

# **GRADUATE PROGRAM**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**The Pennsylvania State University**  
**Department of Philosophy**

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## PART I: OVERVIEW

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Doctoral Program in Philosophy at Penn State has particular strengths in continental philosophy, critical philosophy of race, and feminist philosophy. Graduate training in philosophy focuses on these areas while providing all graduate students with a strong foundation in the history of philosophy. Graduate students have the option of pursuing dual-title doctoral degrees in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; African American and Diaspora Studies; and Classics and Mediterranean Studies. Over the last ten years, the Program has come to be recognized for its devotion to admitting and fostering students of diverse backgrounds. Our faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized experts in their fields. We strive to prepare our graduate students for professional academic careers through our mentoring program, teaching apprenticeship, and our effective placement program.

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, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies; Bioethics and Medical Humanities; African-American Studies; and The Africana Research Center. The Philosophy Department offers students the opportunity to earn a dual-title doctoral degree in Philosophy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; for more information, visit <https://wgss.la.psu.edu/graduate/degree-programs/>; in African-American and Diaspora Studies; for more information, visit <http://afam.la.psu.edu/join-us/graduate>; in Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies; for more information, visit <https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/classics-ancient-mediterranean-studies/>

There is also a Latin American Studies minor, at:

<https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/minors/latin-american-studies-graduate-minor/>.

Minors are more defined by the Graduate School. Students pursuing a graduate minor must complete the Grad School form, indicating their course of study, and have the minor signed off by both programs.

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>), and the Humanities Institute (<https://hi.psu.edu>).

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. *As of 2019, the Philosophy Department no longer requires applicants to submit Graduate Record Examination 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 their 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 (DGS) 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.

## DURATION OF PROGRAM AND FUNDING

The Penn State Philosophy Doctoral Program is a five (5) year program. The Penn State Philosophy Department and the College of Liberal Arts guarantees five (5) years of funding with the expectation that students graduate with a doctoral degree at the completion of the fifth year.

## **COURSE OF STUDY**

Each student pursues an individual program, approved by and planned in consultation with their mentoring committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. The program of formal instruction leading to the master's degree consists of a minimum of 30 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. The department permits a maximum of 9 graded credits of individual study in philosophy to count toward the degree.

### ***INDIVIDUAL STUDY***

Students will have the opportunity to pursue individual study for graded credit with a faculty advisor on a mutually agreed upon topic relevant to a specific area and historical period of philosophy. However, students are limited to one independent study over the two years of course work (with the exception of independent studies completed during summer session). In the first two years, students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a second independent study. The petition will be approved if the student and the independent study instructor make a compelling case for the independent study, that is, if the independent study is significantly more appropriate for the student's philosophical development than any of the offered courses. The Graduate Studies Committee will consider petitions for independent studies from students who have entered the program with an M.A. in philosophy to be stronger than those from students who have entered the program with a B.A. in philosophy. To earn credit, the student must complete the *Individual Study Request (PHIL 596)* form providing the name of the faculty advisor, relevant area and historical period, and a brief description of the course of study. Once both the student and faculty advisor have signed the form, it should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Program Assistant to process, at which time three credits of PHIL 596 will be added to the student's schedule for the appropriate semester. These requests must adhere to University Registrar academic deadlines. A maximum of nine graded credits of PHIL 596 will be allowed to count toward the degree.

### ***STUDY ABROAD***

The Philosophy Department provides \$5,000 in supplemental funds (in addition to the regular graduate student travel funds) to support study abroad. The supplemental funds may be used to pay for such things as airfare and language classes abroad prior to the semester/year in question. Students must apply for external funding, e.g., a Fulbright, a DAAD, or a Chateaubriand, in order to receive the extra departmental funding. The College of Liberal Arts provides incentives to graduate students to develop and submit competitive applications to external agencies for research funding or fellowship support: <http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/student-resources/funding-opportunities/external-funding-incentive-award>.

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. Formal exchanges exist with the University of Freiburg and with Université Jean Moulin (Lyon III).

In general, any graduate student who wishes to study in a foreign country must demonstrate that study abroad will support their dissertation research.

Criteria for being granted time for study abroad: (1) excellent work in the doctoral program overall; (2) consistent progress toward completion of the degree; (3) progress toward completion of the dissertation (percentage written at time of application); and (4) relevance of study abroad for dissertation research.

Eligibility for study abroad:

Note: Normally students applying for studying abroad will have met the following eligibility criteria and in the event that the application process is competitive preference will usually be given to those students who have met these eligibility criteria.

1. ABD status (pass dissertation prospectus defense).
2. In good academic standing (all “pass—good progress” on last annual review).

Application Process\*

1. Student must submit a cover letter stating their desire to study abroad, where the study will be conducted, and the duration of time projected abroad.
2. Student must submit an up-to-date Curriculum Vitae.
3. Student must submit a 300-500 word rationale and plan for the study abroad, which includes a timetable for the completion of the dissertation.
4. Dissertation advisor must submit a brief letter of support, which explains how the study abroad is relevant to the student’s dissertation research.
5. In addition, subsequent to the time spent abroad, the student must submit a report (of at least 300 words).

The application must be submitted at least one semester prior to the projected time abroad. The Graduate Studies Committee and the Head of Department will evaluate all applications. The report on the study abroad must be submitted within one month after the student returns to residency in the doctoral program.

Study Abroad Extension Application Process

1. If a student wishes to remain for a second study abroad semester, they must apply for an extension.
2. The student must submit a statement detailing what they have accomplished during their first semester abroad, as well as their plans for the second semester studying abroad.
3. The Dissertation Advisor must submit a letter indicating their support of a second semester of study abroad.

The extension application must be submitted four (4) weeks prior to the start of the second semester. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Head of Department, will evaluate all applications.

\*If the graduate student wants to receive the \$10,000.00 departmental grant for making the transition to the foreign country, they must apply for (but not necessarily win) an external grant such as a Fulbright Fellowship.

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. In particular, graduate students who are ABD (those with an approved dissertation prospectus) may apply for funding in the amount of \$2,000 for travel to special collections from the RGSO Dissertation Support Competition (<https://la.psu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/student-resources/funding-opportunities/rgso-dissertation-support-competition>).

Deadlines for submitting application for College Dissertation Support Competition are October 1 and March 4. Students should also keep in mind the "Traveling Scholar" program among the universities associated with the Big Ten Academic Alliance, which includes, among others, the University of Michigan, Northwestern University, and Rutgers University: <https://btaa.org/resources-for/students/traveling-scholar-program/introduction>.

