Department of Political Science, University of Alberta
Graduate Program Degree Requirements and Regulations

About this document:

This document was drafted in 2015 by Associate Chair Graduate Studies (DGS) Cressida Heyes and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee on January 7 2016 and by Department Council on January 21 2016. It can only be amended by revisions brought by any permanent faculty member to the Graduate Studies Committee for discussion and approval (by majority vote if necessary), after which a revised document must be approved by a majority vote in the Department Council.

Graduate students, Contract Academic Staff (Teaching) [CAST] instructors, or staff may propose amendments but they must be brought forward by any permanent faculty member. The department is committed to consulting with the Political Science Graduate Student Association (PS-GSA) on program changes that will affect current graduate students.

Nothing in this document, nor any revisions subsequently made, can supersede regulations imposed by the University Calendar or by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (GPS), unless this supersession is expressly permitted.

Revision 1 was approved by the Department Council on April 6 2017 and amended the description of the comprehensive exam.

Revision 2 was approved by the Department Council on April 22 2021. The revisions regulate the Master of Arts in Policy Studies program, which was approved by the Government of Alberta in December 2018 and welcomed its first cohort in Fall 2020, and they update other policy and practice descriptions.

Revision 3 was approved in principle by the Department Council on April 22 2021. These revisions relate to piloting a new PhD Comprehensive Exam process. The Graduate Committee approved these changes on October 13, 2021.

Revision 4 was approved in principle by the Department Council on November 30 2025. These revisions relate to the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Process. The Graduate Committee approved these Changes on October 15, 2025.

Abbreviations:

DGS: Director of Graduate Studies (formerly Associate Chair Graduate Studies) CAST: Contract Academic Staff (Teaching)
MPF: Master of Arts in Policy Studies Facilitator
GPS: Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research GET: Graduate Ethics Training GSA: Graduate Students Association PI: Principal Instructor
POL S: The Calendar designation for all Political Science courses taught at the University of Alberta main campus
PS-GSA: Political Science Graduate Students Association RA: Research Assistant TA: Teaching Assistant
*: The Calendar designation for “credits,” e.g. “*6” means “6 credits”

Website and documents referenced:

GPS Graduate Program Manual: https://uofa.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual
University Calendar: https://calendar.ualberta.ca/
University of Alberta International: http://www.international.ualberta.ca

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I. Degree programs offered and requirements:

See the University Calendar.

A. Entrance requirements

See also Appendix 1: Applying to graduate school in Political Science FAQs

i. Academic requirements

Applicants who have completed the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree will be considered for admission to the MA programs. Degrees in Political Science, Policy Studies, or close cognates such as International Relations or PPE are strongly preferred; applicants with other undergraduate majors should normally have at least 30 graded credits of coursework in Political Science.
Applicants must have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.3 (when converted to the University of Alberta's grading scale) or equivalent in the last 60 graded credits of academic studies.

Students whom the admissions committee considers promising but insufficiently prepared for graduate work in Political Science or Policy Studies may be considered for admission to the MA after completing a qualifying year. Qualifying year students normally complete four undergraduate courses a term (although the requirement will vary depending on the student's background) and must maintain a grade point average of at least 3.3. These credits do not count toward the MA.

Applicants to the course-only stream of the MA in Policy Studies with GPAs lower than 3.3 may be considered for admission based on demonstrated excellence and experience in public policy.
Applicants who have completed the equivalent of a Master's degree will be considered for admission to the PhD program. Graduate degrees in Political Science or close cognates such as International Relations or Policy Studies are strongly preferred; applicants with fewer than four graduate-level courses in Political Science are admitted to the PhD only under exceptional circumstances. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of at least 3.3 in the last 60 graded credits of academic studies, but successful applicants will typically have a GPA of 3.7 or higher.

Please note that meeting the admission minimums does not guarantee admission to the program. A department recommendation of admission with or without funding is determined by the Graduate Studies Committee, who discuss and rank all applicants. Official offers of admission to the university are extended by GPS. Admission is highly competitive and is based

on the quality of materials submitted in the admissions package: statement of intent, writing sample, letters of recommendation, CV, application form, ESL scores (if applicable) and transcripts. Short-listed doctoral applicants may be interviewed by phone or video conference.

The department welcomes applications from graduate students who intend to come to the University of Alberta for one year, either as part of a formal exchange program or as non-exchange visitors, whereby they receive credit at their home institution for coursework completed at U of A. These applications are evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee and admitted using the same criteria for likely academic success as our own graduate program admissions. For more information about available exchange programs and the process of becoming a visiting student, see the websites of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (especially the Graduate Program Manual) and of University of Alberta International.

ii. English Language Proficiency:

Since English is the primary language of instruction and communication at the University of Alberta, all applicants must be proficient in English prior to admission. Applicants with degrees/ qualifications in a language other than English may need to demonstrate English Language Proficiency through one of the following exam scores:

- TOEFL with a minimum score of 5.0 with a score of at least 4.5 on each individual skill
- MELAB of 85; or
- IELTS 7.0 with at least 6 on each band.

B. Requirements for all graduate degrees:

i. Graduate ethics training (GET):

All graduate students at the University of Alberta are required to take eight hours of Graduate Ethics Training (GET). Five hours of this requirement can be met by registering through the GPS website to take a self-guided online course. The remaining three can be met by taking a department seminar on academic integrity offered every spring, or by taking three hours of approved seminars offered by GPS or other units on campus. The department strongly recommends that all graduate students complete the GET in their first year. Students hoping to complete the GET through any method other than the GPS on-line course or department seminar require advance permission from the DGS to receive credit. Students should report all ethics training completed to the Graduate Advisor, who keeps a record of each student's progress.

ii. Professional development:

All students entering a graduate degree program at the University of Alberta from September 1 2016 will be required to complete a professional development requirement. See GPS Graduate Program Manual §7.6 and the Calendar for more information about the requirement.

In brief, the Professional Development requirement includes 1. an individualized professional development plan, and 2. eight hours of professional development activities. Students must submit their individualized professional development plan to the Graduate Office within 12 months of the program's commencement for master's students and 18 months of the program's commencement for doctoral students. Please contact the DGS for approval of all professional development activities.

iii. Annual meeting and report

All supervisors and all graduate students have a responsibility to schedule at least one full supervisory committee meeting (preferably face to face) per academic year to discuss degree progress. The supervisor normally schedules the meeting after the end of the winter semester exam period in April and before July 1. The graduate student should bring a completed copy of their annual report to this meeting, and the supervisor should sign it for submission to the Graduate Advisor by July 1.

