

**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI**

The University Requirements take precedence over the Department's.

[University MA requirements](#)

[University PhD requirements](#)

You should regularly communicate with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) about satisfying these requirements and your progress in the program in general. The DGS may waive specific requirements for special cases.

Required forms, including the M1-M3 and D1-D4, can be found on the [Graduate School website](#)

1. ADVISING AND SUPERVISION

The DGS is the advisor for all MA students. After completion of the MA, students will select a faculty member to supervise their doctoral research. Students may change advisors as their needs and interests change. The DGS should be informed of all changes.

Students who will satisfy the research requirement (see below) by writing two papers should arrange for the faculty member supervising one of the papers to be their advisor. For each paper, the supervisor of the paper in consultation with the student chooses a second reader from the Philosophy Department. At least three members of the Philosophy Department must serve on the committee assessing the two papers.

Students who satisfy the research requirement by writing a thesis (see below) should arrange for a member of the Department graduate faculty to serve as director. This faculty member becomes the student's advisor. The advisor in consultation with the student chooses a second reader from the Philosophy Department and a third outside reader, who must be a member of the graduate faculty from another MU graduate program.

2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The MA research requirements will automatically be satisfied if students satisfy the PhD course requirements. Thus, students seeking a PhD should focus on the PhD course requirements in the section below.

MA Course requirements

Credit Hours: To obtain an MA, students must accrue 30 hours of graduate credit (courses numbered 7000 or higher) satisfying the following conditions:

- at least 15 hours of coursework must be at the 9000 level;
- at most 3 hours may be outside Philosophy (see DGS for exceptions);
- 6 hours must be in research (PHIL 8090 or 9090);
- at most 6 (8 for students pursuing a second MA degree) graduate credit hours may be transferred from another university or from another campus of the UM System, and this

requires the approval of the DGS and advisor. Only courses completed with a grade of B or better may be transferred.

Distribution requirement: Students are required to satisfy the following:

- PHIL 8100, Protoseminar in Philosophy;
- PHIL 7110, Advanced Logic;
- One of the following philosophy of history courses: 9030 Topics in Modern Philosophy, 9050 Plato, 9060 Aristotle, 9110 The Rationalists, 9120 The Empiricists, 9130 Kant.
- One of the following core courses: 9520 Ethical Theory, 9320 Social and Political Philosophy, 9610 Metaphysics, 9710 Philosophy of Mind and Psychology, 9840 Seminar in Philosophy of Language, 9820 Epistemology, and 9830 Philosophy of Science

Residency requirements: In each of the fall and spring semesters, funded students must enroll in at least 9 credit hours in graduate philosophy courses.

Grades: Philosophy courses must be completed with a grade of B or better (or S, if S/U) in order to count towards any of the philosophy requirements for the MA. At least 80% of all graduate courses taken (including courses in other departments) must be completed with grades of A or B and an overall B average (3.0 GPA) is required.

PHD Course Requirements

GPA minimum: An overall GPA of at least 3.0 in all graduate work taken at MU whether in philosophy or not. Philosophy courses must be completed with a grade of B or better in order to count towards any of the philosophy requirements for the PhD.

Credit hours: Doctoral students must complete 72 credit hours of graduate work (courses numbered 7000 and higher; including courses taken for an MA in philosophy at MU), subject to the following restrictions:

Transfer Credits: With the approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee, up to 30 of the 72 graduate credit hours can be transferred from other institutions, but only with grades of B or better. Also, for every nine credits transferred, the period of guaranteed financial support will be reduced by one semester.

Doctoral Level Credits: At least 15 credit hours be earned at the 8000 level or above—exclusive of research, problem, or independent study courses.

Philosophy Credits: At least 60 credit hours must be in philosophy.

Residency Requirement:

- Those who have completed the comprehensive exam requirement must take at least 2 credit hours in PHIL 9090 Research in the fall and spring semesters and at least 1 credit hour in PHIL 9090 in the summer semester.

