

THE PENN STATE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(revised December 2008)

PART I OVERVIEW

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Graduate education in the Penn State Department of Philosophy is characterized by a focus on, and commitment to, the history of philosophy conceived as a basis for pursuing philosophy in an international context. Specifically, the program includes special emphases on both contemporary Continental philosophy (including phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, social theory, and postmodernism) and classical American philosophy (including transcendentalism, naturalism, semiotics, pragmatism, and contemporary cultural issues). The curriculum is designed to foster and promote genuine dialogue across international borders and philosophical traditions, both established and emerging. The program is organized to facilitate the ability to engage meaningfully a variety of philosophical approaches—including feminist theory, analytic philosophy, critical race theory and social/political philosophy—and a range of systematic fields—including aesthetics, ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of science. Our faculty maintain strong professional relationships in Europe and Latin America. Members of the faculty work in close collaboration with students to ensure the depth and breadth of their philosophical education.

Interdisciplinary study is also possible across the humanities, the social sciences, the arts, the natural sciences, and interdisciplinary programs such as Women's Studies, Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, Bioethics and Medical Humanities, and Science, Technology, and Society. The Philosophy Department offers students the opportunity to earn a dual-title doctoral degree in Philosophy and Women's Studies (<http://www.womenstudies.psu.edu/academics/programs/phd.htm>). There are doctoral minors available in social thought and in literary theory, criticism, and aesthetics. Study abroad is possible as well through exchange programs or individual arrangements with leading departments of philosophy in, for example, Freiburg, Lyons, and Sao Paulo.

Graduate students benefit from the many colloquia, conferences, symposia, and special events on campus and sponsored by the department. In addition to these programs, graduate students can participate in the Rock Ethics Institute (<http://rockethics.psu.edu>), the Institute for Arts and Humanities (<http://php.scripts.psu.edu/dept/iah/index.php>), the Program in Aesthetics, the Graduate Program in Social Thought, and the Program for Semiotic Research in Law, Government, and Economics.

The philosophical richness and complexity of our students' training prepares them well for success in the profession. This preparation is further augmented through a faculty mentoring program, instruction in research methods and the development of foreign language abilities, a teaching apprenticeship and teaching certificate program that are central to all students' studies, and a highly effective placement program.

ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID

The Graduate Program in Philosophy at Penn State is highly competitive. However, the Department is committed to fully funding every student it accepts through to the PhD. Decisions about admissions and the awarding of assistantships and fellowships are made on the basis of careful comparative evaluation of the credentials submitted by the applicants. These credentials must show that the candidates have done superior work in their previous studies, and that they have the capacity to complete successfully a program of graduate work at Penn State. Applicants typically have had an undergraduate major in philosophy, but this is not required and students may be admitted with limited undergraduate work in philosophy if their work generally gives evidence of high intellectual ability. *All applicants must submit Graduate Record Examination Aptitude Test scores.*

Financial assistance is available in several forms, the primary one being *graduate assistantships* offered by the Philosophy Department. Those who receive such awards will, in their first year, assist a professor or senior graduate student in an introductory class. This involves grading papers and discussing the content of the course with students during office hours. The time required averages about 20 hours per week. In subsequent years students will be expected to lead discussion sections and teach introductory level undergraduate courses.

It is the responsibility of each graduate student who is employed as a teaching or research assistant to carry out his or her duties throughout the course of the semester. For those with teaching assignments, the semester does not end until grades are computed and posted. Those graduate students who are teaching must be present for each class session. Any absences, except for last minute emergencies, must be approved in advance by the Department Head or Director of Graduate Studies and alternate arrangements for the class, acceptable to the Head or DGS must be made. It is not acceptable to miss classes at the beginning or end of the semester, as well as during the semester, without the express consent of the Head or DGS.

Other forms of financial assistance include grants-in-aid and Graduate Fellowships (upon departmental recommendation). Awards typically are for a period of 10 semesters (unless the student is admitted with Advanced Standing) during which the student is required to maintain good standing in the program. Students with a one-half time graduate assistantship for Fall and Spring semesters receive a full tuition grant-in-aid on application for the Summer session.

The Department also admits students with advanced standing on a case-by-case basis.

COURSE OF STUDY

Each student pursues an individual program, approved by and planned in consultation with a faculty mentor and the graduate officer. The program of formal instruction leading to the master's degree consists of a minimum of thirty credits selected according to the interests and qualifications of the student concerned. An additional 20 credits of coursework are usually taken to complete course requirements for a Ph.D. candidate. Course work is to be completed by the

end of the fifth semester of residence. A maximum of nine graded credits of independent study in philosophy is permitted by the department.