C. The MA degrees:

Two MA in Political Science routes are available: a course-based program (which can be taken full time or part-time), and a thesis-based program (which can only be taken full-time).

Two MA in Policy Studies routes are available: a course-only MA program and a practicum-based program (both of which can be taken full-time or part-time).

There is no language requirement for the MA degrees.

i. Course-based MA in Political Science degree requirements:

Courses:

For the course-based MA in Political Science, *24 of graduate-level courses (usually 8 3-credit courses) and a project (POL S 900, counted as 3 credits upon completion) are required (for a total of *27 for the degree). All MA in Political Science students are required to take POL S 599 as one of their courses, which is offered every year, typically in the fall semester. Course-based MA in Political Science students may take a maximum of three courses outside Political Science at the University of Alberta if they provide a written academic rationale that the DGS approves. No more than 6 credits (two courses) may be taken outside the University of Alberta for transfer credit to a U of A degree.

Capstone paper:

The Master of Arts in Political Science capstone paper should be 7000-9000 words inclusive of notes and bibliography. The paper can be an expansion of a course paper, but requires more extensive research or literature review and argumentative development. The MA student's supervisor and a second faculty member will assess the research paper. Master's papers are assessed as a pass or fail, and both readers must agree that the paper is a pass. Both the supervisor and the second reader must provide a brief (250– 500 word) written assessment of the work that is given to the student and kept on file in the department; the department also retains a PDF copy of the paper. If either reader fails the initial paper, the student has the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit within four months (provided this does not violate any other regulations, such as time in program). A student whose revised paper is also judged a fail may be given one further opportunity to rewrite, or the department may recommend to GPS that they be required to withdraw. The supervisor and

reader in conjunction with the DGS will make this decision.

Residence requirement and time to completion:

The minimum period of residence for full-time programs is two four-month terms of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta. There is no residence requirement for part-time students.

Full-time students in the course-based MA in Political Science program will normally complete the program within 12-18 months, and part-time students will normally complete within three years.[1] Students hoping to complete the course-based MA in Political Science in one academic year should take four *3 courses in each of the fall and winter semesters if possible, as the department does not routinely offer graduate courses in the spring and summer semesters.

[1] "Full-time" is defined by the University of Alberta as a student taking at least *9 in any given semester, i.e. usually three 3-credit courses. Part-time students must take a minimum of *3 to maintain their registration.

All full-time students in the course-based MA in Political Science program must maintain continuous registration (excluding approved leave) and complete the program in six years. Part-time students are required to complete in four years.

ii. Thesis-based MA in Political Science degree requirements:

Courses:

The thesis-based MA in Political Science requires *18 of graduate-level courses (usually 6 3-credit courses) and a thesis (registering in a minimum of *6 of thesis registrations). All MA in Political Science students are required to take POL S 599 as one of their courses, which is offered every year, typically in the fall semester. Thesis-based MA in Political Science students may take a maximum of two courses outside Political Science at the University of Alberta if they provide a written academic rationale that the DGS approves. No more than 6 credits (two courses) may be taken outside the University of Alberta for transfer credit to a U of A degree.

Thesis:

At a minimum, the thesis should reveal that the student is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis. As far as possible, it should be an original contribution (see the Calendar). The thesis should be approximately 20,000 words, inclusive of notes and bibliography. More extensive direction and feedback will be provided by the supervisor.

The Master's thesis must also undergo an oral defence. Once the supervisor has determined that the thesis is defensible, they will inform the DGS and organize the defence with the assistance of the Graduate Advisor. Master's defences must be held in accordance with GPS guidelines (Information on Conduct of Examinations can be found in the Calendar), which specify an

examining committee consisting of the supervisor, a second member (usually a faculty member in the Political Science Department), an arms-length examiner, and a chair.

Residence requirement and time to completion:

The minimum period of residence for full-time programs is two four-month terms of full time attendance at the University of Alberta.

Students in the thesis-based MA in Political Science program will normally complete the program within 24 months, and must complete the program in four years (see Time Limit for Completion of Graduate Programs in the Calendar).

iii. Course-only MA in Policy Studies degree requirements Courses:

For the course-only MA in Policy Studies, *24 of graduate-level courses (usually 8 3-credit courses) and a capstone project (POL S 902, counted as *3 upon completion) are required (for a total of *27 for the degree). All MA in Policy Studies students are required to take POL S 527 and POL S 532 as two of their courses, which are offered every year, typically in the fall semester. Course-only MA in Policy Studies students may take a maximum of two courses outside Political Science at the University of Alberta if they provide a written academic rationale that the DGS approves. No more than *6 may be taken outside the University of Alberta for transfer credit to a U of A degree.

Capstone paper:

The Master of Arts in Policy Studies capstone paper should be 7000-9000 words inclusive of notes and bibliography. Capstone papers are developed and presented in POL S 902. The paper can be an expansion of a course paper, but requires more extensive research or literature review and argumentative development. The MA in Policy Studies student's supervisor and a second faculty member will assess the capstone paper.The supervisor is responsible for securing the second reader. Master's papers are assessed using a letter-grade system, and both faculty readers must agree on the assigned grade. One of the student's policy community mentors or preceptors will review the capstone paper and provide a brief (200 to 250 word) written review to the supervisor for incorporation in this assessment.

Both the supervisor and the second faculty reader must provide a brief (250– 500 word) written assessment of the work that is given to the student and kept on file in the department; the department also retains a PDF copy of the paper. If either faculty reader fails the initial paper, the student has the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit within four months (provided this does not violate any other regulations, such as time in program). A student whose revised paper is also judged a fail may be given one further opportunity to rewrite, or the department may recommend to GPS that they be required to withdraw. This decision will be made by the supervisor and reader in conjunction with the DGS.

Competency development and mentorship

Behavioral competencies will be developed through course-based work and optional professional

development workshop. Competency development will be assessed holistically using 360-degree feedback assessments at various points throughout the program. The initial competency self assessment will be conducted in the first semester of the program, as part of POL S 527. Students will be encouraged to include peer and supervisor assessments as part of this 360-degree process. The results of this initial assessment will inform the development of the students' Individual Development Plans (IDPs), as required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.. All MA in Policy Studies students will complete a final 360-degree assessment at the close of their program, as part of the POL S 902 requirement.

