

Handbook of Rules and Policies
for Graduate Study

Philosophy Department
University of Maryland

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1 Preface

The Department of Philosophy is part of the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Maryland, and as such is bound by all of the rules and policies of these bodies. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about these rules and policies, which are summarized in the University of Maryland Graduate Catalog, available on the web at

<http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/requirements.html>,

and also to be informed about the rules and policies of the Department of Philosophy, which are contained in this Handbook.

Throughout this Handbook, expressions such as “the Department,” “students,” “the faculty,” “the University,” and the like are to be understood as referring to the Department of Philosophy, graduate students enrolled in the Department of Philosophy, faculty members of the Department of Philosophy, the University of Maryland, and the like, except as explicitly noted otherwise. Furthermore, “completing” a course should be taken to mean completing that course with a grade of B or better.

The faculty is the official interpreter of the rules and policies set forth in this Handbook, which delegates the power in the first instance to the Graduate Director. The Department retains the right to modify, alter, overrule, or change any of the rules or policies set forth in this Handbook, in accord with its established practices for doing so.

2 The PhD program

2.1 Basic Requirements

2.1.1 Course Requirement

In order to satisfy the Course Requirement, each student must complete twelve courses, or a total of thirty-six hours of credit.¹ As detailed below, two of these courses must be Core Courses. The expectation is that the other ten will be graduate seminars offered by the Department, but substitutions, including undergraduate courses offered by the Department, or courses offered by other departments, are allowed with permission of the Graduate Director.

¹Since the requirements of the PhD program subsume those of the MA program, PhD students are welcome to collect an MA once they have completed the requirements detailed in Section 3 below.

2.1.2 Core Course Requirement

Each year the Department will offer the following two graduate courses, known as Core Courses, specifically designed for students beginning their graduate careers:

- Core Analytic Philosophy
- Core Ethics

These Core Courses will: (i) be taught at a suitable level for first year graduate students; (ii) be broad, covering at least a handful of central topics (although not necessarily attempting a general survey); (iii) be aimed at preparing students for further graduate work in the area; and (iv) have a final examination and, although perhaps numerous smaller papers, not a long term paper.

In order to satisfy the Core Course Requirement, student must complete both of the two Core Courses within the first year of graduate study.

2.1.3 History Requirement

In order to satisfy the History Requirement, a student must complete at least one course focusing primarily on a particular period or on particular figures in the history of philosophy. (Courses only part of which are historical can count toward satisfying the history requirement, but only for those students who opt to write a largely historical term paper for assessment purposes.)

2.1.4 Philosophy of Science Requirement

In order to satisfy the Philosophy of Science Requirement, a student must complete at least one course in the philosophy of science.

2.1.5 Logic Requirement

A student can satisfy the Logic Requirement in one of four ways: (i) by completing Philosophy 370; (ii) by completing the final exam for that course, even though the student did not enroll in the course; (iii) by completing a more advanced course in logic offered by the Department that presupposes the material from Philosophy 370; or (iv) by demonstrating completion elsewhere of course work equivalent to or more advanced than Philosophy 370.

Note that Philosophy 370 is not a seminar, and so would not normally count as one of the twelve courses required for the PhD degree.

2.2 Prospectus Requirement and Admission to Candidacy

2.2.1 Prospectus Requirement

In order to satisfy the Prospectus Requirement, a student must form a Prospectus Examining committee, write a Dissertation Prospectus, and have the Prospectus approved by the Prospectus Examining Committee at a formal Prospectus Meeting.

- (1) A Prospectus Examining Committee is an internal Departmental committee appointed by the Graduate Director for the sole purpose of evaluating a particular student's Prospectus. The Committee must have a minimum of three members. The Chair of the Committee and at least two other members must be members of the Department.
- (2) A Dissertation Prospectus is a written document, prepared by the student, that describes the nature of the proposed dissertation project, and also demonstrates the student's competence to write such a dissertation. The Department requires that a Prospectus should contain at least the following four parts: (i) an overview of the proposed dissertation, typically ten to fifteen pages, though some Committees may ask for considerably more; (ii) an extensive bibliography, demonstrating familiarity with the relevant literature; (iii) a tentative schedule for completion of the dissertation; and (iv) a writing sample demonstrating the student's competence to work in the area (the writing sample need not be part of the projected dissertation, but may be simply a relevant paper in a related field). Depending on the nature of the student's proposed dissertation project, the Examining Committee may impose other requirements on the Prospectus. Since there are a variety of different models for what a Prospectus should look like, students are advised to get clarification of the expectations of their committee members in advance.
- (3) With the consent of the Chair of the Examining Committee, the Prospectus will be distributed to members of the Committee, and a Prospectus Meeting will be scheduled. At this meeting, the members of the Committee discuss the Prospectus with the student, to determine whether it is a viable dissertation project. The Committee may

accept the Prospectus as it stands, or accept it conditional upon the satisfaction of certain specified requirements; alternatively, the Committee may reject the Prospectus, and either require revisions for reconsideration at another Prospectus Meeting, or deem the entire project not viable.

2.2.2 Admission to Candidacy

After all Basic Requirements have been completed, and the student's Dissertation Prospectus has been accepted by the Examining Committee, the student may apply for Admission to Candidacy for the PhD degree, following the procedures detailed in the Graduate Catalog.

2.3 Dissertation Requirement

In order to satisfy the Dissertation Requirement, a student must write a Dissertation, and have that Dissertation approved by the Dissertation Examining Committee at a formal Dissertation Defense.

