

Graduate Degree Requirements

Department of Philosophy College of Arts and Sciences University of Cincinnati

Revised 02 November 2022

1. General

General requirements for the receipt of graduate degrees are set by the University Dean for Research and Advanced Studies. Please consult the current *University Graduate Handbook* for the current requirements. University requirements supersede all departmental requirements.

If any student wishes to be exempted from any of the requirements set forth in this document, or wishes to be subject to alternative requirements, he or she may submit a petition stating his or her request to the Director of Graduate Studies within the Department of Philosophy (DGS). In most cases, the petition will be put to a vote by the faculty present at the next department meeting at which time can be afforded to the matter.

2. Enrollment requirements and time limits

All students receiving a graduate assistantship or Taft fellowship must maintain full-time student status as determined by the College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School, or other funding body. Students who have not yet completed their course requirements (see below) are expected to enroll in courses. Students who have completed their course requirements but who have not yet advanced to candidacy may take as many credits as necessary in the form of "Graduate Readings," enrolling in the section number associated with the student's primary advisor or the DGS. Students who have advanced to candidacy may take all credits each term in the form of "Dissertation Research".

Students who are no longer taking classes and who are not receiving financial aid must maintain their student status as determined by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, or other governing bodies. Note that special rules pertain to international students. Note also that all students must register for at least 1 credit hour of coursework (such as Graduate or Dissertation Readings) per academic year to remain a student in good standing. Failure to do so will result in substantial fees when the student seeks to graduate or gain readmission.

3. Evaluation of students

3.1. Consultation with DGS

Twice each academic year, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will contact each student to review his or her progress toward his or her degree objectives. This will include a review of the recent evaluations provided by the student's mentors (see sections 3.2 and 3.3).

3.2. Evaluation of performance in courses

In advance of each graduate review meeting, each instructor is expected to write a brief report on the performance of each of the philosophy graduate students in any graduate-level course that he or she may have taught that term. The report should report the grade received and describe the student's performance. The Director of Graduate Studies will compile these reports as appropriate into a single letter provided to the student during the biannual (twice yearly) review.

3.3. Evaluation of performance as teaching or research assistant

In advance of each graduate review meeting, each instructor who has had the help of a graduate assistant is expected to write an evaluation of each assistant's performance. The reports on each student will be compiled as appropriate by the Director of Graduate Studies into the graduate progress review letter provided to the student at their biannual (i.e. twice yearly) review. (See also section 4, "Teaching", below.)

3.4. Annual review

Twice each year the Graduate Faculty of the Department will conduct a review of each student. For each student, the department will decide whether that student will (a) be continued in the program, and (b) be offered financial support, for example in the form of a Graduate Assistantship (GA) or University Graduate Scholarship (UGS), (c) continued with qualification, or (d) discontinued.

Continuation in the program will be contingent upon the student's having made satisfactory progress toward his or her degree objectives since the time of the last review. Participation in the intellectual life of the department will also be a consideration.

Graduate Assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. Reappointment as a Graduate Assistant will be contingent upon strong academic performance, continued progress toward the Ph.D. and participation in the intellectual life of the department. In addition, reappointment as a GA will depend on the student's having performed well as an assistant in previous assignments. Reappointment as a GA will depend on the number of assistantships awarded to the department by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Students whose performance in previous assignments is not satisfactory may not have their awards continued.

Violation of the University, Graduate School, or College of Arts and Sciences student codes of conduct can be the basis for immediate termination of financial awards, or for termination from the Department. Such violations include but are not limited to plagiarism and other failures of academic integrity.

Students who hold financial awards must be able to complete the duties associated with those awards. Any student who is unable or unfit to complete the duties associated with their award may have it suspended or withdrawn.

Decisions regarding removal of financial awards will be made by the Faculty of the department, upon the recommendation of the DGS and the Graduate Studies Committee, and can be appealed to the Head of the Department of Philosophy.