Students in the course-only MA in Policy Studies will be paired with a mentor from the policy community. This match will be facilitated by the MPF or designate, who will provide an orientation session for mentors and students to align expectations for the program.

Residence requirement and time to completion:

The minimum period of residence for full-time programs is two four-month terms of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta. There is no residence requirement for part-time students.

Full-time students in the MA course-only program will normally complete the program within 12 to 18 months, and part-time students will normally complete within three years.[1] Students hoping to complete the course-only MA in Policy Studies in one academic year should take four *3 courses in each of the fall and winter semesters if possible, as the department does not routinely offer
graduate courses in the spring and summer semesters.

iv. Practicum-based MA in Policy Studies degree requirements:

Courses:

The practicum-based MA in Policy Studies requires *18 of graduate-level courses (usually 6 3-credit courses), *6 in practicum courses (completion of POL S 803 and 804), and a capstone project (POL S 902, counted as *3 upon completion) are required (for a total of *27 for the degree). All MA in Policy Studies students are required to take POL S 527 and POL S 532 as two of their courses, which are offered every year, typically in the fall semester. Practicum-based MA in Policy Studies students may take a maximum of two courses outside Political Science at the University of Alberta if they provide a written academic rationale that the Director of Graduate Studies approves.

Practicum:

Students in the practicum-based MA in Policy Studies must complete two practicum courses (POL S 803 and 804). Each course is valued at *3 and requires students to complete a minimum 30-hour research project with a policy organization chosen in consultation with the MAPS Program Facilitator (MPF).

Practicum placements are designed to provide students with hands-on learning experience in a public policy work setting, requiring the integration and synthesis of theory and practice through

application and critical assessment. Students will contribute to a community or organization's capacity to critically assess public policy issues, and design, implement and evaluate policy initiatives, while gaining confidence and skills as public policy researchers.

Students are permitted to complete both POL S 803 and 804 with the same host organization, or to complete each course with a different host organization.

Placements will be secured by the close of the students' first semester in the program, allowing them to work with their preceptors as mentors throughout as much of their program as possible. Students will be paid employees of the host organization.

Practicum-based students are required to apply for practicum placements on a competitive basis. The MPF will work with community partners to create opportunities for students. Students are also encouraged to work with the MPF to approach potential hosts in fields of interest. The practicum based program is designed to minimize the financial impact on students by providing them with paid placements during their degree.

To ensure each practicum placement contributes to the professional development of the student, the proposed program will employ the University of Alberta's Individual Development Plan (IDP) to select appropriate practicum preceptors and track progress toward meeting learning objectives. The MPF will screen potential practicum preceptors prior to placing students with their organization. The MPF will also organize orientation sessions for preceptors and students before each placement, to align expectations and ensure a common understanding of the requirements of the program. The MPF to conduct at least one check-in during each placement.

POL S 802 and 803 are graded on a pass/fail basis. Assessments are made by the MPF in consultation with the preceptor(s).

Capstone paper:

The Master of Arts in Policy Studies capstone paper should be 7000-9000 words inclusive of notes and bibliography. Capstone papers are developed and presented in POL S 902. The paper can be an expansion of a course paper or practicum assignment, but requires more extensive research or literature review and argumentative development. The MA in Policy Studies student's supervisor and a second faculty member will assess the capstone paper.The supervisor is responsible for securing the second reader. Master's papers are assessed using a letter-grade system, and both faculty readers must agree on the assigned grade.

One of the student's policy community mentors or preceptors will review the first submitted draft of the capstone paper and provide a brief (200 to 250 word) written review to the supervisor for incorporation in this assessment. The purpose of this review is to highlight the contribution of the capstone paper to the organization and/or broader policy community; it is not an academic assessment For clarity, the mentor or preceptor review has no bearing on the academic evaluation of the capstone paper as a pass or fail, which is determined entirely by the faculty supervisor and second reader.

Both the supervisor and the second faculty reader must provide a brief (250– 500 word) written assessment of the work that is given to the student and kept on file in the department; the department also retains a PDF copy of the paper. If either faculty reader fails the initial paper, the student has the opportunity to rewrite and resubmit within four months (provided this does not violate any other regulations, such as time in program). A student whose revised paper is also judged a fail may be given one further opportunity to rewrite, or the department may recommend to GPS that they be required to withdraw. This decision will be made by the supervisor and reader in conjunction with the DGS.

Competency development and mentorship

Behavioral competencies will be developed through course-based work and optional professional development workshop. Competency development will be assessed holistically using 360-degree feedback assessments at various points throughout the program. The initial competency self assessment will be conducted in the first semester of the program, as part of POL S 527. Students will be encouraged to include peer and supervisor assessments as part of this 360-degree process. The results of this initial assessment will inform the development of the students' Individual Development Plans (IDPs), as required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Practicum students will undertake a pair of mid-program 360-degree assessments at the mid-point and close of their practicum placement (POL S 803 and 804). All students will complete a final 360-degree assessment at the close of their program, as part of the Capstone Seminar (POL S 902).

Preceptors for the students in the practicum-based MA in Policy Studies program will serve as professional mentors and capstone paper supervisors will serve as academic mentors in their program.

Residence requirement and time to completion:

The minimum period of residence for full-time programs is two four-month terms of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta. There is no residence requirement for part-time students.

Full-time students in the MA in Policy Studies practicum-based program will normally complete the program within 16 months, and part-time students will normally complete within three years.

D. The PhD degree

i. Coursework

The PhD requires *18 of graduate-level courses (usually 6 3-credit courses). All PhD students are required to take POL S 680 as one of their courses, which is offered every year, typically in the fall semester, as well as the Grad Lab Combined Field Course which prepares you for your Comprehensive Exams and is typically offered in the winter semester. All PhD students must select two courses in two fields of specialization from among Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Indigenous Politics, Gender and Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory. The remaining courses

should be selected from 500 and 600-level courses in Political Science at the University of Alberta; doctoral students are permitted to take one course outside the department only in exceptional circumstances with the permission of the DGS.