## **MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AND ADVISING**

Until students select a Dissertation Advisor, who serves as the primary faculty advisor for advanced students, all students work closely with a mentoring committee composed of three faculty members assigned at the start of the student's graduate program. All faculty members are involved in this mentoring program. Mentoring committees and the Director of Graduate Studies are responsible for reviewing student progress through the program until the Dissertation Advisor is chosen. From that time forward, the Dissertation Advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies will be responsible for reviewing student progress through to the completion of the doctoral degree.

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

- Assist students in choice of courses;
- Assist in the preparation for qualifying examinations;
- Ensure timely completion of all program requirements;
- Guide students in teaching duties (in addition to the guidance provided by the teaching mentor);
- Evaluate student progress annually (in addition to the formal annual review process; see below, Part II, Section F).

In addition, the DGS will appoint a teaching mentor for each graduate student in their second year of residence. Throughout the remaining period of the student's residence, the appointed teaching mentor will advise the student on their teaching responsibilities and will provide counsel if the student is encountering teaching problems. If graduate students encounter disruptive students in their classroom, they should contact not only their teaching mentor but also the Head and Director of Graduate Studies.

Teaching mentors are also responsible for evaluating their mentee's teaching on the basis of the occasional in-class observation. Teaching mentors will observe their mentee's classes at least once during their first semester of teaching. They will observe their mentee's teaching during their second semester of teaching, as well. Thereafter, if there are no major pedagogical issues to

address, teaching mentors will observe their mentees in the semester or two preceding the student's time on the job market. Students should contact their teaching mentors to schedule teaching observations.

## **TRAVEL TO CONFERENCES**

The Philosophy Department allots \$7,500.00 in travel funding to each doctoral student when they enter the program. Doctoral students must request authorization for travel reimbursement in advance of the planned trip. The authorization request form may be found at: <https://philosophy.la.psu.edu/graduate/currentgrads/travel-funds-request-form/>. It is recommended that students do not attend and present at conferences until the third year of the program.

## **PLACEMENT**

The Department of Philosophy has an excellent record of placing its students in major colleges and universities (<https://philosophy.la.psu.edu/graduate/graduate-placement/>). 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**

As a professional program, the Philosophy Doctoral Program is devoted to training its students in all aspects of the academic profession, in particular, in research, teaching, and service. More specifically, all students are required to enroll in three one-credit courses that are intended to provide training in these traditional areas of academic life. PHIL 602.1 provides students with orientation in the Philosophy Doctoral Program. PHIL 602.2 provides students with training for teaching philosophy at the college and university level. Finally, PHIL 602.3 provides students with knowledge about philosophy publishing and philosophy job placement. The apprenticeship sequence is as follows:

- Semester 1: One credit Orientation Seminar and Writing Seminar (PHIL 602.1); begin Teaching Assistantship (grading)
- Semester 2: Writing Seminar (PHIL 602.1); continue Teaching Assistantship (grading)



- Semester 3: One credit Teaching Practicum (PHIL 602.2); Teaching Assistantship (teach discussion groups).
- Semester 4: Teaching Assistantship, begin teaching one course with full responsibility and with support from teaching mentor.
- Semester 5: One credit Professional Development Seminar (PHIL 602.3) teaching assistantship, teaching one course with full responsibility and with support from teaching mentor. (Students, in conversation with their dissertation advisor, may decide whether to take PHIL 602.3 during semester 5 or 7.)

Students must remain in residence at University Park during any semester that they are teaching, including online teaching, unless they receive permission from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head to travel for the sake of research or other legitimate academic purposes. These requests must be submitted in writing and approved at least one semester prior to the research travel. (See Part II, Section M on the residency requirement.)

The Philosophy Program Graduate Apprenticeship is designed to facilitate, among other things, our students' ability to earn their Graduate School Teaching Certificate. For information on the requirements for this certificate, see <https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-student-life/graduate-school-teaching-certificate/>.

## **B) COURSE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT**

1. Students must take four courses in four (4) of the following areas: ethics; metaphysics-epistemology; continental philosophy; critical philosophy of race; and feminist philosophy.
2. Students must also take four (4) courses in the following historical periods: ancient; medieval; modern; nineteenth century; and World Philosophies (prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century).
3. Definition of World Philosophies (prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century): This course rubric is intended to problematize the chronology of Western philosophy. It signals the doctoral program's distinctive agenda of diversifying the Western canon. The rubric includes not only figures outside the Western canon, but also figures who have remained marginal or entirely neglected because they have not been generally considered as "philosophers." World Philosophies courses aim to focus attention on the methodological question of how philosophy and its history is to be conceived.
4. Under the "World Philosophies" (prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century) rubric, instructors will teach: different ways of narrating world history; figures that have contributed significantly to the key problems, topics, questions, and debates in philosophy but who have remained marginal or entirely neglected in the Western canon; figures outside of the Western canon; questions and traditions that would lead us to rethink the centrality of certain perennial questions in the Western canon. A typical course to fulfill this category would be 19<sup>th</sup> Century Africana Philosophy.
5. A single course may fulfill a requirement in both the area and history categories. Individual courses may not be counted twice internal to the area requirements. Students may take two history courses in one period, but only in a single period. For example, while students may

fulfill part of the history requirement by taking two 19<sup>th</sup> century courses, they may not fulfill the history requirement as a whole by taking two 19<sup>th</sup> century courses and two modern courses.

6. The faculty member teaching the course determines which area(s) and/or historical period(s) toward which the course may count.