Note on "Satisfactory Progress": There is a presumption that funding will not be continued for a student after any semester when the student has been judged by the Graduate Faculty not to be making satisfactory progress. This presumption can only be overturned by a majority vote of the Graduate Faculty. Factors that can lead to the Faculty's judging a student's progress unsatisfactory include but are not limited to: (a) a serious failure in carrying out TA or teaching duties, (b) continued lack of attendance or habitually poor performance in graduate seminars, (c) engaging in behavior in violation of the University Student Code of Conduct, and (d) failure to successfully defend a dissertation proposal in keeping with the timelines set out in Sections 5.4 and 6.4 below.

4. Teaching by Graduate Students

4.1. Assignments

The assignments of each Graduate Assistant will be determined by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head in advance of each term. An effort will be made to accommodate the preferences of the student; however, the final decision will be based also on curricular needs, the skills of the available assistants, and the desirability of giving each student experience in a variety of settings. The workload of a student assisting another instructor should not exceed 20 hours per week. Students who find that they are devoting more time than this to their responsibilities should bring this fact to the attention of the primary instructor and ask for a reduction in workload. Advanced students may sometimes be given the opportunity to teach their own sections of undergraduate courses.

4.2. Mentoring

When a graduate student is scheduled to teach a course that he or she has not taught on his or her own before, the graduate student is to seek out some member of the faculty who is willing to serve as a mentor for that course. Prior to the ordering of books for the course, the mentor and graduate student should meet to discuss the course content and plan, including the choice of readings, the basic structure of the assignments and the grading method. It is recommended that the mentor make two pre-arranged visits to the course. Further visits may be requested by the graduate student. These visits should be followed by a discussion between the mentor and the graduate student. The graduate student is encouraged to consult with the mentor on any matters where the mentor's advice might be helpful, for instance, in the design and grading of assignments. Optionally, the graduate student may request that the mentor review the course evaluations written by the students in the class. The mentor is expected to write a brief report of his or her own design concerning the course, which will be entered into the graduate

student's file and copied to the student. If a student teaches the same course in subsequent terms, a mentor should be advised of any significant changes in textbooks and assignments.

4.3. Summer Teaching

It is the understanding of the department that teaching is an integral part of graduate training, and therefore that summer teaching by graduate students is to be encouraged. Selection of graduate students for summer teaching is based primarily on teaching experience and ability.

5. Requirements for a Ph.D.: The Traditional Track

The Philosophy Department recognizes two tracks leading to the receipt of a Ph.D. in Philosophy, the "traditional" track and the "sciences" track. This section sets out the requirements for the traditional track. See section 6 for the requirements for the sciences track.

5.1. Overview

A normal course of study would comprise approximately two and a half years of coursework, with the third year also devoted to the proposal defense and advancing to candidacy, followed by two years of work on the dissertation. (See Appendix A for an example of an ideal progression through the program by year.) The University requires students to earn 90 semester credit hours before being awarded a Ph.D.

5.2. General requirements

Engagement: Students are expected to participate in the intellectual life of the department. In particular, they are expected to regularly attend the lectures of invited speakers and to attend the annual colloquium.

Teaching. Students must receive a significant amount of teaching experience.

5.3. Course requirements

Students must complete thirteen (13) semester courses in Philosophy, as outlined below. Three of these are specific courses: the first-year proseminar (PHIL 7096), the Formal Methods Seminar, and the Philosophical Pedagogy Seminar. The others can vary by student but must satisfy the below distribution requirements. The grade in each course counted toward the thirteen must be at least a B-. In order to be considered making good progress, a student's grade point average should be at least 3.5. Independent study courses do not count toward this requirement. Coursework should be completed in the first three years of study.

Formal Methods Seminar: One of the 13 required graduate seminars must be a Survey of Formal Methods course offered by the Philosophy Department. This seminar is typically offered once every two years, alternating years with the Philosophical Pedagogy seminar. If it is offered in a student's first year, that is when they must take it; otherwise, they must take it in their second

year.

The purpose of this seminar is to acquaint students with formal methods that are relevant for contemporary philosophy and empirically-informed philosophy of science. The areas of formal methods covered in the seminar are, at minimum, formal logic, probability, and statistics. Typically, other topics will also be covered such as decision theory, formal methods in the special sciences, and so on. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the applications of these formal concepts in contemporary philosophy.