STUDY ABROAD

All students are strongly encouraged to study abroad for a portion (semester or year) of their graduate education and to apply for external grants and/or fellowships to support this study. Mentors and dissertation advisors will work closely with students to design an appropriate course of study abroad in connection with the student's particular interests and area(s) of specialty to be developed in the dissertation. In conjunction with Penn State's College of Liberal Arts and Graduate School, the philosophy department provides incentives to students who apply for external funds to support their work abroad.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AND ADVISING

Until students select a dissertation director, who serves as the primary faculty advisor for advanced students, all students work closely with a faculty mentor and the Director of Graduate Studies who are available for consultation about course selection and other program matters. All faculty are involved in this mentoring program and each faculty member typically has two to three students who they mentor at any given time. Mentors and the Director of Graduate Studies are responsible for reviewing student progress through the program until the dissertation adviser is chosen.

Specifically, the mentor will meet with the student at least once a semester to:

- Assist students in choice of courses;
- Assist in the preparation for candidacy examinations;
- Ensure timely completion of all program requirements;
- Guide students in teaching duties;
- Evaluate student progress annually.

PLACEMENT

The Department of Philosophy has an excellent record of placing its students in major colleges and universities. The entire faculty is committed to the successful placement of every student in the program. This is facilitated by the Graduate Placement Officer, who organizes placement workshops, arranges for mock interviews and works closely with students to put together a compelling CV and dossier. It is important that students recognize that successful placement is a matter of professional development throughout the course of graduate education, and not just at its end. The department's interest in its alumni does not cease when they have found their first position; it endeavors to stay in touch with them and is prepared to offer further assistance in the advancement of their careers.

PART II RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

A) GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIP

Students are required to participate in the teaching apprenticeship sequence. The sequence guides students through the responsibilities and methods of teaching philosophy, preparing them to teach their own courses at the beginning of their third year in the program:

- Semester 1: One credit Orientation Seminar
- Semester 2: Begin Teaching Assistantship
- Semester 3: One credit Teaching Practicum
- Semester 4: Teaching Assistantship, begin teaching own course
- Semester 5: One credit Professional Development Seminar, Teaching Support Group gatherings

The Philosophy Program Teaching Apprenticeship is designed to facilitate our students' ability to earn their Graduate School Teaching Certificate. For information on the requirements for this certificate, see <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/tacert.html>.

B) COURSE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

1. Students must take at least one course in at least three of the following areas: feminist theory, Continental philosophy, American philosophy, analytic philosophy.
2. Students must also take at least one course in each of the following historical periods: ancient, medieval, modern, nineteenth century and twentieth century.
3. Courses may double-count across category 1 and category 2. They may not triple-count. The faculty member teaching a course determines which area(s) and/or historical period(s) toward which the course may count. The required 400 level Logic course may not count as a student's required course in analytic philosophy.

C) INCOMPLETES

1. Students are strongly discouraged from taking incompletes. For pedagogical reasons and to facilitate the student's timely progress through the program, work for a particular course is expected to be completed by the end of the semester in which the course is offered.
2. In rare cases when a faculty member approves an incomplete, the student will be given a grade of DF at the end of a semester.
3. Accumulation of DF's (and the F's to which they convert six weeks into the next semester in which the student is enrolled) creates serious problems for students. Unless granted a written exception by the Director of Graduate Studies, students must have the work for previous course work completed by the beginning of each Fall semester in order to continue in good standing in the Program.
4. Failure to meet these requirements: Each student's progress in the program will be reviewed at the end of every Spring semester. Those who have exceeded the incomplete limit will be informed that their funding is in jeopardy. When students have not turned in their work for all of their courses by the beginning of the Fall semester the faculty will consider, among other appropriate measures, asking the student to take a leave of absence until the overdue work is completed and passed or to leave the Ph.D. program permanently.