Doctoral students should note that the PhD includes a language requirement that may require supplemental coursework early in the program.

ii. Comprehensive exams

By October 1st of year 2, PhD students submit a comprehensive exam in each of their two areas of specialization. See Appendix 2 for detailed regulations.

iii. Language requirement

Every PhD student must demonstrate proficiency in a language other than English. This requirement can be fulfilled by having successfully completed a second-year undergraduate language course in the previous five years (if a student does not want to have a language course included in the calculation of their GPA, they should declare the course "extra to degree" prior to the first lecture). It can also be fulfilled by completing a translation exercise, which entails the translation of a 400-500 word passage from a scholarly journal into grammatically correct and coherent English.
Students may qualify in a language that is spoken in the geographical region on which their research focuses or the language of origin of the political thinkers whose work they engage. Students taking Canadian Politics as a field will normally be required to take French. A student whose native language is not English and who does not require supplementary language competency to conduct their dissertation research (as determined by their doctoral supervisor and communicated in writing to the graduate chair) will be deemed to have met the language requirement. Students are advised to plan in the first year of the program and in consultation with their supervisor and the DGS how they will meet the language requirement.

iv. Candidacy

After passing the comprehensive exams, doctoral students prepare for and sit an oral candidacy exam, in which the dissertation proposal is examined. See Appendix 3 for more information. This exam and all other degree requirements (including language and ethics requirements) except the dissertation must be completed by the end of year 3 of the program (GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.7). On passing the candidacy exam and provided all other degree requirements are met, the student becomes a PhD candidate, or "ABD" (All But Dissertation). Students who don't advance to candidacy by the end of year 3 are formally in unsatisfactory academic standing in the eyes of the department, and are required to meet with the DGS to discuss their progress, after which their department funding (if applicable) will be re-evaluated. Students who have passed candidacy may be considered for employment as the principal instructor of an undergraduate course.

v. Dissertation

Beginning in year 3 students write their dissertation under the direction of their supervisor and with the assistance of two other faculty, who constitute the supervisory committee according to the

GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.1.

Students may, in consultation with their Supervisor(s) and Supervisory committee, opt for either a traditional-format thesis or dissertation-by-publication. Students should consult with their supervisor early in their degree program to determine which format is best for the nature of their research area and the time frame for their program completion. A decision must be made prior to the candidacy examination, and approved by the supervisory committee. A change of thesis format (from or to the thesis by publication from or the traditional dissertation) must be approved by the supervisory committee and the Associate Chair (Graduate Studies) must be informed.

Traditional and publication-based theses contrast mainly in terms of the "body" of the thesis – that is, the portion between the introduction and conclusion. A traditional thesis is a monograph consisting of chapters. A dissertation-by-publication includes an introduction and conclusion chapter, but the documents in-between are independent papers in journal-article format, rather than chapters that are not necessarily independent documents.

Guidelines for the Traditional-Format Thesis:

A doctoral dissertation is typically 50,000-80,000 words long, containing 4-7 linked chapters, an introduction, conclusion, bibliography, and any other appendices or presentation of data. "A doctoral thesis, at a minimum, must embody the results of original investigations and analyses and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study" (GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.4.1).

When the dissertation is complete to the satisfaction of the supervisory committee, it is sent to two other arms-length examiners, one of whom must be an expert in the field from outside the University of Alberta. The definition of "arms-length" as well as criteria and process for appointing an External Examiner are specified in GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.2.3 and § 8.3.4. All five examiners must receive the final version of the dissertation at least four weeks prior to an oral defence. The oral defence typically takes 2-3 hours and the student takes questions from all examiners, with the most time being given to the external examiner and the least to the supervisor. The possible outcomes of a doctoral defence examination are described in the GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.3.4. If a student passes or passes with revisions, they are responsible for submitting the final version of the dissertation to GPS with the supervisor's approval. Note that GPS also requires other documentation from students to complete the PhD degree, described on their website under "thesis preparation and submission." Students should note the fee and convocation deadlines and leave plenty of time to complete these final steps. The department is not able to accelerate this process or make exceptions to it. The department has a handout "Tips for Completing Your PhD" that describes the final roughly six months of the program, from full draft to submission, which students should consult well in advance.

Guidelines for Dissertation-by-Publication:
These guidelines were unanimously passed by the Department Council, November 21, 2017.

A. Format of the Dissertation Proposal

1. As is the case for the traditional dissertation format, the proposal for a paper-based thesis will be evaluated based on its cohesion, clarity, grounding in the relevant literature(s) and scholarly merit. The proposal will be about 25 pages in length, and achieve the following:

a. Identify the research question, or questions, the thesis will address.

b. Situate these questions within the relevant literature(s).

c. Explain the research design; that is, explain and justify: the theoretical or conceptual frameworks and approaches to interpretation; text, case or data selection; hypotheses; and methodology. Also, offer a rationale for differences in approach, focus and method between the articles.

d. Provide an outline of the components of the thesis, taking care to explain how the individual articles will be thematically connected, and integrated throughout the work.

e. If one of the articles is to be co-authored, the contributions to be made by the PhD.

f. students and co-authors must be explained (See section C and E, below).

g. Present a preliminary timetable for the completion of the components of the thesis, identifying likely publication venues for the three articles, submission dates and completion dates.

B. Role of the Supervisory Committee

1. As is the case for the standard thesis format, the three-person supervisory committee, comprised of supervisor and two other faculty members with expertise in the subject, will:

a. Provide advice and counsel while the proposal is prepared;

b. Determine whether the proposal is of sufficient quality to proceed to the oral candidacy exam;

c. Offer intellectual and strategic guidance as the articles are prepared for publication/dissemination, and as the introductory and concluding sections of the work are drafted;

d. In particular, the committee will sign off on the choice(s) of journal to which the student will submit the work, mindful that the journals must be of Q1 or Q2 type quality to meet criterion C 3a(ii) publication, or C3a(iii), acceptance for publication in a double blind peer-reviewed academic journal.

e. Determine whether the completed thesis is ready to be examined.

C. Format of the Dissertation:

1. The dissertation-by-publication includes introductory and concluding chapters, a certain number of chapters consisting of publishable quality papers in journal-article format, and a bibliography summarizing the sources used throughout the thesis. Between three and five papers is the most common, but the actual number of papers in an individual thesis can vary at the discretion of the Supervisory committee.

