courses will: (i) be taught at a suitable level for first year graduate students; (ii) be broad, covering at least a handful of central topics (although not necessarily attempting a general survey); (iii) be aimed at preparing students for further graduate work in the area; and (iv) have a final examination and, although perhaps numerous smaller papers, not a long term paper.

In order to satisfy the Core Course Requirement, student must complete both of the two Core Courses within the first year of graduate study.

History Requirement

In order to satisfy the History Requirement, a student must complete at least one course focusing primarily on a particular period or on particular figures in the history of philosophy. (Courses only part of which are historical can count toward satisfying the history requirement, but only for those students who opt to write a largely historical term paper for assessment purposes.) Graduate courses taken elsewhere can be used to satisfy the History Requirement, with permission of the Director of Graduate studies.

Philosophy of Science Requirement

In order to satisfy the Philosophy of Science Requirement, a student must complete at least one course in the philosophy of science. Graduate courses taken elsewhere can be used to satisfy the Philosophy of Science Requirement, with permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Logic Requirement

A student can satisfy the Logic Requirement in one of four ways:

- (i) by completing Philosophy 370;
- (ii) by completing the final exam for that course, even though the student did not enroll in the course;
- (iii) by completing a more advanced course in logic offered by the Department that presupposes the material from Philosophy 370; or
- (iv) by demonstrating completion elsewhere of course work equivalent to or more advanced than Philosophy 370. (Note that Philosophy 370 is a not a seminar, and so would not normally count as one of the twelve courses required for the PhD degree.)

Prospectus Requirement

In order to satisfy the Prospectus Requirement, a student must form a Prospectus Examining committee, write a Dissertation Prospectus, and have the Prospectus approved by the Prospectus Examining Committee at a formal Prospectus Meeting.

(1) A Prospectus Examining Committee is an internal Departmental committee appointed by the Graduate Director for the sole purpose of evaluating a particular student's Prospectus. The Committee must have a minimum of three members. The Chair of the Committee and at least two other members must be members of the Department.

(2) A Dissertation Prospectus is a written document, prepared by the student, that describes

the nature of the proposed dissertation project, and also demonstrates the student's competence to write such a dissertation. The Department requires that a Prospectus should contain at least the following four parts:

- (i) an overview of the proposed dissertation, typically ten to fifteen pages, though some Committees may ask for considerably more;
- (ii) an extensive bibliography, demonstrating familiarity with the relevant literature;
- (iii) a tentative schedule for completion of the dissertation; and
- (iv) a writing sample demonstrating the student's competence to work in the area (the writing sample need not be part of the projected dissertation, but may be simply a relevant paper in a related field).

Depending on the nature of the student's proposed dissertation project, the Examining Committee may impose other requirements on the Prospectus. Since there are a variety of different models for what a Prospectus should look like, students are advised to get clarification of the expectations of their committee members in advance.

(3) With the consent of the Chair of the Examining Committee, the Prospectus will be distributed to members of the Committee, and a Prospectus Meeting will be scheduled. At this meeting, the members of the Committee discuss the Prospectus with the student, to determine whether it is a viable dissertation project. The Committee may accept the Prospectus as it stands, or accept it conditional upon the satisfaction of certain specified requirements; alternatively, the Committee may reject the Prospectus, and either require revisions for reconsideration at another Prospectus Meeting, or deem the entire project not viable.

Admission to Candidacy

After all Basic Requirements have been completed, and the student's Dissertation Prospectus has been accepted by the Examining Committee, the student may apply for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD degree, following the procedures detailed in the Graduate Catalog.

Dissertation Requirement

In order to satisfy the Dissertation Requirement, a student must write a Dissertation, and have that Dissertation approved by the Dissertation Examining Committee at a formal Dissertation Defense.

(1) A Dissertation Examining Committee is a University committee appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School for the purpose of evaluating the student's dissertation. The constitution and authority of this Committee is described in the Graduate Catalog. In the normal course of events, the Prospectus Examining Committee will form the core of the student's Dissertation Examining Committee, and the Chair of the Prospectus Examining Committee will become the Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee, known as the student's Dissertation Director. A student may request that a Dissertation Examining Committee be formed at any point after he or she has satisfied the Prospectus Requirement.