While specific topics may vary by instructor, a typical sequence might include: Propositional Logic (2 weeks), First-Order Logic (2 weeks), Modal Logic (1 week), Basics of Probability Theory (1 week), Approaches to Conditionalization (1 week), Statistics Concepts (1 week), Statistics in Science (1 week), Basics of Decision Theory (1 week), Causal Decision Theory (1 week), Game Theory (1 week), Formal Epistemology (1 week), Group Decisions (1 week).

Philosophical Pedagogy and Towards an AOC Subject-Development Seminar: All Ph.D. graduate students must enroll in the 4-credit “Philosophical Pedagogy” graduate seminar. This seminar is typically offered once every two years, alternating years with the Formal Methods in Philosophy seminar. If it is offered in their first year, then that is when students take it; if not, they take it in their second year.

This seminar serves two purposes:

- (1) To provide Ph.D. students with formal education in pedagogy as it relates to philosophy. Topics covered in the course will include: theory and practice of syllabi and course design, inclusive pedagogy practices, assessment design, grading policies and practices, as well as other relevant topics and logistical matters of teaching. As part of this seminar, students will engage in weekly readings on these topics, as well as smaller assignments geared towards developing teaching documents for the job market.
- (2) Development of Ph.D. student’s “Area of Competence” (AOC) through creation of an upper-level (3000 level) undergraduate course in said AOC. AOC topic area must adhere to either department’s sub-distribution areas or PhilJobs pre-determined AOC categories.

The specific structure of the seminar and readings may vary by faculty instructor. However, the following seminar requirements will, at minimum, always be included: (1) Weekly readings, which will generally cover both subjects related to philosophy & pedagogy and subjects related to the student’s AOC development. (2) Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement. (3) One 30-minute Teaching Demo. (4) an AOC Capstone project, which will contain: (a) creating a short form course syllabus in selected AOC, which will be assessed both by seminar instructor and an external faculty member closely aligned with the AOC, (b) a long-form syllabus narrative (~5,000 words) detailing the justification for focal topics, course themes, and justification for selected readings and corresponding assignments (c) 25-30 lecture/reading notes on the AOC course’s assigned 25-30 articles. (Should the student select book(s) for their course, appropriate adjustments will be made in consultation with the seminar instructor), and (d) development of core course assessments and grading rubrics.

First-year proseminar: First-year Ph.D. students are to take a course that has been designated as the proseminar. This will be offered in the Fall Term and is expected to be a writing intensive course. The objective of this class is to develop skills for close reading of philosophical texts and

for clear and careful writing. This course may also be used to satisfy one of the below distribution requirements, when it is offered on a suitably related topic (as is typically the case).

Distribution Requirements: For purposes of defining the distribution requirements, the “areas” of philosophy are defined as (1) History of Philosophy; (2) Core Problems in Philosophy; (3) Philosophy of Science; (4) Value Theory. Students must take courses in each of these areas from Graduate Faculty of the Department of Philosophy, unless otherwise approved by the DGS.

History: Students must take at least one course in two of the following six sub-areas: (1) Ancient; (2) Medieval and Renaissance; (3) Modern; (4) 19th Century; (5) Pragmatism; (6) Early Analytic and 20th Century.

Core Problems: Students must take at least one course in each of two of the following four sub-areas: (1) Metaphysics; (2) Epistemology; (3) Language and Logic; (4) Mind. (The required logic course does not also satisfy this distribution requirement.)

Philosophy of Science: Students must take at least one course in the philosophy of science. The recognized sub-areas of the philosophy of science are: (1) History and Philosophy of Science; (2) Contemporary Philosophy of Science; (3) Physical Sciences; (4) Social Sciences; (5) Life Sciences; (6) Cognitive Sciences.

Value Theory: Students must take at least one course in each of two of the following three sub-areas: (1) Ethics; (2) Social and Political Philosophy; (3) Aesthetics.

Electives: Students must take four (4) additional courses in Philosophy or conducted by Graduate Faculty of the Department, normally in the area (as defined above) in which they expect to write a dissertation.