2. The introduction and conclusion *inter alia* situate the papers within a broader literature or literatures, introduce (as appropriate) the theoretical, conceptual and methodological orientation of the works, and discuss avenues for future research.

a. The introductory chapter must outline the thesis and clearly state the background to the research; contain a clear statement of the research question(s); situate the paper within a broader literature; and, discuss the methodological orientation of the works. Some overlap or redundancy between the introductory chapter and the papers might occur.

b. The concluding chapter should state clearly the contribution to knowledge represented by the thesis as a body of research, and should put forward or recap the important conclusions to be drawn from it. The conclusion must, implicitly or explicitly, demonstrate that the papers form a thematically-related body of work which represents an original contribution to the discipline or sub-discipline in which the thesis is written.

c. The introductory and concluding chapters will be between 5,000-7,000 words, including all notes and references.

3. All papers comprising the dissertation-by-publication project should be of publishable quality. Each paper should also be an independent, stand-alone document, in journal article format, following the norms of the discipline. The length of the paper is part of these norms. Papers will generally be between 7,000-9,000 words, including all notes and references. To qualify for the dissertation-by publication format, papers must include coherent linkages that can be articulated and defended in the overall introduction and conclusion. The precise nature of the linkages between papers (ie., thematic, theoretical, methodological, etc.) will be determined by the author in consultation with the supervisory committee.

a. Dissertation by Publication Thresholds

i. No more than one of the papers comprising the dissertation may be co-authored, providing the student has met the criteria set out in Section E1.

ii. No fewer than one of the papers comprising this dissertation format must have been accepted as a sole-authored publication (above the line) in a Q1 or Q2 type quality double blind peer-reviewed academic journal prior to oral defense.

iii. A second paper in this format must have been under formal consideration by a recognized blind peer-review journal prior to oral defense; this standard includes articles under review, articles rejected by reviewers, and articles returned as “revise and resubmit” (below the line).

iv. A third paper in this format must be of publishable quality, but need not yet have been submitted for blind peer-review by the time of defense.

v. Fourth or fifth papers in larger dissertation-by-publication projects will only be held to the standard in 3.a.iv.

b. Non-Blind Review Outlets

i. Invited contributions, book chapters, policy papers, or peer-reviewed conference papers will not be deemed as satisfying condition 3.a.i.

ii. In consultation with the student's supervisory committee, rare exceptions may be made under 3.a.iii for book chapters of unusual quality, significance, or published by a high-quality university press. However, such an exception for 3.a.iii must have been accepted for publication.

iii. In consultation with the student's supervisory committee, rare exceptions for work directed at a policy-oriented audience may be deemed to satisfy any of 3.aiii-3.a v, as long as the other criteria are met.

c. Non-English language publications

i. Work published in non-English language publications must be translated into English for the final dissertation submission. (See C(5), below regarding GPS formatting requirements.)

4. Connecting text between the papers is optional. It could be included to make the relationship between the papers more apparent, or to elaborate further when the paper length is limited by publication norms. A final bibliography for all sources cited in the thesis must be included, in addition to the references listed at the end of each paper.

5. Note that GPS also specifics a common set of formatting requirements to which all theses at the University of Alberta must conform.

6. A prior graduate thesis or sections of a prior graduate thesis/dissertation cannot be included as a paper in a PhD thesis.

7. If individual papers in the thesis constitute journal articles authored or co-authored by the student (including an accepted paper that is forthcoming at the time of thesis submission) and/or if the research conducted for the thesis required ethics approval, a preface must be included. Consult GPS's guidelines.

a. For theses that include co-authored material, the preface must include a statement from the supervisor/second reader and the student clearly indicating the distribution of labour on each co-authored paper. The objective of this requirement is to assure examiners that there has been full disclosure of collaborative activity.

D. Published Material

1. Publication or acceptance for publication of research results before presentation of the thesis in no way supersedes the evaluation of the publication by the Supervisor, the Supervisory Committee, the External Examiner for the thesis, or the Final Doctoral Examining Committee. Inclusion of published material in the thesis does not guarantee that the thesis will be found acceptable for the degree.

2. If a paper has been published or is being considered for publication, it is the student's responsibility to obtain copyright permission from the publisher to include the paper in the thesis. University policy requires compliance with copyright law. Should the publisher request an embargo (a maximum of two years is permitted by the University), the student must submit a written request to the department prior to submission the final version of the thesis to GPS. Note that is it University policy that a thesis be made freely available as soon as possible after a student's convocation. See the Graduate Program Manual 8.4.3. for further information on restricting access to a thesis.

E. Co-authored Papers

1. A maximum of one paper may be co-authored or represent collaborative work. However, the student must have produced more than 50% of the work; that is, hold primary responsibility for the conceptualization of the study, analyses, interpretation, and writing. A description of the role of the student and the other author(s) in all co-authored work must be given in the Preface, as required by GPS regulations. The Supervisor and each co-author(s) must provide written documentation that the student has done more than 50% of the work.

F. Abstract

1. In a paper-based thesis, the Abstract must summarize the main findings presented in each of the separate papers. It should indicate how the included works are tied to a coherent theoretical framework, and how, when considered together, they demonstrate a significant new contribution to knowledge in the discipline or field.

G. Review

1. This programme option will be reviewed by the Department Council in Fall 2022.

vi. Residence requirement and time to completion

There is a residence requirement for PhD students of two academic years of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta.

Students in the PhD program will normally complete the program within five years.

The maximum time to completion for a doctoral degree is six years. The department will grant a first extension request for all or part of PhD Year 7 (accounting for approved leaves) only in exceptional circumstances. A request to extend the PhD into Year 8 must be approved by GPS. The department will normally recommend to GPS that a student who has not completed the degree by the end of their eighth year in the PhD be required to withdraw from the program. A former doctoral student may apply for readmission if and when they have a dissertation ready to defend.
Students should note that once they cease to be registered and pay tuition and fees they are no longer entitled to use any university services (including the library), and their supervisor's responsibilities are formally ended.

E. General guidelines

i. Interim advisors and supervisors

The department makes admissions offers to a graduate degree in Political Science and Policy Studies in significant part on the basis of those research interests stated in the student's application. Once a student has accepted an offer of admission, they will be assigned an interim advisor, who is matched on the basis of research expertise. The interim advisor is expected to become the supervisor, but need not. They can also provide general counsel on academic matters and assist students with the transition to graduate school. Students are strongly advised to contact their interim advisor as soon as they start at the University of Alberta, and to seek advice if they are unsure about any aspect of their degree.