### **C) DEFERRED GRADES**

1. Students are strongly discouraged from taking deferred grades. 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 a deferred grade, the student will be given a grade of DF (deferred grade) or NG (no grade) at the end of a semester.
3. Accumulation of DF grades or NG grades creates serious problems for students. Should there be a pressing need to take a deferred grade, we urge that the work be completed as soon as possible after the end of the semester. The Graduate School regulations mandate that outstanding work be completed and graded within 12 weeks after the course end date in order to resolve a deferred grade. The DF or NG will turn into an F after that point and neither the department nor the instructor will be able to change the grade. Only in the case of an extreme circumstance, such as a medical problem, will the Graduate School make an exception to this rule.
4. In order to extend the time of a deferred grade beyond the granted 12 weeks, the student must request the extension from the instructor of that course. The student must provide to the instructor a compelling reason to extend the deferred grade deadline. If the instructor agrees to the extension (and to the new projected deadline), the Philosophy Graduate Program Assistant and/or the Director of Graduate Studies will compose a memo to be signed by the instructor and then sent to the Graduate School. The Graduate School decides whether to grant the extension or not.
5. The full paragraph from the University Bulletin, Graduate Degree Programs, Grading System, reads: "In addition to the quality grades listed above, three additional grade designations, DF (deferred), NG (no grade), and R, may appear on a student's transcript. If work is incomplete at the end of a semester because of extenuating circumstances, the instructor may report DF in place of a grade, which will appear temporarily on the student's record. It is not appropriate to use the DF either casually or routinely to extend a course beyond the end of the semester or to extend a course for a student who has failed so that the individual can do extra work to improve the grade. Required work should be completed and the DF resolved as soon as possible once assigned, but must be resolved (i.e., the course must be completed) no later than 12 weeks after the course end date as noted on the Registrar's Schedule of Courses, unless an extension of a specific duration to a specified date is agreed upon by the instructor and student and approved by the Graduate School that allows for a completion deadline longer than 12 weeks. A memo with a justifying statement and the agreed-upon date must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services in order to request an extension. A deferred grade that is not resolved before the end of this period automatically converts to an F and cannot be changed without approval by the Graduate School. A memo with a justifying statement for changing the F grade must be submitted by the instructor to the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services in order to request a DF that has defaulted to an F grade be changed."

6. Note the sentence in the Graduate School statement: “Required work should be completed and the DF resolved as soon as possible once assigned, but must be resolved (i.e., the course must be completed) no later than 12 weeks after the course end date as noted on the Registrar’s Schedule of Courses”.
7. To allow time for the instructor to grade the outstanding materials and post the grade, all work for deferred grades *must be submitted no later than 10 weeks after the course end*, or two weeks prior to the 12-week deadline.
8. Failure to meet these requirements: Each student’s progress in the program will be reviewed at the end of every spring semester (See Section F below). Deferred grades that have turned into Fs will be counted as failing grades; will impact yearly assessment negatively; and will result in the possibility that the student will be exited from the program.

## **D) SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

The Scholarship and Research Integrity Program (SARI) at Penn State is designed to offer graduate students comprehensive, multilevel training in the responsible conduct of research, in a way that is tailored to address the issues faced by individual disciplines.

For more information, see: <https://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari>.

As part of the satisfaction of the Penn State SARI requirement, graduate students will be required to complete an online Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training program provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) no later than November 1 of their first semester in residence. You must take the quiz. Then print out the “SARI passed certificate,” and submit it to the Philosophy Graduate Program Assistant so that they can put the quiz results in your personnel file.

## **E) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and is a federal law that was enacted in 1974. FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. All educational institutions that receive federal funding must comply with FERPA. If you're an employee of Penn State with access to student education records, you're obligated to comply with FERPA and to protect those records according to the law. FERPA gives students four basic rights with respect to their education record: (1) The right to control disclosure of their education record; (2) The right to review their education record; (3) The right to request amendment of inaccurate or misleading portions of their education record; and (4) The right to file a complaint regarding non-compliance of FERPA with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information, see: [https://www.registrar.psu.edu/confidentiality/FERPA\\_faq.cfm#1](https://www.registrar.psu.edu/confidentiality/FERPA_faq.cfm#1).

As part of the satisfaction of the Penn State FERPA requirement, graduate students will be required to complete the FERPA training no later than November 1 of their first semester in residence. Go to: [http://www.registrar.psu.edu/staff/ferpa\\_tutorial/ferpa\\_tutorial.cfm](http://www.registrar.psu.edu/staff/ferpa_tutorial/ferpa_tutorial.cfm). The webpage (under the Office of the University Registrar) provides instructions on how to learn

about FERPA. You must take the quiz. Then print out the “FERPA passed certificate,” and submit it to the Philosophy Graduate Program Assistant so that they can put the quiz results in your personnel file.

## F) ANNUAL REVIEW

1. To ensure that students are making good progress in the program, the department will conduct an annual review of every graduate student.
  - Reviews of year one graduate students will be in the form of the Qualifying Exam (see Section G).
  - By May 1 of each year, all graduate students -- with the exception of first year pre-qualifying students -- must submit to the Director of Graduate Studies and to Graduate Studies Program Assistant an up-to-date curriculum vitae and a “student activity report” (SAR). The SAR should be organized into three sections in which you report on (1) your academic and research activity, (2) your teaching activity, and (3) your departmental citizenship activity (e.g., attendance at talks, help with recruitment, and all of the many ways in which graduate students contribute to the flourishing life of the department). This list of activities reflects the three traditional areas of academic assessment: research, teaching, and service. The period for which graduate students are required to report is from May 1 of the previous year to April 30 of the current year, including the summer (e.g., summer research, conferences, language courses). As part of section (1), graduate students are also required to provide an indication of and brief rationale for the academic and professional plans for the coming summer and the next academic year, for example, summer research, language learning, courses you plan to take next year or areas of research. The SAR should be a document that combines a list of activities and plans with a narration of those activities and plans, including, where appropriate, your reflections on conditions and circumstances that have aided your progress or interfered with it. The SAR should be between 250 and 500 words (1-2 8½ by 11 pages, double space).
  - Reviews of year two graduate students will be conducted by the entire faculty who will meet to review the following:
    - Course grades and faculty assessments;
    - Progress toward completion of area, historical, and language/logic requirements;
    - Teaching evaluations from faculty mentors and SRTEs
  - Reviews of third through fifth year students will be conducted by the Dissertation Advisor in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head. The review will cover:
    - Completion of any remaining course or language/logic requirements;
    - Completion of comprehensive examination;
    - Completion of dissertation prospectus;
    - Progress toward completion of dissertation;
    - Teaching evaluations from faculty and SRTEs.
2. In accordance with [GCAC-404](#), students must maintain a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 to remain in good academic standing. One or more failing grades or a cumulative grade-point average below 3.00 for any semester or combination of semesters may be considered as evidence of failure to maintain satisfactory scholarship by the program.