D) CANDIDACY EXAMINATION

1. All graduate students must pass the departmental candidacy exam taken at the beginning of a student's third semester of graduate study. The candidacy exam has two components: a review by the full faculty of the student's academic portfolio and an oral interview based on the portfolio. Each student must put together a portfolio that includes:
 - a. Major writings from all of the student's classes,
 - b. A 1-2-page self-evaluation (500-700 words) that includes a reflective analysis of the student's academic progress to this point and an indication of the direction of the student's future study.
2. No student with an outstanding incomplete can submit the candidacy exam. No student who has not taken at least one language translation exam can submit the candidacy exam. If the student cannot submit an exam, the student will be placed on probation for the Fall semester. If the candidacy exam is not completed by the end of the Fall semester, the student will be required to take a leave of absence.
3. Students who have not passed at least one language translation exam by the beginning of the third semester are permitted to submit the candidacy exam, but will not be admitted to candidacy until the first language exam has been passed.
4. The full faculty reviews the progress of each student. Students are given a written evaluation from the faculty drafted by the Director of Graduate Studies in which they are informed of the results of the exam: pass, fail or probation. Following this written evaluation, the Director of Graduate Studies will meet in person with the student.
5. Students who are placed on probation must successfully resubmit the candidacy exam at the beginning of their fourth semester. Students who fail the candidacy exam in either their third or fourth semester may complete a terminal second year of graduate study, resulting in an MA with submission of an acceptable master's paper, but will not be allowed to remain in the program after this time and will not become Ph.D. candidates.

E) LOGIC REQUIREMENT

1. All graduate students must satisfy the department's logic requirement by passing the department's 400 level Logic class with a grade of B or higher. The course covers the following five areas: a) informal concepts of logic; b) translation into symbolic logic notation for both propositional and predicate logic; c) decision methods (truth tables, truth trees) for both propositional and predicate logic; d) natural deduction proofs for both propositional and predicate logic; and e) formal semantics and metalogic.
2. The 400 level Logic class will be offered every other year.

F) LANGUAGES

Written exams

1. Written exams demonstrating competence in two languages other than English must be passed. The choice of languages should be relevant to the research program of the student. The selection of languages must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The student will request that a written exam be scheduled by completing the language exam request form and submitting it to the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. The Director of Graduate Studies will assign an examiner for the exam.
4. The author will be chosen by the student; the passage will be chosen by the examiner.
5. The student will have 2 hours to complete the exam and can use a dictionary for the exam.

6. The first exam must be taken prior to the beginning of the third semester, and the second exam must be taken prior to the beginning of the sixth semester.
7. The standard for passing the exams is the same for both languages. One reader will be given the exam initially. If that reader passes the exam, no other reader is necessary. If the first reader fails the exam, a second faculty member may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the first reader, be asked to read the exam. If that faculty member passes the exam, the student will be said to pass the exam. If not, then the exam is failed. Passing signifies that the student has been judged to have a reading competence in the language sufficient to use that language in philosophical research. The precise meaning of this competence will, of course, be left to the judgment of the reader of the exam; however, it is generally taken to mean that the student is able to read and understand the text in a sufficiently sophisticated manner as to enable a serious discussion of that text. It does not mean that the student must be able to translate the text for publication.
8. Students are permitted multiple re-takes of the exam if the exam is failed. In the event of a failing exam, the student is encouraged to discuss the timing for the re-take with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Intensive language course

1. A student must pass an intensive language course in a language other than English. This course cannot be taken until the written language exam for this language has been passed.
2. This course must be taken and completed with a passing grade by the end of the 6th semester.

Failure to meet these requirements.

If the written exams and the intensive language course are not passed by the required dates, the student will be put on probation for one semester (either Fall or Spring). If the requirements are not met by the end of that semester, the student may be required to take a leave of absence.

G) COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

1. All graduate students must complete and pass the departmental comprehensive exam prior to the beginning of a student's seventh semester of graduate study. The comprehensive examination may not be taken until all coursework is complete, the language and logic requirements are met, and a formal doctoral committee has been approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. If the comprehensive exam is not passed by the required dates, the student will be put on probation for one semester. If the requirements are not met by the end of that semester, the student may be required to take a leave of absence.
2. The comprehensive exam is a departmental exam administered in formal consultation with the entire faculty. It is composed of two written parts based on a reading list generated by each student in consultation with the doctoral committee. The specific areas on which the comprehensive exams will focus is determined by the doctoral committee in consultation with the student:
 - a) A written exam on systematic areas of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence, for instance: aesthetics, social/political philosophy, ethics, etc.
 - b) A written exam on historical areas of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence: Ancient, Medieval, Modern, 19th century, and 20th century. Students will have no more than 72 hours to complete their responses to questions generated by the doctoral committee in the designated areas.