Provided the student's research interests do not change significantly, and they have a good working relationship with the interim advisor, they should formalize a supervisory relationship. MA students in Political Science and Policy Studies should do so at the end of their two semesters of coursework, and PhD students should formalize their supervisor by the end of the first year. PhD students and their supervisors are required to sign a form by the end of their first year, which is available from the Graduate Office. Students whose research interests do change or who want to be supervised by a faculty member other than their interim advisor should seek out a new prospective supervisor as soon as possible. Please note that it is ultimately the student's responsibility to find and formalize a supervisor, and no individual faculty member can be compelled to supervise any particular student. The DGS is always available to advise students on prospective supervisors and to make sure all graduate students establish mutually agreeable arrangements for supervision.

Department guidelines on supervision (in accordance with GPS Graduate Program Manual § 1.2)

- Cultivate mentoring relationships with professors working in your areas of interest from early in the program. Go to office hours, ask questions in talks, and engage in the extra-curricular intellectual life of the department as much as possible.
- Do not assume that because you came here intending to work with a particular faculty member that this professor has read your application file or knows who you are, especially if you did not correspond with that professor in advance. Approach the professor early to get a sense of their availability and suitability as a supervisor.
- Once you have a faculty member's agreement to supervise you, let the DGS and Graduate Advisor know so that we can keep records up-to-date.
- Work out what you need to know about writing a paper, thesis, or dissertation and ask your supervisor practical and scholarly questions: what is a reasonable schedule? How can I find the best sources for this research topic? Who do you think are the most important figures in this debate? Do you agree with my claim that *x*—how could I argue that point more effectively?
- Remember that a supervisory relationship is different than an instructor relationship: the supervisor is not going to set you assignments with a deadline, nor give you a grade at the end of

four months. Instead, the student must be highly self-motivated to seek out the supervisor's help, write and bring work for feedback.

- If you give your supervisor a draft of work, allow a reasonable amount of time (ten working days, for example) before expecting feedback or scheduling a meeting to discuss it. Never expect a supervisor to turn work around overnight or over the weekend.
- Come to meetings with your supervisor well prepared and ready to get to work. Have some questions you'd like answered and make sure to get lots of feedback on the content of your research that will help you revise and move forward.
- Be open to advice and willing to reflect on how to improve your own work. Your supervisor approaches your ideas, data, or written work as initial gambits in an ongoing scholarly conversation. If they suggest revisions, take those suggestions seriously, and respond to them. Learning to be effective in responding to feedback is a key skill, and one that your supervisor will be able to describe to your benefit in letters of reference.
- If you have personal problems that impact your research it is important to let your supervisor know, but also remember that they are not a trained counsellor; your supervisor and the DGS can assist you to find the campus services designed for students experiencing personal challenges including mental illness and needing financial assistance.
- If you have difficulties with your supervisor that you cannot resolve by direct conversation with her or him, approach the DGS for confidential advice. (If your supervisor is the DGS, you should approach the Chair.)

Department guidelines on first meeting between supervisor and supervisee:

Incoming graduate students and interim advisors should schedule a first face-to-face meeting as soon as possible after the new student arrives in Edmonton.

Topics to cover at that first meeting may include:

- Any logistical problems with registering for courses, understanding how U of A works, etc. and whom to contact for their resolution.
- The academic suitability of courses selected for the first year.
- The role of interim advisor, and how to appoint a formal supervisor by the end of the first year.
- The student's academic interests and how they can establish a good base for later thesis or dissertation research.
- Any personal problems the student has with housing, money, etc. and which resources (GSA, Mental Health Services, Campus Food Bank) they should approach for help.

ii. Graduate Ethics Training and academic integrity

The Department of Political Science takes academic integrity extremely seriously. Any graduate student found through the university's discipline process to have violated the Code of Student Behaviour (COSB) may cease to be eligible for any further department-administered funding. Academic misconduct is discussed every September at new graduate student orientation, reviewed briefly at the beginning of every term by every instructor (who must include a boilerplate about

academic misconduct in their syllabus), and discussed in more depth in POL S 680, POL S 599, and in the spring academic integrity workshop. The department's policy on academic integrity (available from the DGS) includes more information and lots of links to resources on campus.

All graduate students at the University of Alberta are required by GPS to complete eight hours of Graduate Ethics Training (GET).

iii. Transferring between graduate degree programs

Students wishing to transfer between the course-based and the thesis-based MA in Political Science programs may do so with the permission of the DGS.

Students wishing to transfer between the course-only and the practicum-based MA in Policy Studies programs may do so with the permission of the DGS.

Students applying to the PhD from the MA in Political Science or Policy Studies programs will be treated as new applicants.

Students in the PhD who no longer wish to continue or whom the department recommends withdraw may be able to transfer to the MA in Political Science or Policy Studies and leave with a degree in hand. In such cases the department may waive POL S 599 as a requirement but will still require an MA thesis (Political Science) or MA capstone paper (Policy Studies). Students in this situation should consult with the DGS. Voluntary withdrawal from a program is possible at any time by completing a withdrawal form, available from the Graduate Advisor. A student whom the department does not recommend to continue in the PhD but who does not wish to withdraw voluntarily will be referred to GPS for a final decision on whether they will be "required to withdraw." This decision is made in consultation with an Associate Dean and can be appealed.
Both voluntary withdrawal and "required to withdraw" are transcript notations.

Transferring to a graduate program in another discipline usually requires a new application to the appropriate department. Consult with the DGS in Political Science and in the department to which you wish to transfer.

iv. Program support and professionalization

Every year the department offers a series of degree support and professionalization seminars including those on comprehensive exams, designing a research question, completing a dissertation, and teaching for the first time. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend any of these relevant to their degree stage. The Faculty of Graduate Studies also offers an extensive palette of professionalization and support services, and graduate students are also urged to seek out and make the most of these resources in order to make the most of their graduate degree and develop a credible professional profile.

v. Grievances and appeals

Graduate students who wish to dispute a grade awarded for an assignment or a final grade in a

course should use the standard university policy, which is outlined in the Calendar. The department's policy is that the student should approach the instructor who awarded the grade within 14 days of receiving it for an informal conversation about the criteria used. If that does not produce a resolution, the student may approach the department Chair to request within four weeks a reevaluation of the work by another professor in the field who will not know how the work was originally evaluated. If that reevaluation also does not produce an outcome that satisfies the student, they may consult the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts for further advice.
Failure at the comprehensive exams is not appealable per se, although students who believe a procedural irregularity has occurred should consult with the DGS or an Associate Dean at GPS. See GPS Graduate Program Manual 9.2 Academic Grievances and Appeals.