3. Students will be sent a yearly evaluation letter, which provides an assessment of their progress in the relevant dimensions. They will also receive one of the following three rankings:
  - a. Pass—good progress;
  - b. Pass—but with concerns;
  - c. Unsatisfactory.
4. Students who receive either an evaluation of “pass, but with concerns” or “unsatisfactory” will receive feedback on the reasons for the evaluation and will be provided with clear goals for future improvement of their ranking.
5. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of Department will meet with any student receiving an “unsatisfactory.”
6. If an assessment of unsatisfactory is received, the student will have until the first day of class in the following spring semester to address the concerns and improve performance. If the student is unable to improve performance by that date, the Head of Department will convene a faculty meeting, where the faculty will determine whether the student should be exited from the program or be given the opportunity to improve performance by the end of the current academic year. At this meeting, faculty will take into account any extenuating circumstances the student has encountered (such as health problems) that contributed to their inability to improve performance. Subsequent to this meeting, the Head of Department and Director of Graduate Studies will meet with the student in order to inform them of the meeting’s outcome.
7. If the student, to whom the faculty grants an extension to improve performance until the end of the current academic year, is unable to improve performance by this date, the Head of Department will convene a faculty meeting where the faculty will determine whether the student should be exited from the program or be given the opportunity to improve performance by the end of the following fall semester. At this spring meeting, faculty will take into account any extenuating circumstances the student has encountered (such as health problems) that contributed to their inability to improve performance. Subsequent to this meeting, the Head of Department and Director of Graduate Studies will meet with the student in order to inform them of the meeting’s outcome.

## **G) QUALIFYING EXAMINATION**

1. All graduate students must pass the departmental qualifying exam taken at the beginning of a student’s third semester of graduate study. The qualifying exam has two components: a review by the full faculty of the student’s academic portfolio and an oral defense of the portfolio submitted (duration of about 60-65 minutes). The Director of Graduate Studies appoints a three-member committee to review the portfolio and conduct the oral defense. If a student is enrolled in a dual-title program, the committee must include a philosophy faculty member with at least affiliate status in the partner department. Subsequent to the oral defense, the student’s qualifying committee will submit a report on the oral defense with a recommended grade for the qualifying exam. The decision on the grade for the qualifying exam is made by the full faculty. Once the faculty have decided the grade, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of Department will issue a letter to the student informing them of the outcomes. This letter also serves as the student’s annual review letter for the first year in the program.
2. The review by the full faculty of the student’s portfolio provides the opportunity for the assessment of the student’s work over the course of their first year. The oral component of the qualifying exam is the first of four formal oral self-presentations or defenses (the other three

being the oral defense of the comprehensive examination; the oral defense of the dissertation prospectus; and the oral defense of the dissertation itself). Each of the four oral defenses has the dual purpose of assessing the student's philosophical development (that is, the clarity and complexity of the philosophical concepts being presented) and of assessing the student's professional development (the clarity and maturity of self-expression).

3. Each student must put together a portfolio that includes:
  - a. Major writings from all of the student's classes. These are to be unrevised and unmarked versions of all papers that were handed in for the class.
  - b. A 500-700 word self-evaluation that includes: i) a reflective analysis of the student's academic progress to this point; ii) the title of the paper or papers (one or two), out of those submitted, that best indicates the quality of the student's work; and iii) an indication of the direction of the student's future study.
  - c. The date by which one must submit the portfolio (submitted electronically to the Graduate Studies Program Assistant, formatted in PDF) is set each year by the DGS. However, generally, the date by which to submit the portfolio will be one week before classes begin.
4. In order to be eligible for the qualifying exam, the student must have completed all work for the first-year courses and must have sat for a language or logic exam; it is not necessary to pass the language or logic exam.
5. Any student with an outstanding deferred grade may not submit the qualifying portfolio. No student who has not taken at least one language translation exam or taken the logic course can submit the qualifying exam. If the student cannot submit a portfolio, the student will be placed on probation for the fall semester. Probation in this context means that the student must complete all work required to submit the qualifying portfolio by the Graduate School deadline for removing DFs, that is, by the end of the twelve-week period. This deadline requires that the student submit all work required for any change of grade from DF to the relevant faculty member(s) at least two weeks in advance of the Graduate School deadline so that the faculty member(s) may be able to read and evaluate the work. If the student completes the work required to submit the qualifying portfolio by the Graduate School deadline, the student may then make a request to the DGS to schedule the exam. If the qualifying exam is not completed by December 1 of the Fall semester, the student will be required to take a leave of absence for the following spring semester.
6. 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 and will receive one of the following rankings:
  - a. Pass—good progress;
  - b. Pass—but with concerns;
  - c. Pass—but unsatisfactory progress;
  - d. Fail.
7. If an assessment of pass—but unsatisfactory progress is received, the student will have one year to address the concerns and improve performance. If a second evaluation of unsatisfactory is received on the same issue in the second-year annual review, the faculty will meet to determine if the student should be exited from the program.
8. Following this written evaluation, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of Department will meet in person with students who received a ranking other than pass—good progress.

9. If an assessment of fail is received, the student may retake the qualifying exam once in the following spring semester (the student's fourth semester). If the student fails in the fourth semester, the student may complete a terminal second year of graduate study, resulting in an M.A. 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 a Ph.D. candidate.

## H) LANGUAGE/LOGIC REQUIREMENT

All graduate students must fulfill the Language/Logic requirement. This can be accomplished in one of two ways depending on the research program of each student. Students may either:

- a. *Two Language Option*: pass two translation exams in two languages relevant to their research studies or
- b. *Language/Logic Option*: pass one translation exam in one language and pass the graduate level logic class with a grade of B or higher.

Decisions about which languages to focus on and which option should be taken to fulfill the Language/Logic requirement must be made in formal consultation with each student's mentoring committee. The mentoring committee will ascertain that the decision between these options best fits the student's course of study. The justification for the choice must be put in writing by the Chair of the students mentoring committee and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval.

Concerning the qualifying exam, students should be aware that, in order to sit for the qualifying exam, one must have sat for either one language exam (done either during the first academic year or in a summer language course) or the logic exam. In order to sit for the qualifying exam it is not necessary to pass either of these exams. However, students who pass the qualifying exam without having first passed a language or logic exam are still obligated to meet the language/logic requirement.

International students who have learned English as a second language (that is, non-native English speakers) may petition the Director of Graduate Studies (who will consult with the Graduate Studies Committee) to have English serve as one of the two languages or the one language in addition to logic used to meet the language/logic requirement. For instance, a native Spanish speaker who has learned English as a second language and is clearly fluent in English could request that English be counted as one of their languages for the language/logic requirement; but that student would still be required to pass another non-Spanish language exam or the logic exam in order to fulfill the language/logic requirement completely.