(2) The University's policies concerning the style and form of Doctoral Dissertations are

described the Thesis and Dissertation Manual, available from the Graduate Records Office.

(3) Once a student's Dissertation is complete, the student will be examined on the contents of the dissertation in a final Dissertation Defense, which will be conducted in accord with the procedures set out in the Graduate Catalog.

Note that there is no set format for the Dissertation itself. On one model, a Dissertation might be organized around the defense of a single unifying thesis. On another—“covering concept”—model, a Dissertation might consist of a related set of arguments on a broader topic. Either model is acceptable in principle, but the detailed format will need to be negotiated with your Dissertation Director.

Auditing Requirement

All students who have completed the coursework component of the program are required to audit at least one course in each semester thereafter. The main rationale for the rule is to keep students engaged with and learning new philosophy, as well as to strengthen their CVs. As a result, there is a presumption that the audited course should be a philosophy seminar. However, exceptions may be permitted by the Director of Graduate Studies where a course to be attended in another department would significantly help the student’s research or would better position the student for the job market. Students who can do so at no additional cost should formally register as Auditors.

The MA program: Basic Requirements

Course Requirement

In order to satisfy the Course Requirement, a student must complete ten courses, or a total of thirty hours of credit. As detailed below, two of these courses must be Core Courses. The expectation is that the other eight will be graduate seminars offered by the Department, but substitutions, including undergraduate courses offered by the Department, or courses offered by other departments, are allowed with permission of the Graduate Director.

In addition, if an MA student chooses to write an MA Paper, then as many of two of the ten required courses may be special MA Paper courses.

Core Course Requirement

The Core Course Requirement for the MA is identical to that for the PhD, described above.

History Requirement

The History Requirement for the MA is identical to that for the PhD, described above.

Logic Requirement

A student can satisfy the Logic Requirement in one of four ways:

(i) by completing Philosophy 271 (Symbolic Logic); (ii) by completing the final exam for that

course, even though the student did not enroll in the course; (iii) by completing a more advanced course in logic offered by the Department; or (iv) by demonstrating completion elsewhere of course work equivalent to or more advanced than Philosophy 271. Note that Philosophy 271 is not a seminar, and so would not normally count as one of the ten courses required for the MA degree.

The Scholarly Paper Requirement

A student must complete at least one scholarly paper, exhibiting appropriate mechanics and standards of argument. Normally, a substantial seminar paper will satisfy this requirement, but the paper must be approved by the Graduate Director.

The MA Paper

The Department does not require a thesis for the MA degree. However, a student who wants to concentrate on the production of a substantial piece of philosophical research in the course of obtaining the MA degree has the option of taking up to two terms (six credit) of Philosophy 798 (Master's Level Independent Study.) This course is run as a directed study with an individual faculty member, who is then designated as the student's MA Paper Director. The student's goal in the MA Paper Research Course is the production of an extended paper, equivalent in quality and scope to a standard Masters thesis.

Financial Support and Good Standing

Financial Support

PhD students are normally admitted to the Department with financial support—in the form of a TA, an RA, or a Fellowship—or otherwise acquire a presumption of support at some point in their graduate career. The Department guarantees that, barring financial emergencies, each of these students who remains in good standing will receive financial support for a total period of ten terms, or five years. Both internal and external sources of funding are counted in determining the years of support.

The five-year rule will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis for supported students who are admitted with transfer credits, or for students who acquire the presumption of support at some time later than their first semester, since, in either case, the duration between the initial award of financial support and completion of the degree can be expected to be somewhat shorter.

Students who do not remain in good standing should not expect to receive any further financial support. There will be cases in which, due to staffing or other needs, students who are not in good standing, or students for whom there is no presumption of support, will nevertheless be hired as TA's or RA's by the Department. The Department makes no commitment of further support to students in this category.