- Students who have not yet completed the comprehensive exam requirement must complete at least 9 credit hours in graduate philosophy courses in each of the fall and spring semesters. (Students completing the comprehensive requirement in a given semester, however, need only take enough credits to complete that requirement, as long as this is at least 3 credits.)
- Students who have completed the comprehensive examination requirement must satisfactorily complete, in each of the fall and spring semesters, either for credit or as a formal auditor at least one regular (non-research) 3 credit-hour philosophy course that is either (a) a 8000/9000-level course, or (b) PHIL 7120 Selected Topics in Logic or 7130 Probability and Induction (c) PHIL 3000, or PHIL 3200, Modern Philosophy or (d) some other course approved by both the DGS and the students' advisor. Students are encouraged to audit courses (rather than take them for credit) so that they can spend more time working on their dissertations. Students with special circumstances may request a waiver of this requirement.

Distribution Requirement

The distribution requirement has two parts: (A) a core requirement (21 credits), and (B) supplemental requirement (6 credits)

A. The Core Distribution Requirements. Seven courses (21 credits) must be taken as follows:

Logic and Related Areas (2 courses): 7110 Advanced Logic, plus one of:

- 7120 Selected Topics in Logic
- 7130 Probability and Induction
- 7150 Formal Semantics
- 9510 Decision Theory
- 9887 Seminar in Logic

History of Philosophy (6 credits):

- 9030 Topics in Modern Philosophy
- 9050 Plato
- 9060 Aristotle
- 9110 The Rationalists
- 9120 The Empiricists
- 9130 Kant
- 9240 Russell and Wittgenstein

Note: If offerings of 9030 and 9110, or 9030 and 9120, have significantly overlapping topics, the DGS may decide not to accept the offerings as two courses counting toward fulfillment of the distribution requirements.

Ethics and Political Philosophy (3 credits):

- 9520 Ethical Theory
- 9320 Social & Political Philosophy

Metaphysics, Mind, and Language (3 credits):

- 8510 Metaphysics: A Survey
- 8510 Metaphysics: A Survey
- 8520 Philosophy of Mind: A Survey.
- 8540 Philosophy of Language: A Survey
- 9610 Metaphysics
- 9710 Philosophy of Mind and Psychology
- 9840 Seminar in Philosophy of Language

Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (3 credits):

- 8530: Epistemology: A Survey
- 9820 Epistemology
- 9830 Philosophy of Science

B. The Supplemental Distribution Requirements (6 credits):

Students must take an additional course from each of two of the five distribution areas. For this purpose, students may take either courses on the area lists for the core distribution requirements (above), or from the following supplemental lists:

History of Philosophy:

- 9210 Hegel, or
- 9350 History of Eastern Ethics

Metaphysics, Mind, and Language:

- 9720 Foundations of Cognitive Science

Epistemology and Philosophy of Science:

- 9720 Foundations of Cognitive Science
- 9850 Philosophy of Biology

With the approval of the Graduate Affairs Committee, PHIL 9901 Seminar in Philosophy (topic open) will count towards one of these areas when the seminar is on a suitable topic. Other substitutions may be possible, subject to approval by the Graduate Affairs Committee.

3. THE MA DEGREE RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

In addition to the course requirement, there is a research requirement, which can be satisfied in one of two ways. In both cases, the written work should have a clear, thorough, and well-structured defense of a thesis, show familiarity with the relevant literature, and be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

In order to fulfill the MA research requirement, students must sign up for research hours (either 8090 or 9090) in both the fall and spring semester of their second year. This requirement will be waived if and only if the student has already met the MA research requirement by the end of the fall semester of the second year.

Two research papers:

The student writes two papers of format and topic appropriate for a refereed paper in a major journal. The papers must be of high quality. They normally are revisions of work done for seminars, but this is not required. They are normally each 5,000– 6,000 words long.

Each paper is written under the supervision of at least two faculty members (a first and second reader) in the Department. Three to six hours of credit in PHIL 8090, Research, are awarded for writing the papers. (PHIL 8090 is for research not leading to a thesis or dissertation.)

The student must pass a final oral examination administered by at least three Department members, including those who supervised the student's writing. Normally, the final examination committee consists of the first and second readers for the two papers, as long as this involves at least three Department members. (No outside member is needed for this way of satisfying the research requirement.) The examination committee normally determines grades (S or U) for the PHIL 8090 Research hours taken during the semester in which the MA qualification exam takes place.

One Thesis paper:

Thesis work is completed in the fourth semester of graduate work. The student writes an extended paper that presents a substantial philosophical thesis and defends it. The thesis is typically 6,000– 12,000 words long. When the thesis has been judged ready for examination by the advisor and two additional readers (one of whom must be from the graduate faculty of another MU department), they conduct an oral examination. Three to six hours of credit in PHIL 9090, Research, are awarded for successfully defending the thesis in the oral exam, with grades of S or U.