3. Once the written portion of the exam is complete and submitted, the doctoral committee convenes with the student for an oral defense of the exam. One member of the department outside of the doctoral committee will participate in the oral defense.
4. If the student fails the comprehensive exam, after consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies and the dissertation committee, the student may either a) re-take part or all of the exam, or b) assemble a different dissertation committee to pursue a different course of study and a different dissertation project. Either resolution of this problem must be fulfilled by the end of the semester in which the exam was failed.
5. Students may not defend a prospectus unless they have passed the comprehensive exam.
6. Once a student passes comprehensive exams, ABD status is conferred. The graduate school requires that all ABD graduate students maintain continuous enrollment until the doctoral defense has been passed. There are no exceptions to this requirement. Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment will be required to register retroactively and pay all past due tuition before being permitted to defend the doctoral dissertation.

H) DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

1. The student will begin by asking a faculty member to be the Director of her/his dissertation by the end of the 4th semester. At this time, the student will also consult with that faculty member about what other faculty members should constitute the dissertation committee.
2. The rest of the committee is constituted by three other members of the Penn State Graduate Faculty, one of whom must be from the Philosophy Department, one of whom must be external to the Department and a third, who may be but need not be a member of the Philosophy faculty. Faculty from outside PSU can serve on the committee with the permission of the Chair of the Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. By the end of the 5th semester, the student will submit to the Graduate Director a Committee Appointment Signature Page signed by all members to constitute her/his committee.
3. The dissertation prospectus will be formulated in consultation with the dissertation committee members. Typically a prospectus will include a clear statement of the dissertation topic and problem, the case for the importance of this topic, an outline of the approach to be taken, an outline of chapters, a bibliography of the most significant primary and secondary literature (students are encouraged to set up a session at the library to help with this part of their work). Typically, the prospectus will be about 15-20 pages long.
4. After the written prospectus is submitted, there will be an oral exam in which the dissertation committee members examine the student on the project as outlined in the prospectus.
5. This exam should be completed by the end of the 7th semester. The committee has the option of requiring some revisions for a passing grade. The exam is failed if two or more members of the committee grade it as failing. If the exam is failed, the student will discuss his/her options with the Director of Graduate Studies.
6. The dissertation defense will be scheduled after the completed dissertation is approved by the dissertation advisor and second reader. Typically, the defense will be scheduled at least 4 weeks after the final copy of the dissertation is submitted. The committee can require revisions before the dissertation is accepted. If the committee does not accept the dissertation, the student will discuss options with the Director of Graduate Studies.

PART III

STANDARDS OF PROGRESS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Although students begin graduate study with different backgrounds, confront different situations, and develop in different ways at different speeds, all students should meet the following standards of reasonable progress to ensure successful and timely completion of the Ph.D. requirements. Failure to meet these standards may result in the student being required to take a leave of absence from the program until the requirements are met. Leaves of absence carry significant consequences, including loss of use of University resources such as the library and email account; loss of insurance coverage; loss of eligibility for travel funding; and loss of student status for financial aid purposes. Minimally, failure to maintain the following standards of progress will require that the student consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and her/his mentor in order set up a clear plan for resolving the problems with progress in the program. It is the responsibility of each student to familiarize herself with The Graduate School's policies, procedures, and calendars.

Appointment as a graduate assistant or receipt of fellowship support for more than 10 semesters after admission to the program should not be expected. The Graduate School requires completion of all work for the degree within eight years after admission to candidacy. The Department enables and strongly encourages students to complete all work much earlier.

TIMETABLE FOR STANDARDS OF PROGRESS

By the end of the first semester: Complete ten (10) credits, including the required one credit orientation.

By the end of the second semester: Complete nine (9) additional credits.

By the beginning of the third semester: Pass one foreign language translation exam. At the beginning of the third semester, the student must submit materials for the candidacy exam.

By the end of the third semester: Complete ten (10) additional credits, including the one credit teaching practicum.

By the end of the fourth semester: Complete nine (9) additional credits. Begin discussions about constituting a dissertation committee.

By the end of the fifth semester: Complete all course work (with the exception of the language intensive course), including the one credit professional development seminar, and meet all course distribution requirements and pass the logic requirement (48 total credits). File a Committee Appointment Signature Page. Discuss with dissertation director concrete plans for applying for external grants or fellowships, especially for support studying abroad.

By the beginning of the sixth semester: Pass a second foreign language translation exam. Finalize application(s) for external grants or fellowships.

By the end of the sixth semester: Complete and pass the intensive language course. Complete nine credits of dissertation research (Philosophy 600) in conjunction with the comprehensive examinations.