Any student receiving full financial support must remain fully registered during the period of support, either to the full extent of available tuition remission or at least up to the part-time

fees limit of 8 credits. Credit hours that are not used directly for seminars can be applied to private reading courses, mentoring courses, or seminar audits. It is expected, however, that each supported student will attend at least one graduate seminar offered by the Department during each term of support. This should be taken for credit or official audit whenever the student can do so without paying fees at a higher level.

Subject to the availability of funds and the teaching needs of the department, students in the year following the expiry of full support (normally the sixth year in the program) may be supported at $\frac{3}{4}$ the normal rate (while continuing to teach two courses over the year). For such students, the maximum number of courses they will be permitted to teach is three (in return for full support). Students in the year following who have not yet graduated (normally the seventh year in the program) may be supported at $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal rate (while teaching two courses), up to a maximum of four courses in return for full support. Students who fail to graduate by the end of this year will not normally receive support thereafter. All of the appointments described here will be as $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, or full TAs, which include tuition remission pro rata and full health benefits. Note, however, that the teaching needs of the department vary from year to year. While the department will do its best to provide the minimum levels of support in years 6 and 7 described here, opportunities to do more may not always be available.

Good Standing

The concept of good standing applies only to students with the presumption of support, is based on rate of progress through the PhD program, and has three components: (1) Core Course completion rate, (2) course completion rate, (3) date of Admission to Candidacy. All such students must remain in good standing. Without it, they lose their presumption of full support.

In order to remain in good standing, a student who has not yet been Admitted to Candidacy must:

- (1) Complete one Core Course by the end of the student's first term, and the second by the end of the student's second term, so that both are finished after the first year;
- (2) Satisfy the Logic Requirement by the end of the student's fourth term, or second year;
- (3) Satisfy the Course Requirement at the rate of three courses in the first-year fellowship term, and at the rate of two courses per semester otherwise and thereafter;
- (4) Choose a provisional dissertation topic, obtain the consent of a faculty member to chair the prospectus, and formulate with the chair a plan to complete the prospectus on time, by the end of the sixth term, which is usually the end of the third year;
- (5) Complete all Basic Requirements, satisfy the Prospectus Requirement, and be Admitted to Candidacy by the end of the seventh term, which is typically the first term of the student's fourth year.

In order to remain in good standing, a student who has been Admitted to Candidacy must make substantial progress toward the completion of a dissertation during the eighth and ninth terms of graduate study. Such a student will then continue to receive support for the full five-year period.

Students should note that in order to be eligible to receive their second term of Fellowship in the Spring of their fourth year, it must be clear to the scheduling committee at the time that it schedules graduate teaching for the Spring that the student will have advanced by the start of the Spring semester. This normally means that the student will need to have advanced by *early* in the fall of their fourth year.

Periodic Review and Removal from the Program

The Department meets once each semester to review the progress of all students in the program who have advanced beyond their first semester.

On rare occasions, the semester review raises serious questions about a student's prospects for completing the program – that is, for writing an acceptable dissertation in a reasonable amount of time. In some of these cases, the Department can best serve the interests of both the student and the program by asking the student to leave the PhD program. The Department's approach to such cases will be governed by the following principles:

1. There is a presumption that a student's prospects for completing the program are not in doubt if the student is in Good Standing and has no more than a small proportion of grades outside of the "A" range.
2. If the Department is considering asking a student to leave the program, the student will be so informed at the time of the review, and a final decision will be deferred until the following semester.
3. In cases where one of the concerns raised by the review relates to the quality of the student's work, the student will be invited to provide some written work to the Department three weeks before the time of the next review that best illustrates the student's philosophical abilities.
4. In cases where a student is asked to leave the PhD program, an MA may be awarded if sufficient credits have been earned, or the student may request permission to transfer to the MA program if additional credits are required.

Post-Advancement Reviews of Progress

An annual review of progress will be held each year for students who have advanced to candidacy. The meeting will be timed shortly before the Spring semester faculty meeting at which the progress of all students is discussed. Typically the review will be conducted by the same committee that undertook the prospectus exam (with substitutions allowed as appropriate for faculty who may be away). The candidate will be required to present a sample of recent writing drawn from the dissertation, together with an outline of progress made since the time of the exam or the last review, as well as a plan for completion of the PhD in timely fashion.