Forms

Students are responsible for ensuring that all relevant forms required by the Office of Graduate Studies are filed in a timely manner. Students should complete these forms in consultation with their advisor and transmit them through the DGS to the Office of Graduate Studies. The forms can be obtained on the web at <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/>

M-1 Program of Study: This form provides the student, the department, and the Office of Graduate Studies with a plan for all coursework, transfer credit, and research hours that will comprise a student's program of study. Submit to the DGS by *Dec. 1st of their second year.*

Course Substitution Form: This records any changes made to the program of study.

M-2 Request for Thesis Committee: This form is required only of students who will be writing a thesis (and not of students writing two research papers). Submit to the DGS by *Dec. 1 of the second year.*

Change of Committee Form: This records any changes made to the Thesis Committee.

M-3 Report of Committee: This form reports the final results of 1) master's thesis defense or 2) master's two-paper defense. Submit to DGS as soon as possible after the exam or thesis defense. Also attach your completed Departmental Program of Study Worksheet (available on our website) so that DGS can verify that you have completed all course requirements. All students must submit this form upon completion of the defense of the master's research.

4. THE PHD DEGREE

Besides fulfilling the course requirements described in the previous section, the PhD requirements consist of undergoing the *qualifying process*, the taking the *comprehensive exam*, and defending the *dissertation*.

Note: For students doing *interdisciplinary* research, the committee will ensure that the student's plan of study should include courses in the other discipline(s) that the committee deems necessary for the successful completion of the course. Where possible, the committee will also include a faculty member from the relevant non-philosophy discipline(s).

Qualifying

The student's MA committee, along with the DGS, judges the student to be sufficiently likely to complete a PhD of sufficiently high quality in a timely manner.

Within one month of qualifying for the doctoral program, the student chooses an advisor from the Department's doctoral faculty who will chair their Doctoral Program Committee. The student, in consultation with the advisor, chooses the other members of the committee. The Doctoral Program Committee oversees the student's dissertation research and conducts the final dissertation examination. Students enroll in 3 credits of 9090.

The Office of Graduate Studies requires that the committee be composed of a minimum of four members of the MU *graduate* faculty. It must include at least three members from the student's doctoral degree program and an outside member from a different MU program. At least two members must be MU doctoral faculty. Additional committee members with specialized expertise who do not meet the criteria for the MU graduate faculty or doctoral faculty may serve as a fifth or sixth member.

Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination requirement is completed once students have (1) satisfied all course requirements other than the 72 graduate credit requirement, (2) completed the written dissertation proposal (described below), and (3) completed the oral examination of the proposal.

After passing the comprehensive examination requirement, the student is required to be continuously enrolled until graduation. This is met by enrolling in two hours each semester and one hour each summer session in PHIL 9090.

Dissertation Requirement

(1) To begin dissertation research, students sign up for 3-6 credits of PHIL 9090 and write and defend a dissertation proposal. The proposal should briefly (in 6,000–8,000 words) explain (a) the history of the philosophical issue that they intend to address, (b) the available current positions on that issue; (c) the general significance of this issue to the field of philosophy; and (d) some general sense of the student's thesis relative to the issue. The student's Doctoral Program Committee then decides whether to accept the proposal as a feasible project. The committee may ask for changes.

A written dissertation proposal may be formally submitted for review by the student's Doctoral Program Committee only after the first reader (i.e., director) and second reader judge the document ready for oral examination and affirm their willingness to serve in their respective roles for the dissertation. If one of them declines to so serve, either the proposal must be revised to their satisfaction, or a replacement must be found who approves the proposal and affirms their willingness to serve in the role at issue (first or second reader).

Once the written proposal has been approved by first and second readers willing to continue in their roles, there will be an oral examination of the proposal by the Doctoral Program Committee. The Committee will evaluate the proposal on a pass/fail basis. If a majority of the Doctoral Program Committee finds the student's oral defense of his or her proposal to be unacceptable, the student must resubmit a written proposal (which may be the same as the previous submission, but normally is an improved version thereof) and retake the oral examination. If a majority of the Doctoral committee again finds his or her proposal unacceptable, then the student is terminated from the doctoral program.

Students, dissertation directors, and second readers should ensure that clear expectations are in writing.