Each instructor will decide which (if any) of these areas and sub-areas his or her course belongs to. In cases where a course belongs to more than one sub-area, students may choose which requirement it will satisfy. (No course can be used to satisfy more than one distribution requirement.) The final decision as to which requirement a course will satisfy need not be made until that time when the DGS certifies that the student has satisfied the course requirements.

5.4. Pre-doctoral work

Before beginning work on the dissertation, students must satisfy the following three criteria, which will together constitute their having passed their Qualifying Exam.

Conference Paper.

Students must compose a conference length paper suitable for presentation at a professional meeting (such as the APA, PSA, SPP, etc.). The paper will be written in consultation with a faculty advisor chosen by the student. The student is expected to present the paper at a refereed and selective professional (i.e., not student) conference. If reasonable efforts to present an approved paper to an approved conference do not succeed, the student may present the paper at a department colloquium instead.

GPA Requirement for Advancing to Candidacy:

In order to advance to candidacy, students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 in all (and only considering) Philosophy courses used to satisfy course requirements. The grading scale used will be the following: A=4.0, A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B-=2.67. (Note: per other requirements, no courses with grades lower than B- can count toward fulfilling PhD course requirements.)

Proposal Defense:

A successful dissertation proposal defense is an essential component to advancing to candidacy. *There is a strong expectation that all students will defend a proposal by February 1 of their third year of study.* A suitable proposal will typically be 3000-6000 words (including footnotes/endnotes, but not bibliography) and will indicate that the student has a strong familiarity with the relevant literature, shows promise for making a novel contribution, and has a planned project of appropriate scope for a dissertation.

Typically, during the proposal defense, the student will provide an approximately 10 minute overview presentation of their proposal, which will then be followed by a Q&A session with proposal committee members. The student will then leave the room while committee members deliberate. The proposal defense will be judged by the committee on whether it indicates that the student has a strong familiarity with the relevant literature, shows promise for making a novel contribution, and has a planned project of appropriate scope for a dissertation.

All proposal committees must be composed of at least three full time UC faculty members, at least one of whom (the chair) must be a philosophy graduate faculty member. Students must provide all three members of their proposal committee a full draft of their proposal at least four weeks prior to the date at which they would like their proposal defense to occur. Failure to meet this deadline for providing the full draft may result in faculty declining to schedule the proposal defense before the February 1 deadline. When this occurs, the student will be considered to have failed their first attempt at a proposal defense.

If the first defense of the proposal is not successful, the student will have an additional opportunity to complete a successful defense. *This second defense must occur no later than April 10 of the student's third year of study.* As with the first proposal attempt, the student must provide to committee members a draft of the revised proposal at least four weeks before the desired defense date. *If a proposal is not successfully defended by April 10 of the third year, the student will not be making satisfactory progress.* In keeping with the definition of "satisfactory progress" above (Section 3.4), not making satisfactory progress comes with the assumption that the student will not be funded in subsequent semesters, which can only be overturned by a majority vote of the Graduate Faculty.

Several mechanisms will be in place to support students in their efforts to draft and defend a proposal. First, there will be two faculty-led Proposal Development Workshops each year. All students must attend one such workshop in the spring of their second year and in the fall of their third year. Second, each fall semester there will be a "proposal fair" where all third-year students provide brief, informal pitches of their proposal ideas to an audience of other philosophy graduate students and faculty. Third, students must meet with their advisor—or pre-dissertation advisor, if they haven't yet identified an advisor—regularly during the spring of their second year

and fall of their third year. During the fall of a student's third year, such meetings are expected to occur at least once per month. (In cases where a faculty advisor has multiple advisees at roughly the same stage, these meetings may be group meetings involving multiple advisees with the advisor.)

When above criteria (i.e., coursework, conference presentation, and proposal defense) have been fulfilled, the student will be considered to have passed their Qualifying Exam and will be formally advanced to candidacy.

5.5. Additional requirements and recommendations

A student's dissertation committee may require the student to take additional courses inside or outside the Philosophy department in pertinent fields of study. For example, a student working in Aesthetics might be required to take Art History courses, or a student working in the Philosophy of Mind might be required to take certain psychology courses. A student working in the history of philosophy might be required to demonstrate competence in a foreign language.