### Logic

1. The logic course is offered every other spring semester. It is designed to provide students with the training needed to be able to teach undergraduate level courses in the area of introductory symbolic logic and critical reasoning. Students taking the class will both be trained in logic as well as cover pedagogical strategies for teaching both of these classes. One outcome of the class will be the preparation of a syllabus for both classes.

2. Students who opt for the Language/Logic Option fulfill the logic portion of this option only by passing the graduate level logic course with a grade of B or higher.
3. First year students who take (but who do not necessarily pass) the logic course or who sit for a logic exam are eligible to sit for the qualifying exam.

### **Written Language Exams**

1. If a student chooses the Two Language Option, written exams demonstrating competence in two languages other than English must be passed. One such written exam is required of the student who chooses the Language/Logic Option. The choice of languages should be relevant to the research program of the student. The selection of languages is made in formal consultation with the mentoring committee and must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The student will request that a written exam be scheduled by contacting the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. The Director of Graduate Studies will assign an examiner for the exam.
4. The figure will be chosen by the student; the text will be chosen by the examiner whenever possible from a previously untranslated text either by or on the figure.
5. The student will have 2 hours to complete the exam and can use a dictionary for the exam. A second dictionary in the original language will be permitted in addition to a translation dictionary and online dictionaries. 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 fifth semester.
6. 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. Students are expected to translate no less than 500 words during the two-hour period. Errors that will probably result in a fail grade are things like: not recognizing common verb tenses, common syntactical formations, and common idioms. Not recognizing less common or obscure verb tenses, syntactical formations, and especially not recognizing obscure idioms should not count towards a grade of fail. It is not really possible to quantify the errors. But clearly, several errors in relation to common aspects of the original language would indicate a low or poor level of comprehension and a fail. One error in relation to a very common formulation probably indicates a very low (too low) level of comprehension and probably a fail. Yet, a translation including several errors in relation to more obscure formulations, etc., might be a pass, if the translation nevertheless seems to get the gist of the original language text.
7. 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.



8. The Philosophy Department offers summer German and French courses tailored specifically for philosophy doctoral students. Sitting for the final exam in either course (regardless of the exam's outcomes) counts as meeting the requirement for the qualifying exam. Passing the final exam in either course counts towards meeting the language/logic requirement.

**Failure to meet the language/logic requirement** by the required dates will negatively affect the student's annual review. It is recommended that students complete the language/logic requirement by the beginning of the third year.

## I) DISSERTATION/COMPREHENSIVE EXAM COMMITTEE

1. The student must select and obtain the agreement of a faculty member from the Philosophy Department to be the advisor for their Doctoral Committee prior to the fifth semester in the program. In consultation with the dissertation advisor, the student must compose a dissertation committee. Once the chosen advisor and committee members agree to serve, the student must complete a Philosophy Department *Declaration of Dissertation Advisor* form (including the advisor's signature) and submit it to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Studies Program Assistant. At this time, the student will also consult with the chosen dissertation advisor about what other faculty members should constitute the Doctoral Committee.
2. **Important: the Graduate School Doctoral Committee Form** must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than one calendar year after the date of the student's qualifying exam. This deadline is in accordance with Graduate School Policy (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-602-phd-committee-formation/>).
3. The selection of the Dissertation Advisor and the Doctoral Committee members must be based on faculty expertise relevant to the comprehensive exam and dissertation topics.
4. The Doctoral Committee must be composed of the Dissertation Advisor(s) and three other members of the Penn State Graduate Faculty, two of whom must be from the Philosophy Department, and one of whom must be external to the Department. In the case of students enrolled in a dual-title program, the committee must include a co-advisor from the partner program. If a philosophy faculty member has a partial appointment in the partner department, that faculty member can serve as the sole advisor or as co-advisor. If the sole advisor serves as both the Philosophy advisor and the partner program advisor, the committee may use another member of the partner department as the external to the department member. If there are two advisors, one from each department, then the committee must include a member who is external to both departments. Faculty from outside PSU can serve on the committee with the permission of the Chair of the Committee (that is, the Dissertation Advisor) and the Director of Graduate Studies.
5. Once the Committee has been formally constituted, any changes to that committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. The student must submit a formal written request detailing the proposed changes and providing an explanation of the reasons for making such changes to the committee. The student must then submit a new signed **Graduate School Doctoral Committee Form** to the Graduate Studies Program Assistant, who will then send it to the Graduate School.

## J) COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

1. All graduate students must complete and pass the departmental comprehensive examination 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/logic requirement is met, and a formal doctoral committee has been approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. Not passing the comprehensive exam by the required date (that is, by the end of the sixth semester) will negatively affect the student's annual review.
2. The comprehensive examination is a departmental exam administered in formal consultation with the entire faculty. Students should work closely with their Dissertation Advisor and all committee members to generate two reading lists: one in a systematic area of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence, for instance: aesthetics, social/political philosophy, ethics, etc. and the second in historical areas of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence: Ancient, Medieval, Modern, 19<sup>th</sup> century, and World Philosophies (prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Once the committee accepts the lists, the student should send to the Director of Graduate Studies (and copy the Graduate Studies Program Assistant) an electronic copy of i) the proposed reading lists; ii) a one to two page (300-500 words) justification/explanation of the reading lists and how they support their areas of specialization; and iii) a CV which includes AOS and AOC, and all graduate courses taken; and iv) a list of the members of the comprehensive exam/dissertation committee. This information supplies the context needed for faculty to provide meaningful feedback on the proposed reading lists. These documents will be circulated to the entire faculty for consultation. The faculty will be given one week to review and comment on the proposed reading lists.
3. The specific areas on which the comprehensive exam will focus is determined by the dissertation/comprehensive exam committee in consultation with the student. The comprehensive exam is composed of two written parts based on the reading lists generated by each student in consultation with the doctoral committee and the faculty, namely:
  - a) A written exam on systematic areas of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence.
  - b) A written exam on historical areas of philosophy relevant to the student's projected areas of specialty and competence.
4. Once the student is ready to sit for their written exam, they should consult with their dissertation advisor to finalize the start dates and times for the exam and then contact the Graduate Studies Program Assistant with this information. Overall, students will be given a total of 144 hours to complete the comprehensive exams, in two 72-hour periods. In consultation with their dissertation advisor, the student will decide which area of the comprehensive exam to do first (systematic or historical), and will decide the duration of the time between the two 72-hour periods, which can be no more than one week (162 hours) from the completion of the first 72-hour period to the beginning of the second 72-hour period. At the time and date scheduled for the first 72-hour period, the student will receive several questions for the first area of the exam (systematic or historical) and will be asked to choose one question from the several questions provided. Then at the time and date scheduled for the second 72-hour period, the student will receive several questions for the second area of the exam (systematic or historical) and will be asked to choose one question from the several questions provided. The comprehensive exams are open book and open notes.