By the beginning of the seventh semester: Pass the comprehensive examination.

By the end of the seventh semester: Pass the dissertation prospectus oral examination.

During the seventh through tenth semesters: Register for full-time dissertation research (Philosophy 601), which is designed for the completion of the dissertation and its oral defense.

SPECIFIC CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR ADVANCED DEGREES

The Department of Philosophy is authorized to award two advanced degrees: the M.A. and the Ph.D.

M.A. CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Students receive an M.A. degree as a part of their work for the Ph.D. The M.A. is awarded after successful completion of the comprehensive exam, part of which serves as the student's master's paper. Students awarded an M.A. will have met the following requirements:

1. A minimum of 30 credits including 18 credits in 500 and/or 600 courses.
 - a) 18 credits must be in philosophy. (At least 12 of these credits must be in 400 and 500 level courses.)
 - b) 6 credits may be in a minor.

Ph.D. CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Formal admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. requires passing the candidacy examination. The following are normal requirements for the Ph.D. in Philosophy:

1. A minimum of 30 credits in residence at Penn State. Usually candidates take 50 credits of coursework and 36 research credits as follows:
 - a) 50 credits in philosophy . 18 of these course credits must be at the 500 level. In addition, at least 9 credits will be taken at the 600 level. These courses will include PHIL 600, 601, 602, and 603. With the exception of 602, all of these courses are specifically for pre- or post-comprehensive dissertation research and will be assigned an "R" grade.
 - b) Continuing registration for at least one research credit until completion of degree.
 - c) At the option of the department, candidates may take up to 15 non-Philosophy credits toward a doctoral minor.

Advanced Standing

Students entering with an MA in Philosophy or substantive graduate work in Philosophy may be eligible for advanced standing. Qualified students may be awarded up to 9 credits of advanced standing and retain their full funding package. In rare cases, students with significant graduate work in Philosophy may be awarded up to 18 credits of advanced standing. In such cases, the period of funding will be reduced by one year. Interested students must request advanced

standing from the Director of Graduate Studies. Decisions about advanced standing are made by the Director of Graduate Studies based on the academic qualifications of the student.

Academic milestones: the bureaucracy behind them

Graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies and procedures of both the Philosophy Department and the Graduate School. The Graduate School website, <http://www.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/>, is always the most current source of information regarding University policies and procedures. Below is a summary of some of the most important regulations and requirements for Graduate Students in Philosophy.

Year one: Formalizing admission

Upon admission, students will be required to provide the Graduate School with an official copy of their undergraduate transcript with the date of BA if one has not already been submitted. Transcripts submitted during the admissions process often lack this information; the Graduate School will notify students directly if this is required. Because the Graduate School's correspondence is through the US postal service, it's important that students update their physical mailing address via eLion AND at the Employee Self-Service Information Center at the Office of Human Resources website <http://www.ohr.psu.edu/>. (Students will be notified via mail of ALL academic milestones, so it is important to keep this information current; doing so also ensures that students receive income tax documents and W-2 forms each year.)

Year two: Doctoral Candidacy exam

A student has no official status as a doctoral student and no assurance of acceptance as a doctoral candidate until the candidacy examination has been passed. To be eligible for the candidacy exam, students must be registered for classes; have completed one year of coursework; have no outstanding (DF) grades; and carry a minimum 3.0 grade point average. Students must also have passed one language translation examination.

Students will submit their candidacy exam portfolios early in their third semester. The faculty review process will be completed by the end of that semester. When the faculty has completed the review, the department will notify students of the exam results and file the Report on Doctoral Candidacy with Graduate Enrollment Services. Students will receive a memo from the Graduate School notifying them officially of the candidacy exam results. Those results will also be posted to student transcripts. Again, keeping addresses current ensures that students will receive this notice. Students should add the Graduate School's notification of results to their records.

Year three: Establishing a Doctoral Committee

As a condition for passing the PHIL 602 Professional Development course in the fifth semester, students are required to submit an official Doctoral Committee Appointment Signature form to the Director of Graduate Studies. Please see the Graduate Program Staff Assistant for this form.

Each committee must consist of no fewer than four members of the Graduate Faculty. Two of those members must be from within the department; one member (the outside member) must be a member of the Penn State Graduate faculty from an unrelated field. The primary roles of the outside member are to maintain the academic standards of the Graduate School and to ensure that all procedures are carried out fairly. The outside member's participation is required at all

future examinations. Students should keep a copy of the committee paperwork with their records.