Any provisional decision made by a department that affects a graduate student's academic standing takes the form of a recommendation to GPS (e.g. a student who has twice failed comprehensive exams will be recommended to withdraw from the PhD program; students who fail the MA thesis defence, PhD candidacy, or PhD dissertation defence exams may be recommended to change programs or to withdraw). An Associate Dean at GPS then decides whether to uphold or oppose this recommendation. All GPS decisions at this level are appealable through the GPS Academic Appeals Committee.

Students who are experiencing difficulties with their program or TA/RA supervisor are advised to consult the DGS in confidence in the first instance for informal resolution strategies. See GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.1.6 for more advice about student-supervisor relationships.
Complaints about the DGS are handled by the department Chair in the first instance. Complaints about the department Chair are handled by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

See GPS Graduate Program Manual § 9.2 for more information on Academic Appeals and Grievances. Graduate students can also consult the Graduate Students Association or the Students Ombudservice for independent and informed advice about grievances.

vi. Leave from program

Each graduate degree has a maximum permitted time to completion, specified in the Calendar and repeated in this document. The department and GPS also have a number of practices and policies on taking a leave from graduate studies (see GPS Graduate Program Manual § 7.11). Graduate students may ask to "stop the clock" on their degree to take parental leave, medical leave, compassionate leave, or to work in a designated elected office for the Graduate Students' Association. The Department of Political Science will, wherever possible, support these requests if they are adequately documented and include a reasonable projection for returning to and completing the degree program. Students are advised that the time to completion clock does *not* stop if they continue to be registered in a program or continue to draw salary or scholarship payments while unable to make progress toward their degree. Students experiencing any personal circumstances that seriously impede their academic work are strongly advised to request a leave of absence and suspend their academic program and/or income.

II: Appendices

Appendix 1: Applying to a graduate degree in Political Science FAQs

How do I apply to the University of Alberta graduate programs in Political Science?

All applications are received entirely on-line through a central admissions system. Go to the website of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at https://uofa.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies and click on "Apply Now" to start an on-line application.

What materials do I need?

All materials you need to submit are itemized within the GSMS system. In brief, you will need to complete a standard application form that identifies three referees, and also provide as separate documents: a *curriculum vitae* (resumé); your transcripts from all previous post-secondary education; a statement of research interests; a sample of your academic writing; and evidence of ESL competence (if applicable). If you are applying to the PhD program you will also need to specify
two proposed areas of specialization, selected from: Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Gender and Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory.

What is the deadline?

The deadline for applications is normally January 15 for admission starting September 1 of the same calendar year. Although starting in September is strongly recommended, candidates admitted in any annual cycle may opt to start in the following January with the agreement of the DGS. Applications not received or incomplete by the GSMS portal will be cut off by the system; due to the large volume of applications we receive, it is not normally possible to follow up on incomplete applications, and applicants are advised to make every effort to ensure their applications are complete by the deadline.

How is my application evaluated?

Your application is forwarded to the Department of Political Science where it will be read and discussed by the Graduate Studies Committee, which is a committee of five permanent faculty from across the different fields of Political Science, chaired by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.
All applications are then ranked (MA in Political Science, MA in Policy Studies, and PhD applicants are ranked separately), and the committee decides based on academic track record, and potential, and fit with supervisory capacity and availability, which students to admit. Those students receive an offer of admission and possibly funding. Admission is competitive and only a small proportion of applicants receive an offer of admission.

What is the admissions committee looking for?

In general, we are looking for evidence that you have adequate educational background in Political Science or Policy Studies to succeed at the graduate level, as well as demonstrated aptitude in the field as shown by your transcripts (courses taken and GPA), writing sample, and letters of recommendation. We are also interested in whether your proposed research is a good fit with our faculty expertise, and in whether you have the potential to undertake and complete a self-directed research project.

What are you looking for in a writing sample?

Your writing sample should be a piece of academic writing that demonstrates your ability to identify and pose a scholarly question and to marshall a literature in the service of providing your own answer. It should be solely authored by you in English, no longer than 6000 words, and use an appropriate citation system. A successful term paper written for a course is often acceptable. For Policy Studies applicants, a policy brief or professional report is often acceptable. It should not consist only of literature review or description of a case study, but should also include some evidence that you are capable of developing your own ideas.

What are you looking for in a statement of interest?

We hope to see that you have selected the University of Alberta Political Science department for reasons specific to our program and faculty research interests.

We are looking for a description of a research project you might undertake during your graduate degree that would become either an MA in Political Science project or thesis; an MA in Policy Studies practicum assignment or capstone project; or a doctoral dissertation. While of course topics can change and you are not bound to this proposal, this description signals to us that you are capable of pursuing your own intellectual agenda and succinctly identifying a research question that can be supervised by faculty members in our department.

At least half of your statement should demonstrate alignment between your research interests and the research expertise and unique strengths of our department. For this reason you must include the name of the faculty member(s) you have approached to supervise you and indicate who has agreed to serve as your interim supervisor(s). In addition to explaining how your research interests align broadly with those of our department, you should address how your intended research project fits within or is related to the research program of your supervisor.

Ensure that your statement is no longer than two to three pages in length (paper size 8 1/2 x 11", 1" margin, 12 point font).

Who should I ask to be my referees?

Your best bet are university teachers who know your abilities well. Typically, stronger letters come from professors who have taught a student several times, taught them in a seminar, or supervised a thesis or other research project. For MA in Political Science and PhD applications, non-academic referees, such as an employer, are not usually suitable unless they can speak to abilities you have shown in the workplace that are relevant to your graduate application (e.g. research skills, data analysis). For MA in Policy Studies applications, you may include one non-academic referee who can speak to your capacity to complete professional and/or community-based research in the policy environment. Give your referees lots of lead time to write your letter, and provide them with your application materials.

How can I pay for my degree?

The Department of Political Science funds some admitted students by offering academic employment. See Appendix 5 for further details. Other students have or get scholarships, or secure paid internships, to support their graduate work. A few are self-funded.

I have my own way of paying for my degree. Can I be automatically

admitted? No. All students are admitted solely on the basis of academic

merit.

When will I hear about my application?