5. Once the written portions of the exam are complete and submitted, the dissertation/comprehensive exam committee convenes with the student for an oral defense of the exam.
6. The oral defense of the comprehensive examination may be held fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be strongly considered, but the student and advisor must agree on the mode. If the student and advisor cannot agree on the mode, the Director of Graduate Studies will make the final decision. Either the student or advisor can appeal the decision of the Director of Graduate Studies to the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
7. The Doctoral Committee will use the following criteria to evaluate the written and oral portions of the comprehensive examination:
  - a) Demonstration of proficiency in the major field (i.e., Philosophy) and, if appropriate, dual-title and minor fields.
  - b) Indication of an adequate foundation to succeed in dissertation research.
  - c.) Demonstration of understanding of the texts on the student's systematic and historical lists.
  - d.) Presentation of responses to the comprehensive examination questions posed that answer the questions fully and accurately.
8. In accordance with [GCAC-606](#), a favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the Doctoral Committee is required for a student to pass the comprehensive examination. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/gcac-606-comprehensive-examination-research-doctorate/>)
9. If the student fails the comprehensive exam once, after consulting with the Director of Graduate Studies and the dissertation/comprehensive exam committee, the student may either
  - a) re-take the entire exam with new questions or b) assemble a different dissertation committee to pursue a different course of study and dissertation project. Either resolution of this problem must be fulfilled within three months of the date when the exam was failed.

If the student fails the comprehensive exam a second time, the graduate faculty as a whole will consider whether the student will be permitted to sit for the exam a third time. The student may opt to provide a written explanation to the graduate faculty of the reasons for the failure and why they wish to retake the exam. Following this, the graduate faculty will meet to determine whether a third attempt will be permitted, informed by the input of the faculty advisor and members of the dissertation committee who are on the philosophy graduate faculty. At the faculty meeting, it will be determined a) whether a third attempt will be allowed and b) whether the third attempt will, if allowed, be conducted by the original committee or if it will be necessary to constitute a new committee. If the student is permitted to take the exam a third time, they must do so within three months of the date when the graduate faculty approves sitting for the exam a third time. As with the second exam, the third exam must consist of questions not posed on previous exams. If a third attempt is not permitted, the student will be exited from the program. If a student fails the exam on a third attempt, no further attempts will be permitted, and they will be exited from the program.

10. Students may not defend a dissertation prospectus unless they have passed the comprehensive exam.
11. Once a student passes comprehensive exams, "all but dissertation" status (ABD) 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.

## **K) DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **I. Dissertation Prospectus**

The dissertation prospectus will be formulated in consultation with the dissertation committee (formerly called “the dissertation/comprehensive exam committee”), and primarily with the Dissertation Advisor. 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). The prospectus will be about 15-20 pages long. The student must use the template available on the Philosophy Department website (<https://philosophy.la.psu.edu/graduate/currentgrads/dissertation-prospectus-template/>).

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. This oral exam should be completed by the end of the 6th semester. The dissertation 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 their options with the Director of Graduate Studies. At the time of the oral defense the dissertation advisor completes a “Dissertation Prospectus Review” form (approved and signed by all committee members and the Director of Graduate Studies). The dissertation advisor submits the completed form to the Graduate Program Assistant with a copy of the prospectus for inclusion in the student’s permanent file. The “Dissertation Prospectus Review” form may be obtained from the Graduate Program Assistant.

### **II. Humanities Dissertation Release (HDR)**

1. Students become eligible for the Humanities Initiative release upon the successful completion of their prospectus defense. The HDR is awarded in the tenth semester in order to help the student complete and defend the dissertation, and graduate.
2. In consultation with the Dissertation Advisor, the Department Head, and the Director of Graduate Studies, students may petition to be awarded the HDR in semesters eight or nine. Students wishing to receive the HDR in semesters eight or nine must provide the DGS with a written statement of justification. The student’s Dissertation Advisor(s) must provide the DGS with a written statement of support. Because HDRs for each academic year are scheduled during the spring semester of the prior academic year, students must submit their request by the end of the spring semester of the academic year prior to the year in which they wish to take their HDR. Assuming the usual progression through the program, this means students wishing to take their HDR in semester 8 must petition to do so by the end of their sixth semester and students wishing to take their HDR in semester 9 must petition to do so by the end of their eighth semester.

3. Students are expected to remain in residence at University Park during the period of the release unless they receive permission from the Director of Graduate Studies to travel for the sake of research or other legitimate academic purposes.

### III. **Dissertation Defense**

1. Ideally, the dissertation defense will be scheduled after the completed dissertation is approved by the Dissertation Advisor and the dissertation committee. Typically, the defense should be scheduled at least 4 weeks after the final copy of the dissertation is submitted to the dissertation committee. In accordance with [GCAC-607](#), students must provide a copy of the dissertation to each member of the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the schedule defense date. The dissertation committee can require revisions prior to the dissertation being accepted.
2. The final oral examination (dissertation defense) may be held fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be strongly considered, but the student and advisor must agree on the mode. If the student and advisor cannot agree on the mode, the Director of Graduate Studies will make the final decision. Either the student or advisor can appeal the decision of the Director of Graduate Studies to the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.
3. The candidate's opening presentation of the dissertation will be open to the public. The date and time of the defenses should be announced at least two weeks in advance through the Philosophy Department list serve for the faculty and the graduate students, and an event flyer should be produced and posted on the events case of the department and made available for posting around the department. While the expectation is that the whole defense be open to the public, the candidate or the committee may request that all or part of the question and answer portion of the defense be closed to the public; the decision about whether or not to close that portion of the defense will be made by the dissertation advisor, in consultation with the candidate, the Director of Graduate Studies, and Department Head. At the completion of all questioning, the committee will meet in private to deliberate on whether the candidate has satisfactorily defended the dissertation.

## **L) THE PENN STATE PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP (P-PDF)**

Students who successfully defend the doctoral dissertation at the completion of the five years are eligible to apply for a one-year Penn State Philosophy Department Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

**Purpose:** The Penn State University Philosophy Department Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship is intended to provide up to two academic years of post-graduation financial support for qualified graduates of the Penn State Philosophy Department Doctoral Program.