Copies of the dissertation should also be made available to members of the Doctoral Program Committee at least a week before the final examination.

The final examination is a searching oral examination of the content of the dissertation, the student's background knowledge, and their ability to handle issues orally. The examination is open to all MU philosophy graduate students and all MU faculty in any department. Others may attend with the unanimous approval of the Doctoral Program Committee. Initially, only members of the Doctoral Program Committee have the right to ask questions and comment. Once they are done, other philosophy faculty and students have the right to ask questions and comment. Following that, any other MU faculty members have the right to ask questions or comment. The Doctoral Program Committee alone determines whether to pass or fail the student on the examination. In order for the dissertation to be successfully defended, the committee must vote to pass the student on the defense *with no more than one dissenting or abstaining vote*.

The Doctoral Program Committee may (a) pass the student unqualifiedly, (b) require the examination to be retaken or the dissertation altered in view of issues raised by the examination, or (c) fail the student altogether. All decisions other than the decision whether to pass require a majority vote of the Doctoral Program Committee.

When the dissertation has been approved by the Doctoral Program Committee, the student submits an electronic version, in the requisite format, to the Office of Graduate Studies. The deadlines for submission of dissertations in time for graduation in each of the three terms are set by the Office of Graduate Studies each year (the student should consult the current Graduate Catalog for exact dates).

The Office of Graduate Studies requires that the dissertation must be completed within five years of the Comprehensive Examinations. Students seeking an extension of this deadline should ask their advisor to send the graduate dean a written request. The final oral on the dissertation cannot be taken less than seven months after the completion of the examinations.

Forms

- (1) D-1 Qualifying Examinations Results and Doctoral Committee Approval Form, <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/d1.pdf>
- (2) Change of Program/Degree/Advisor (to change degree from MA to PhD). <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/change-degree.pdf> Changes to the committee can be made on the Change of Committee Form, <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/cocform.pdf>

The Doctoral Program Committee reviews the plan of study worked out by the student with the guidance of their advisor. This plan lists courses that will prepare the student for doctoral research and satisfy Departmental and Office of Graduate Studies requirements. Once the committee has approved the student's plan of study, the student submits D-2, Plan of Study, <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/d2.pdf> to the DGS, who, if they approve it, will forward it to the Office of Graduate Studies. Changes to the program of study should be made on the Course Substitution Form, <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/subform.pdf>

Changes to the committee must be requested on the Change of Committee Form, <http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/forms-downloads/repository/cocform.pdf>

5. SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

- each fall and spring semester: complete at least 9 credit hours in graduate philosophy courses
- by the end of 2nd semester: complete 18 Philosophy credits, including the Protoseminar with a B or better
- complete the MA by the end of the 4th semester since matriculation in the program;
- maintain a cumulative GPA in philosophy of at least 3.3 during the first two semesters and at least 3.4 thereafter, and
- maintain regular attendance at departmental colloquia.
- for students who are not native speakers of English: achieve a score of 3P on the university's ITAP proficiency test by the end of the first semester, a score of 4P by the end of the third semester, and a score of 4 by the end of the fifth semester. See here for more information: <https://gradschool.missouri.edu/itap-program/>

If the DGS finds that a student is not making satisfactory academic progress, they will ask the student to meet with the faculty advisor to agree on a plan of action to remedy the situation. Once a plan is agreed upon, the advisor (or the DGS) and the student will sign a document listing the steps to be taken and the appropriate timetable. A student who satisfies the terms of the probation will be removed from probation and returned to good standing in the department. If the student does not satisfy the terms of the probation, the DGS, in consultation with the Graduate Affairs Committee will begin the process of dismissal from the department.

Students have the right to appeal dismissal to the Department. The student will make an appeal to the Chair in writing; the Chair will appoint a committee from members of the faculty who are not

members of the Graduate Affairs Committee to hear the appeal. The committee will make a report to the Chair.

Funded students who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress will lose their guaranteed funding. A student who completes the work necessary for satisfactory academic progress may have guaranteed funding restored. The decision to restore or not restore guaranteed funding will be made by the Graduate Affairs Committee.

It is Office of Graduate Studies policy that doctoral students must successfully complete the comprehensive examination within a period of five years beginning with the first semester of enrollment as a PhD student. In addition, the program for the doctoral degree must be completed within five years of passing the comprehensive examination.