All students are advised to consider adding a fourth dissertation committee member from outside the department. This may be someone in another department at the University, or it may be someone from another philosophy department at another university.

6. Requirements for a Ph.D.: The Sciences Track

6.1. Overview

The requirements for the sciences track are largely the same as for the traditional track. The differences are: (1) a stronger distribution requirement in Philosophy of Science; (2) a "Research Tools" requirement requiring courses outside of Philosophy; (3) students may delay defending a proposal by (roughly) one term, as outlined below.

6.2. General requirements

These are the same as for the traditional track. See section 5.1.

6.3. Course requirements

The course requirements in the sciences track are the same as in the traditional track, with the exception that the requirement of four additional electives is eliminated, and for the philosophy of science distribution requirement, the following is substituted:

Philosophy of Science: Students in the Sciences Track must take at least four courses in the Philosophy of Science. (A) At least one course must be in the general history or philosophy of science. (B) They must take at least one course in two of the following four sub-areas: (1) Physical Sciences; (2) Social Sciences; (3) Life Sciences; (4) Cognitive Sciences.

6.4. Pre-doctoral work

Students in the sciences track must complete the same pre-doctoral work outlined in section 5.4 above. However, whereas students on the traditional track must attempt to defend a dissertation proposal by February 1 of their third year (with a second attempt, if needed, by April 10), students on the sciences track may have until September 1 of their fourth year to attempt a proposal defense, with their second attempt (if needed) occurring by November 10 of their fourth year. Failure to successfully defend a proposal by November 10 of their fourth year will constitute failure to make satisfactory progress and any customary presumption of continued funding (pending availability and satisfactory progress) for the subsequent year will be suspended. Students on the sciences track should take part in the “proposal fair” during the fall of their third year and should attend the Proposal Development Workshops on the same schedule as traditional track students. Students must meet with their advisor—or pre-dissertation advisor, if they haven’t yet identified an advisor—regularly during the fall and spring of their third year. During the spring of the student’s third year, such meetings are expected to occur at least once per month.

Students in the sciences track should complete their pre-doctoral work by the end of the second term of the third year.

6.5. Additional requirements and recommendations

Students in the sciences track are subject to a different set of additional requirements.

Research Tools Requirement: Students must take four graduate courses from one or more departments in an empirical discipline, other than philosophy. One of these, but no more than one, may be a directed study. One of them must be in a formal topic (e.g., statistics, mathematics, computer science). These courses are to be chosen in consultation with an advisor (for students not yet at the dissertation stage) or dissertation committee, but in all cases the DGSis to be informed of the plan.

External Dissertation Committee Member: The dissertation committee must include a fourth member from outside the department. This person may be a member of the University of Cincinnati faculty or may be on the faculty at another university. Preferably this person will be an expert in a scientific field to which the student’s dissertation pertains.

7. Requirements for a Master’s Degree

There are three ways to earn the Master’s Degree in Philosophy: two thesis options, and one non-thesis option.

7.1. Master’s Degrees for students in the Ph.D. program

Students in, and remaining in, the Ph.D. program will be eligible to receive the Master’s Degree when they have completed all pre-doctoral work other than writing a dissertation proposal and

being advanced to candidacy. (This is a non-thesis, “along-the-way to PhD” option.)

7.2. Master’s Degrees for students who completed their bachelor’s degree at UC

Students who are earning their undergraduate degree in philosophy or a related discipline at UC and certain designated partner universities may apply for the one-year Master’s Degree program (also known as the “4+1” or “BA/MA” program). These students may earn the Master’s Degree by completing 8 graduate courses in Philosophy (courses chosen in consultation with the DGS) and by submitting as a thesis of portfolio of papers written for those courses.

7.3. Students who enter the program seeking only an M.A.

In unusual circumstances, the Department may admit students who intend to complete only the Master’s Degree. (This is a thesis option.)

In order to receive a Master’s Degree, students must complete a minimum of 45 semester hours of graduate credit. At least 32 credit hours must be earned in eight (8) semester graduate level courses in the Philosophy Department. The grade in each course counted toward the eight (8) must be at least a B–. Independent study courses do not count toward this requirement. The remaining 13 credit hours may be earned as thesis research and preparation.