**Responsibilities:** Fellows are expected (1) to be actively on the academic job market in consultation with the Placement Officer; (2) to work on transforming their doctoral dissertation into a publishable book or into publishable articles; (3) to teach a 2-2 load; and (4) to participate vigorously in the life of the Philosophy Department. Postdoctoral fellows must be in residence at the Penn State, University Park Campus. Postdoctoral fellows must submit a report describing the progress made during the fellowship no later than May 1 of the fellowship year.

**Eligibility:** Only applicants who have graduated from the Penn State University Doctoral Program in Philosophy within the previous two years are eligible for this postdoctoral fellowship. In order to qualify, applicants must have made good progress through the PhD program and must have defended their dissertation by the end of their final year of funding.

**Requirements:** Students in the last semester of their funding (usually their 10<sup>th</sup> semester or, in the case of Dual Title students, their 12<sup>th</sup> semester) should notify the Director of Graduate Studies that they will be applying for the departmental postdoc no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> of the calendar year in which they wish to take up the postdoc.

During their postdoctoral year, students must fulfill the following requirements in addition to those already listed under “Responsibilities”:

1. Following the defense of the dissertation, the Dissertation Advisor and the student will compose a plan for the fellowship year that will include the development of a complete job market dossier with supervision from the Placement Officer and their respective Dissertation Director and Committee, as well as possible publications.
2. The fellow will continue to work with their Dissertation Advisor, who will normally serve as the fellow’s primary mentor/Advisor during the fellowship year.
3. The fellow will submit 1-2 page reports (similar to the Student Activity Report for annual reviews), on December 15<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> of their fellowship year. These reports should be submitted electronically to the Dissertation Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Placement Officer.
4. These reports will outline the fellow’s achievements in the current semester, including progress on the job market and applications for other fellowships and postdocs; revisions of the dissertation; publication of articles; conference presentations; and teaching.
5. In addition, the December 15<sup>th</sup> report will outline the projects for the upcoming semester.
6. The Dissertation Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Placement Officer must review and approve the December 15<sup>th</sup> report including the projects for the upcoming semester. This will normally take place in a meeting with the Dissertation Advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Placement Officer.

**Renewals of the Postdoc:** Students may apply for a second year of the postdoc to be taken immediately after the first postdoc year. Renewals of the postdoc are not automatic but are competitive and will be determined by the Head of Department on the advice of the Graduate Studies Committee. The application must be submitted March 1st and must include all the documents from the first year of postdoc, a plan for the second year of the postdoc, and a recommendation letter from the prospective fellow's postdoc mentor. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that they have been active on the academic job market, that they are making good progress on their research, and that they have been successful in teaching. Applicants for the renewal of their postdoc should be aware that the availability of any such fellowships is contingent upon department resources. Applicants may be placed on a waiting list pending availability of those resources.

## M) GRADUATION

### *Conferring the Ph.D. in Philosophy*

A student preparing to graduate should notify the Graduate Studies Program Assistant by email at least one week prior to the start of the semester in which they intend to graduate.

One week prior to the start of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students must also initiate the steps outlined here: <https://www.registrar.psu.edu/graduation/intent.cfm>. These steps include notifying the University of their intent to graduate, confirming the activation period on the Academic Calendar for the dates when they can activate their intent to graduate, using the "Apply for Graduation" link within the My Academics page in the LionPATH Student Center to set their intent to graduate, and contacting the appropriate college office or Graduate Enrollment Services to activate or remove their intent to graduate after the activation period expires. In addition, after they submit their intent to graduate, they will receive an email from LionPATH. In this email, they will be asked to log into LionPATH to verify their name and address.

Students who have borrowed federal loans and who are preparing to graduate must participate in the Federal Loan exit counseling process to review their financial obligations in repaying their loan. Visit <https://studentaid.gov> to complete exit counseling.

### **Dissertation Submission and Final Defense**

The Office of Theses and Dissertations identifies a number of deadlines throughout the semester of graduation, which vary from year to year and can be found by visiting the following web site: <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/index.cfm/current-students/etd/thesisdissertationperformance-calendar/>.

Typically, the semester timeline will be as follows:



**Second Week:** submit final dissertation to the committee for review; schedule defense with committee; notify Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Studies Program Assistant of defense date

**Sixth Week:** submit the doctoral dissertation to Office of Theses and Dissertations for format review

**Seventh Week:** pass the doctoral defense; complete Doctoral Approval Page (available for PDF/DOC download at <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/index.cfm/current-students/etd/>)

**Tenth Week:** submit the final dissertation, dissertation fee, and supporting materials\* to the Office of Theses and Dissertations

*\*Supporting materials include the Survey of Earned Doctorates and the ProQuest/UMI Agreement, both of which can be accessed at <http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/index.cfm/current-students/etd/>.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** Students must be enrolled during the semester of their dissertation defense. Once a student has successfully defended, they are no longer required to enroll, even if graduation will not occur until the following semester.

## Commencement

Students who wish to participate in the commencement ceremony should order caps and gowns directly from the Penn State Bookstore early in the semester of graduation to ensure that the proper hood color can be obtained. To order, students should visit the Penn State Bookstore or call (814) 863-3589 or (814) 863-2512. Printed announcements can also be ordered from the Penn State Bookstore with a lead time of 2-3 weeks for processing.

Doctoral candidates planning to attend the spring commencement ceremony are required to sign up and reserve a seat. For information about sign-up process and for more information about the particulars of commencement (e.g., instructions for arrival, parking, etc.), students should visit the Commencement at University Park web site at <http://commencement.psu.edu>.

## Conferring the M.A. in Philosophy

Students who have completed the minimum 30 credits of courses and have successfully completed the qualifying exam are eligible for the conferral of the master's-along-the-way to the Ph.D., for which one of the written portions of the qualifying exam will serve as the student's master's paper (for more information, see M.A. Credit Requirements below in Part II, Section P, "Specific Credit Requirements for Advanced Degrees").

In accordance with GCAC-209, students who wish to enroll in a master's-along-the-way to the Ph.D. should inform the Director of Graduate Studies during their first semester in the doctoral program of their intent. While students may enroll in a master's-along-the-way after their first semester in the doctoral program, a master's-along-the-way may not be added after they have passed the comprehensive examination. Please consult [GCAC-209 P2](#) for further information



(<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/masters-along-the-way-procedure/>).