Year four: Comprehensive examination

During the fourth year, students complete their comprehensive exam. Students must have a valid committee and have met all departmental requirements to be eligible for this exam. Students must also be registered at least part-time during the semester of the exam, have a minimum 3.0 GPA, and have no DF or NGs on their transcript. Successfully passing the comprehensive exam confers ABD status.

Students are responsible for arranging the exam meeting time; please notify the DGS and the program assistant of the intended exam date and time no less than three weeks prior to the exam. This is necessary to allow the Graduate School time to ensure student eligibility and to generate the Report on the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination form prior to the exam; *no exam will be permitted without this form*. Students should be aware that only one member of the committee can participate in the comprehensive exam by telephone, and that a minimum of three members must be physically present for the exam. Students will receive a copy of the exam results in the mail, and, again, should keep a copy of the results with their records.

Once comprehensive exams have been completed, the Graduate School requires that students maintain continuous enrollment. Students who have not maintained continuous enrollment will not be permitted to defend their dissertation until they have retroactively registered and paid tuition for past semesters.

Year five: Dissertation prospectus, Humanities Initiative release, dissertation defense

To be eligible for the Humanities Initiative release from teaching duties, students must have passed their comprehensive exam and dissertation prospectus defense. The submission form for the latter is strictly internal, but required; please see the program assistant for a copy of the form prior to the prospectus defense. The entire committee and the Director of Graduate Studies are required to sign off on this form. Students will be given a copy for their files.

Students become eligible for the Humanities Initiative release upon the successful completion of their prospectus defense. Students must notify the program assistant of their intent to request a release no later than March 15 of the academic year PRIOR to their requested release. This is usually well before students actually complete their comprehensive exam and dissertation prospectus defense, but once this release has been granted, students are committed to it. Teaching schedules and other administrative arrangements are made around this release, so it is crucial that students prepare accordingly. (All Humanities Initiative Dissertation Release recipients are required to participate in the Graduate Exhibition; the department provides students with information about the exhibit at least three months prior to the event.)

The doctoral defense is, of course, the last step in the Ph.D. program. This is conducted separately from all of the Graduate School and Thesis Office deadlines, but it is important that students consult the calendars and guidelines of the Graduate School and Thesis Office as they plan their defense. The relevant websites are: <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/calendar/> and <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html> respectively. Student must notify the Director of Graduate Studies of their upcoming defense *at least three weeks prior to the anticipated defense*

date. Students are responsible for contacting each member of their committee to schedule the meeting date. As with the comprehensive examination, no fewer than three members of the committee must be physically present; one member can participate by telephone. If a member will participate via phone, the Graduate Program Assistant must be notified since this requires a memo requesting the Graduate School's approval. Students are also responsible for distributing their dissertation to the committee at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. Once students have notified the Director of Graduate Studies of their upcoming defense, an examination request form is sent to the Graduate School. They, in turn, generate the Report on the Final Oral Defense Examination. This page will be given to the committee chair prior to the start of the exam; *no defense will be permitted without this form*. As with other milestones, students receive notification of the results via mail and a notation will be added to their transcript. Once a student has defended, s/he no longer needs to register, even if graduation will not occur until the following semester.

A note on deferred grades and leaves of absence

Deferred grades, which are assigned to allow students extra time to complete assignments, should be avoided at all costs. The DF itself will automatically "roll over" to an F six weeks into the next semester for which the student is registered. The Graduate School allows DFs to remain unchanged for one year from the end of the semester for which the grade was assigned. After that, they require a memo from the Director of Graduate Studies, explaining why the student needed additional time, to extend that DF.

Accumulation of excess DFs or failure to complete coursework in a timely fashion may result in probation and a temporary leave from the program. Should a student ever need to be absent from the program during the academic year, there is no formal withdrawal procedure; one simply doesn't register. In order to return to the program, such students will need to complete a Resume Study/Change of Graduate Degree or Major form at least six weeks before their anticipated return date. This form is located at <http://forms.gradsch.psu.edu/ges/reschg2.pdf>. It is submitted directly to the Graduate School. Once they approve the request, both the student and the department will receive notification. The DGS then approves the request, and the program assistant approves the change in status; that, in turn, signals the Registrar to generate a tuition bill. At that point students may schedule classes. Registration will not be complete, however, until the semester bill has been filed (paid).

For help with questions about any of these procedures, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies.