

## Completing the Program

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We consider our PhD program to be a six year program. While some of our students complete their PhD in five years, this is rare. The narrative below describes the progress of a typical student throughout her time in our program.

### **PhD Program—Entering with BA only**

#### *First Year*

Students must meet w/the DGS (Director of Graduate Studies) within the first week of classes. Typically, the student has been in touch with the DGS over the summer to discuss which courses the entering student should take that Fall. Each student should take a full load of three courses per semester.

All first-year students are required to attend a seminar series we call our “pro-seminar.” The students do not receive course credit for this, but they are required to attend. The format of this course is currently under revision, but in the past we have had sessions designed to meet several different goals:

- to familiarize first-year graduate students with the requirements they must meet in order to graduate
- to inform students of some of the more important university, college and departmental rules, policies, and expectations
- to offer advice and tips on how to perform the duties associated with their assistantships—typically, there are several sessions on grading papers and essays, constructing course syllabi, et.
- to introduce students to the nature and expectations of the profession they are entering into

Each first-year student must meet with the DGS in the last few weeks of the Spring semester to discuss the student’s summer plans, and to advise the student about which courses to take the following year.

#### *Second Year*

The students will take the courses they enrolled in upon consultation with the DGS the previous Spring semester. Each student should take a full load of three courses per semester.

During their fourth semester, each student is required to take and pass a PhD qualifying exam. This is usually administered the week after Spring Break.

During this semester, the student should be deciding whom she would like to be on her PhD committee, and in particular, whom she would like to chair it. Upon passing the qualifying exam, the student will schedule her advisory committee meeting, which must take place by the end of her fourth semester. (We realize that the graduate college recommends that the students have their advisory committee meeting in their second semester. However, it is quite typical for our students to still be considering several different possible dissertation areas at this time. Consequently, they will not yet know whom it would make sense to have on their committees. We encourage our students to take this time to

carefully consider their choice of area and topic, so we do not require them to have the advisory committee meeting until their fourth semester.)

### *Third Year*

The student will take a full load of three courses each semester, which will probably leave her with only 2-4 (6-12 hours) courses left to take for the PhD.

Each third-year student must meet with her advisor (dissertation director) in the last few weeks of the Spring semester to discuss the student's summer plans, and to advise the student about which courses to take the following year.

### *Fourth Year*

The student must prepare for and probably take her general examination this year. Typically, the student will take only two courses in the Fall semester, spending much of her time studying for the exam. It is recommended that the student take the exam at the end of her seventh semester, or the beginning of her eighth.

Upon passing the general exam, the student should begin preparing a dissertation prospectus. Ideally, this will be turned in to her advisor by the end of the summer. There is no departmental form or format for the prospectus. This is determined individually by each advisor, in consultation with the student.

Each fourth-year student must meet with her advisor (dissertation director) in the last few weeks of the Spring semester to discuss the student's summer plans, including the prospectus, and to advise the student about which courses to take the following year. (The student should be done with non-dissertation-hour coursework at this point. But if she is not, she should plan her Fall coursework with her advisor at this time.)

### *Fifth Year*

The student's only academic mission in this year is to write the dissertation. If a student has made sufficient progress on her dissertation by the beginning of the Fall semester, she may decide, in consultation with her advisor and the placement director, to go on the market this year. (See the placement section of the Graduate Enrollment Plan.)

It is assumed that the student and her advisor will be in close contact throughout this year, but each student should still meet with her advisor toward the end of the Spring semester to discuss summer plans.

### *Sixth Year*

The student needs to go on the market this year, so her dissertation must be very far advanced by the beginning of the Fall semester. Preparing for the job market and putting together a good application dossier are very time consuming, and the student is not likely to get much dissertation writing done during this semester. The dissertation should be defended by the summer after the student's twelfth semester.

## **PhD Program—Entering with MA in philosophy**

(this assumes that the student receives 30 hours of credit for her MA degree)

### *First Year*

Students must meet w/the DGS within the first week of classes. Typically, the student has been in touch with the DGS over the summer to discuss which courses the entering student should take that Fall. Each student should take a full load of three courses per semester.

All first-year students are required to attend a seminar series we call our “pro-seminar.” The students do not receive course credit for this, but they are required to attend. The format of this course is currently under revision, but in the past we have had sessions designed to meet several different goals:

- to familiarize first-year graduate students with the requirements they must meet in order to graduate
- to inform students of some of the more important university, college and departmental rules, policies, and expectations
- to offer advice and tips on how to perform the duties associated with their assistantships—typically, there are several sessions on grading papers and essays, constructing course syllabi, etc.
- to introduce students to the nature and expectations of the profession they are entering into

Each first-year student must meet with the DGS in the last few weeks of the Spring semester to discuss the student’s summer plans, and to advise the student about which courses to take the following year.

During their second semester, each student is required to take and pass a PhD qualifying exam. This is usually administered the week after Spring Break.

During this semester, the student should be deciding whom she would like to be on her PhD committee, and in particular whom she would like to chair it. Upon passing the qualifying exam, the student will schedule her advisory committee meeting, which must take place by the end of her second semester.

### *Second Year through Fourth Year*

At this point, students who enter with an MA should be at the same point as fourth-year students who entered with a BA only. The expectations and requirements are the same and can be referred to above. The only caveat is that students entering with an MA might have more coursework to take because they received, at most, 30 hours of credit for their MA degree.

## **Terminal MA Program**

All entering graduate students must meet with the DGS by the end of the first week of classes during their first semester. Typically, the student has been in touch with the DGS over the summer to discuss which courses the entering student should take that Fall.

Since our MA students tend to be unfunded, they are often pursuing the degree part-time, while working another job. This means that there is little consistency among them regarding how many courses they take per semester, or how long they take to complete the MA. We impose no deadlines or requirements on them beyond those mandated by the Graduate College and the University. The DGS sends out emails each semester, reminding the MA students to submit the necessary paperwork if they intend to graduate the following semester. At the same time, they are told to either form a master's thesis committee or else begin preparing for the comprehensive MA exam, one of which is required for the MA degree in philosophy.