One week prior to the start of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students must also initiate the steps outlined here: <https://www.registrar.psu.edu/graduation/intent.cfm>. These steps include notifying the University of their intent to graduate, confirming the activation period on the Academic Calendar for the dates when they can activate their intent to graduate, using the “Apply for Graduation” link within the My Academics page in the LionPATH Student Center to set their intent to graduate, and contacting the appropriate college office or Graduate Enrollment Services to activate or remove their intent to graduate after the activation period expires. In addition, after they submit their intent to graduate, they will receive an email from LionPATH. In this email, they will be asked to log into LionPATH to verify their name and address.

Students who have borrowed federal loans and who are preparing to graduate must participate in the Federal Loan exit counseling process to review their financial obligations in repaying their loan. Visit <https://studentaid.gov> to complete exit counseling.

## **N) RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS**

As stated in the Graduate School Policies “assistantships are limited to degree-seeking students enrolled in residence” (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-school-funding/funding/assistantships/>). The Graduate School also requires residency for the PHIL 601 credits that are used for dissertation research and writing. The department agrees with the Graduate School that residency is important for students’ success in the program both in terms of timely completion of the dissertation and in helping students become strong instructors. Hence, graduate students are required to remain in residence at University Park during any semester that they are taking classes and teaching, including online teaching, unless they receive permission from the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head to travel for the sake of research or other legitimate academic purposes. These requests for non-residency must be submitted in writing and approved at least one semester prior to the research travel. Requests for non-residency for academic purposes will only be considered after the graduate student has satisfied all course work and established their dissertation committee.

Requests for non-residency for academic reasons must include the following:

1. From the student:
  - a. The semester of non-residency for which they are applying;
  - b. An explanation of the educational reasons justifying non-residency.
  - c. Provide details about the nature of the activity and its relevance to their dissertation research and/or planned AOS or AOC.
2. From the Dissertation Advisor:
  - a. an assessment of the non-residency application including the value of the planned activities and the impact on the student’s progress;
  - b. the director’s reasons for approval or reservations concerning the request.

## O) TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Assistantships are provided as aids to completion of advanced degrees. The teaching experience they provide graduate students is extremely valuable in building a professional record. When students apply for positions, they will be expected to submit a teaching portfolio which includes course syllabi and teaching evaluations from courses they have taught. Hence, the opportunity to teach and refine one's pedagogical abilities is a key element of the graduate program.

In the first and second semesters students are assigned to teaching assistantships, which require twenty hours of service per week. Teaching assistantships are assigned to a faculty member who is teaching a large class to assist with grading assignments. In the third semester, students will be assigned to a class in which they will lead discussion sections, grade assignments, and hold regular office hours to interact with undergraduate students. Starting in the fourth semester teaching assistants who are in good standing with SRTE scores (<http://www.srte.psu.edu/>) will be assigned to teach their own class and will be expected to design and teach the class, grade assignments, and hold regular office hours. Teaching assistants will be assigned a faculty teaching mentor to work closely with them the first semester they teach. The teaching mentor's report on their observations of the teaching assistant's performance in the classroom will play a central role, in addition to the SRTE scores, in the annual evaluation of the teaching assistant's success at meeting the teaching requirements. In semesters five through nine, students will be assigned one course per semester. In semester ten, students are not required to teach, since they will be occupying the Humanities Dissertation Release. Students may request to teach 2 courses in one semester, releasing them from teaching for the other semester in the academic year. Requests should be made to the Director of Graduate Studies. Requests must be made prior to the academic year for which the request is being made, and no later than March 15.

### Teaching Assistantship Requirements

1. Full-Time Academic Status—Students holding teaching assistantships are required to carry 9 or more credits each semester (fall and spring).
2. Students are expected to work 20 hours per week throughout the semester and until the end of finals week.
3. Students must be in residence, including those who are teaching online courses (see Section M).
4. SRTE scores for discussion sections and for classes must be consistently meet expectations of being at or above a score of 5 on the “overall quality of this course” and “overall quality of the instructor” ratings, with the exception of PHIL 12 in which the expectations are 4.7. If scores on these questions go below 5 (4.7 for PHIL 12), the student will be assigned a faculty mentor and required to work on your teaching skills. Acceptable SRTE scores for residential courses is 5.0; acceptable SRTE scores for online courses is 4.5.

### **Failure to meet these teaching requirements:**

The failure to meet these requirements, in particular, the SRTE scores falling below the acceptable levels (5.0 for residential courses, 4.5 for online courses) and/or the in-class teaching mentor observations indicating poor quality of teaching, will negatively affect the student's annual review.

An “unsatisfactory” for teaching on the annual review may result in the student’s teaching assignment being restricted from teaching courses with full responsibility to assistantship duties alone. If the “unsatisfactory” is not corrected within one year, the student may be exited from the doctoral program.

## **P) 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 qualifying exam, which serves as the student’s master’s paper, and after acquiring the minimum 30 credits of courses. Students awarded an M.A. will have met the following requirements:

1. Successful completion of the qualifying exam.
2. 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.
3. The qualifying exam portfolio serves as a Master’s paper selected by the student.

### ***Ph.D. CREDIT REQUIREMENTS***

Formal admission to qualifying for the Ph.D. requires passing the qualifying 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. Students who receive advanced standing are still required to complete two years of coursework.

### ***Leaves of Absence***

Should a student ever need to be absent from the program during the academic year, they should provide, in writing, an explanation to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head. Additional information regarding leaves of absence is available through GSAD-906—Graduate Student Leave of Absence (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-900/gsad-906-graduate-student-leave-of-absence/>).

In order to return to the program, such students must notify their Graduate Program Head of the intent to return and submit the resume studies application at least 30 days before the end of their Leave of Absence. The application may be found here: <https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/current-students/>. The Graduate School explains the process that follows thusly: “After you submit your application, it will be reviewed by Graduate Enrollment Services and the graduate program for an admission decision. The application will not be considered complete unless all requested transcripts, references, program specific question, and documents are submitted.” Once an offer is extended, the student will need to accept that offer, and then the application will go through the matriculation process with the Graduate School. If the returning student is an international student, they will also need to completed the DISSA part of the process. Returning students will not be able to register for classes until the matriculation process is complete.

### ***Process or Climate Concerns***

Should a graduate student experience any concerns regarding what they perceive to be unjust process or climate concerns (such as harassment), they should request a confidential meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Department Head. In addition, graduate students may contact the chair of the Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee. All such concerns will be taken seriously and confidentiality will be maintained.

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