- (1) A Dissertation Examining Committee is a University committee appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School for the purpose of evaluating the student's dissertation. The constitution and authority of this Committee is described in the Graduate Catalog. In the normal course of events, the Prospectus Examining Committee will form the core of the student's Dissertation Examining Committee, and the Chair of the Prospectus Examining Committee will become the Chair of the Dissertation Examining Committee, known as the student's Dissertation Director. A student may request that a Dissertation Examining Committee be formed at any point after he or she has satisfied the Prospectus Requirement.
- (2) The University's policies concerning the style and form of Doctoral Dissertations are described in the Thesis and Dissertation Manual, available from the Graduate Records Office.
- (3) Once a student's Dissertation is complete, the student will be examined on the contents of the dissertation in a final Dissertation Defense, which will be conducted in accord with the procedures set out in the Graduate Catalog.

Note that there is no set format for the Dissertation itself. On one model, a Dissertation might be organized around the defense of a single unifying thesis. On another—”covering concept”—model, a Dissertation might consist of a related set of arguments on a broader topic. Either model is acceptable in principle, but the detailed format will need to be negotiated with your Dissertation Director.

3 The MA program

3.1 Basic Requirements

3.1.1 Course Requirement

In order to satisfy the Course Requirement, a student must complete ten courses, or a total of thirty hours of credit. As detailed below, two of these courses must be Core Courses. The expectation is that the other eight will be graduate seminars offered by the Department, but substitutions, including undergraduate courses offered by the Department, or courses offered by other departments, are allowed with permission of the Graduate Director.

In addition, if an MA student chooses to write an MA Paper, then as many of two of the ten required courses may be special MA Paper courses.

3.1.2 Core Course Requirement

The Core Course Requirement for the MA is identical to that for the PhD, described above.

3.1.3 History Requirement

The History Requirement for the MA is identical to that for the PhD, described above.

3.1.4 Logic Requirement

A student can satisfy the Logic Requirement in one of four ways: (i) by completing Philosophy 271 (Symbolic Logic); (ii) by completing the final exam for that course, even though the student did not enroll in the course; (iii) by completing a more advanced course in logic offered by the Department; or (iv) by demonstrating completion elsewhere of course work equivalent to or more advanced than Philosophy 271. Note that Philosophy 271 is not a

seminar, and so would not normally count as one of the ten courses required for the MA degree.

3.1.5 The Scholarly Paper Requirement

A student must complete at least one scholarly paper, exhibiting appropriate mechanics and standards of argument. Normally, a substantial seminar paper will satisfy this requirement, but the paper must be approved by the Graduate Director.

3.2 The MA Paper

The Department does not require a thesis for the MA degree. However, a student who wants to concentrate on the production of a substantial piece of philosophical research in the course of obtaining the MA degree has the option of taking up to two terms (six credit) of Philosophy 798 (Master's Level Independent Study.) This course is run as a directed study with an individual faculty member, who is then designated as the student's MA Paper Director. The student's goal in the MA Paper Research Course is the production of an extended paper, equivalent in quality and scope to a standard masters thesis.

4 Financial Support and Good Standing

4.1 Financial Support

Certain PhD students are admitted to the Department with financial support—in the form of a TA, an RA, or a Fellowship—or otherwise acquire a presumption of support at some point in their graduate career. The Department guarantees that, barring financial emergencies, each of these students who remains in good standing will receive financial support for a total period of ten terms, or five years. Both internal and external sources of funding are counted in determining the years of support.

The five-year rule will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis for supported students who are admitted with transfer credits, or for students who acquire the presumption of support at some time later than their first semester, since, in either case, the duration between the initial award of financial support and completion of the degree can be expected to be somewhat shorter.

Students who do not remain in good standing should not expect to receive any further financial support. There will be cases in which, due to staffing or other needs, students who are not in good standing, or students for whom there is no presumption of support, will nevertheless be hired as TA's or RA's by the Department. The Department makes no commitment of further support to students in this category.

Any student receiving full financial support must remain fully registered during the period of support. Credit hours that are not used directly for seminars can be applied to private reading courses, mentoring courses, or seminar audits. It is expected, however, that each supported student will be registered for and attend, either for credit or as an official audit, at least one graduate seminar offered by the Department during each term of support.

4.2 Good Standing

The concept of good standing applies only to students with the presumption of support, is based on rate of progress through the PhD program, and has three components: (1) Core Course completion rate, (2) course completion rate, (3) date of Admission to Candidacy.

In order to remain in good standing, a student who has not yet been Admitted to Candidacy must:

- (1) Complete one Core Course by the end of the student's first term, and the second by the end of the student's second term, so that both are finished after the first year;
- (2) Satisfy the Logic Requirement by the end of the student's fourth term, or second year;
- (3) Satisfy the Course Requirement at the rate of at least two courses per term, or four per year; and
- (3) Complete all Basic Requirements, satisfy the Prospectus Requirement, and be Admitted to Candidacy by the end of the seventh term, which is typically the first term of the student's fourth year.

In order to remain in good standing, a student who has been Admitted to Candidacy must make substantial progress toward the completion of a dissertation during the eighth and ninth terms of graduate study. Such a student will then continue to receive support for the full five-year period.

5 Rate of Progress

The rate of progress necessary for students with financial support to remain in good standing is detailed above. Since their circumstances are so varied, students without financial support are subject only to the University rules governing rate of progress; the Department imposes no additional rate of progress requirements on unsupported students.

A Academic Dishonesty

Any graduate students who receives a grade of F (understood to include a grade of XF for academic dishonesty) in connection with any course will be asked to leave the program. That student may appeal the decision to the Graduate Director or Department Chair.