In cases where a student is deemed not to have made satisfactory progress, the student will be informed and strategies and a timetable for improvement discussed. A brief written report will be made to the Director of Graduate Studies and copied to the student. A report will also be made to the Department at its next meeting to review graduate student progress.

Academic Dishonesty

Any graduate students who receives a grade of F (understood to include a grade of XF for academic dishonesty) in connection with any course will be asked to leave the program. That student may appeal the decision to the Graduate Director or Department Chair.

Arbitrary and Capricious Grading

In accordance with Graduate School policy, the Department has a standing committee to review allegations of arbitrary and capricious grading. (See the Graduate School Catalog under “other academic policies”.) The committee shall consist of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Chair, together with the two most senior graduate student representatives on Graduate Affairs Committee. If either the DGS or Associate Chair is the instructor in question, the Chair shall appoint a replacement. If two or more graduate student representatives happen to belong to the same year, the choice of one or more members of the committee shall be determined by lot. If the graduate student making the appeal is on the Graduate Affairs Committee, the other two student representatives shall be members of the grading review committee.

Informal Benchmarks of Progress (advisory only)

- (1) Within the first three terms in the program students should aim to have given a short (conference-length) presentation at one of the departmental colloquia.
- (2) Within the first two years in the program students should aim to have given at least one presentation at a conference outside the university, and should aim to give at least two such presentations annually thereafter.
- (3) During the third year in the program students should register for 898 with a faculty member to write a paper that might form the basis for a dissertation proposal. This can be either in Fall or Spring semester of the third year, depending on the availability of the faculty member. Only one seminar should be taken during the semester in which the three credits of 898 are taken.
- (4) By the end of the third year in the program students should have a clear idea of the topic of their dissertation, and ideally should be well on the way to completing a prospectus, ready for a defense in September of the fourth year.
- (5) By the end of the third year in the program students should have a clear idea of the areas of competence (AOCs) that they propose to claim on their CV, and should have taken steps to make those claims justifiable (e.g. by taking clusters of seminars, and by requesting to TA and instruct appropriate courses).
- (6) By the middle of the fourth year in the program students should have submitted at least one excellent piece of writing to a journal to be reviewed for publication.
- (7) By the end of the fourth year in the program students should aim to have been the instructor of record for at least one course (either in Winter, Summer, or during the regular year).
- (8) By the end of the fifth year in the program students should aim to have at least one paper accepted for publication (or in press or print).

(9) Before going on the market (preferably earlier) students should have created a professional website containing their CV, publications and works in progress, material from the teaching dossier, and so forth.

Assignments as TAs and Instructors

In addition to their work as TAs, the Department will often need to make a graduate student the instructor of record for a course, either during the regular semester, or in Winter or Summer terms. At various times through the year the DGS or Associate Chair will send out calls for proposals: either to TA a particular course in the following semester, or to instruct an existing course in a future term, or to design a novel course in a future term. Graduate students should then submit their proposals and priorities, accompanied by a brief narrative. The latter might briefly describe the proposed course, if the student wishes to design one; or in the case of TA assignments, it might give a brief rationale for TAing a particular course, appealing to the student's intended Areas of Competence, for example.

While the Department strives to make teaching assignments as fair and transparent as possible, it should be emphasized that there are always multiple constraints in play. Moreover, the Department has an obligation to provide the best education that it can for the undergraduate students whom it serves.

Travel Money for Graduate Students

Travel money is available from various sources (the international travel fund, Graduate School Goldhaber Award, the College travel fund, and the Department). These are normally only given in cases where the student is presenting a paper at a conference. Awards from outside the Department will generally require matching funding from the Department, so applications should be cleared first with the Graduate Director. The Department sets aside a sum of money each year for graduate student travel, which is available for approved travel on a first-come-first-served basis. But it will not normally support more than one award for a given student in any given academic year.