In addition, these M.A. students must write a Master’s thesis under the supervision of a committee that includes at least three Philosophy Department faculty, one of whom is to be designated chair of the committee. The composition of the committee should be communicated to the DGS in writing as soon as it has been determined. The thesis will normally consist of 50-70 pages of philosophical work.

Students seeking this “Terminal M.A.” are not normally eligible for financial aid administered by the University.

7.4. Master’s Degrees for students who switch to a terminal M.A. program

Occasionally students who enter the Ph.D. program decide to conclude their graduate careers in the Philosophy Department with an M.A. There are two ways to do this. First, students who have completed eight semester courses in the Philosophy Department may receive an M.A. by writing a Master’s Thesis (see 7.3). Second, students who have completed the course requirements for the Ph.D. may receive an M.A. by completing all other pre-doctoral requirements other than writing a dissertation proposal and being advanced to candidacy. (see 7.1).

Until a student formally declares his or her intention to conclude with an M.A., he or she will be expected to continue making progress toward a Ph.D. Continuation of financial aid will be at the discretion of the department. If the student has completed the necessary courses, he or she will not need to take courses but may spend that last term writing the Master’s Thesis.

8. Transfer of Credits

1. *General University Requirements:* The Graduate Handbook states that receipt of the M.A. requires a minimum of 30 graduate credits, with at least the last half completed while in residence at the University of Cincinnati. Receipt of the Ph.D. requires a minimum of 90 semester credits, with at least the last 48 under the direction of faculty at the University of Cincinnati.
2. *Credit for Courses Taken at Other Institutions:* The normal maximum of number of distribution requirements that can be fulfilled by courses taken at other universities is as follows:

M.A. Maximum of 2 .

Ph.D. (student admitted without M.A.) Maximum of 2

.Ph.D. (student admitted with M.A.) Maximum of 2

The number of courses credited, up to the maximum, will be decided by the Graduate Studies Committee and will be based on the following criteria: (1) course content and level (with graduate philosophy courses typically required); (2) quality of the institution at which the courses were taken; (3) competence of the instructor; (4) grade in the course, with an A normally required; and (5) student's overall record. Decisions about the credit for courses not taken at UC are wholly at the discretion of the Department. Such courses may excuse the student from particular distribution requirements, but do not reduce the total number of philosophy graduate seminars (13) required for the degree.

APPENDIX A – Ideal timelines through the Graduate Program

PhD Traditional Track:

("3 classes" assumes philosophy 4-credit courses which are fulfilling their area distributions (=11 courses) and required courses (= 2 courses).)

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
1	3 classes* (one of which is + 1cr proseminar)	3* classes	
2	3 classes*	3* classes 1 meeting of Proposal Development Workshop	Preparing Proposal
3	1 class 1 meeting of Proposal Development Workshop 1 Proposal Fair	Defend Proposal: 1 st Attempt = by Feb. 1 2 nd Attempt (if needed) = by April 10	
4	Dissertation	Dissertation	
5	Dissertation	Dissertation	
6	Funding not assumed for students entering with US-equivalent MA		

Phil Sci Track: +1 semester shift (net +3 courses)

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer
1	3 classes* (one of which is + 1cr proseminar)	3 classes*	
2	3 classes*	3 classes* 1 meeting of Proposal Development Workshop	Preparing Proposal
3	3 classes 1 meeting of Proposal Development Workshop 1 Proposal Fair	1 class	Preparing Proposal
4	Defend Proposal: 1 st Attempt = by Sept 1. 2 nd Attempt (if needed) = by November 10	Dissertation	Dissertation
5	Dissertation	Dissertation	Dissertation
6	Funding not assumed for students entering with US-equivalent MA		

* While it is possible to take four courses in a semester without going over credit limits, these timelines show that taking three courses per semester is sufficient for making "ideal" progress. The department especially encourages students to take no more than three courses per semester in their first year of study, while acclimating to the program. Additionally, should a graduate student desire to take a non-philosophy course (such as a science course) in their first year, it is strongly encouraged they do so only after consultation with their pre-dissertation advisor and/or DGS.