The admissions committee meets in February to evaluate applications. Shortlisted doctoral applicants may be asked to do a short phone or video conference interview around this time. Initial offers are usually made by the end of March.
The department will continue to make offers of admission through the spring and into the summer depending on our funding situation and on whether our offers are accepted. If your application is highly ranked but we cannot initially offer you a place, we will typically send you a notice that you are on a waitlist. We appreciate all students admitted or on the waitlist keeping us advised of offers from other universities they are considering.

I wasn't admitted. Can I get feedback on how to improve my application?

Due to the large number of such requests we receive, we are unfortunately not able to provide individualized feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Can I contact individual professors about my application?

We recommend that you contact professor(s) in your areas of research interest in advance of submitting your application. It is helpful to share your statement of interest and ask whether the professor is likely to be available for supervision. This correspondence doesn't commit either party. Once your application is submitted, the person to contact to check on its progress is the Graduate Advisor at psgrad@ualberta.ca.

Who should pursue a graduate degree in Political Science?

In general, successful graduate students are highly self-motivated and intellectually curious. They enjoy independent learning and are willing to defer moving ahead with other career options for the sake of advanced education.

The MA in Political Science is an excellent degree for students interested in a career in public administration, law, journalism, NGOs, working for a political party, or related professional path where a post-BA credential and graduate-level training is an asset. The MA in Political Science is also a path to a PhD.

The MA in Policy Studies prepares students to conduct leading research in public policy and mobilize

solutions to our world's most pressing policy challenges. The program exposes students to the interaction of politics and policy while connecting them to leading practitioners and top policy experts from across the government spectrum.

The PhD is a challenging degree and should only be undertaken by students who are very sure that they want to devote a number of years to advanced study, much of which time will be spent doing self-directed research on a very specific topic. Applicants to the PhD should do careful research on
the limited career opportunities available in contemporary academia and consider whether a doctorate is necessary for their non-academic career ambitions. The department is committed to supporting doctoral students in pursuing research and teaching positions within and outside academia, non professorial careers within higher education, and extra-academic careers.

Appendix 2: Doctoral comprehensive exams (revised and approved in the DC on 30/11/ 2025)

The primary/major field paper (7,000 words): It focuses on the state of the broader field as it relates to the student's dissertation research. The objective is to explore key debates and themes in the field in relation to the student's research and to situate the student's research in the context of the field.

The secondary/minor field (4000 words): it is a literature review paper in the student's secondary field, focusing on a specific key concept driving the student's dissertation research. Students are asked to explain why this concept has been important within the field and the role it will play within their research.

The common purpose of both comprehensive exam papers is to demonstrate:

1. an ability to develop and locate their own intellectual commitments within the debates that animate their chosen fields.
2. a familiarity with the major debates in their field of specialization.
3. an ability to use the key concepts and approaches that animate the discipline of political science.
4. a solid understanding of the fields' development, methodologies, and theoretical approaches as they apply to their subject of study.
5. a capacity to convey this knowledge to both trained and introductory audiences.

Each paper is evaluated by two examiners: the mentor and the arm's length reader.
Mentors and arm's length readers are assigned by the Graduate Program Director. The student's supervisor may serve as one of the faculty mentors.

Once both faculty mentors have approved the final draft of each paper, students will submit both papers to the arm's length readers assigned by the Graduate Program Director by October 1st of year two.

The second reader in each field will evaluate the paper based on the five purposes listed above – papers are expected to meet the standard of an academic journal submission –, provide written feedback, and assess the paper as a pass, pass with revisions or a fail within three weeks of receiving the paper.

The student will have four weeks to submit revisions to the mentor and reader, together with a cover letter detailing the revisions.

If, after revisions, the arm's length examiner deems the paper to be a fail, the student will have two months to resubmit a new field paper.

Once the student has received a pass assessment from the readers, the two faculty mentors will report their evaluation of the Comprehensive Papers to the Graduate Program Director, who will then schedule an oral examination chaired by a faculty member. Only the two faculty mentors will examine both papers.

Students defend both papers in an oral exam comprised of mentors from each field. Mentors in the oral exam will ask students questions that require them to elaborate on the arguments presented in the papers. Students must pass both the written and the oral portions of the comprehensive exam before they can proceed in the doctoral degree program.

The outcome is decided after the oral exam in camera on the basis of a consensus of the examining committee.
Each field is weighted equally, and the written papers are weighted at 70 per cent and the oral at 30 per cent.
Papers that are both judged a definite pass will not usually be failed because of a weak performance in the oral exam, although papers that are borderline can be redeemed by a strong performance.

There are four possible outcomes to a concluded oral: "with distinction", "pass," "conditional pass" or "fail". "With distinction" is reserved for exceptional written work and oral defense, worthy of recognition above and beyond a "pass".

A "conditional pass" is awarded if the mentors believe that there is an identifiable and local weakness in the student's grasp of the material that could be rectified by a supplementary assignment; these have typically been shorter essays inviting a response to a more specific assigned question. In the event of a conditional pass, the Graduate Program Director consults with the mentors and provides specific guidelines to the student on what they must do and how it will be evaluated. The deadline for submitting a supplementary assignment will normally be two months after the oral exam. The assignment is read by the two examiners in the field to which the conditional pass attaches (or all four examiners if both fields were passed conditionally with separate supplemental assignments), who must reach consensus that it improves the comprehensive performance sufficiently to merit a pass. If the examiners do not consider the supplementary assignment adequate, the comprehensive result becomes a fail, and the student will be required to resit.

If a student fails the exam, the student will be asked to repeat the exam (both written and oral). If a student is judged to have failed only in one field, they will repeat the exam after two months, rewriting and being re-examined in the failed field only. If a student fails in both fields, they will repeat the exam after four months, rewriting and being re-examined in both fields. The chair of the examining committee may participate in the second oral, and may break a tie in the event that the four examiners are deadlocked.

Failure on the second attempt indicates the student has failed to meet program requirements and the Graduate Program Director will recommend to the Faculty of GPS that the student be required to withdraw from the doctoral program.

UAlberta Political Science
Comprehensive Examinations

	State of the Field Paper	**Literature Review**
Field (e.g., Theory, Gender & Politics, Comparative, Canadian, IR)	**Primary**	**Secondary**
Focus	the state of the **broader field** as it relates to the student's dissertation research	a specific key ***concept*** driving the student's dissertation research
Length (inclusive of footnotes, exclusive of bibliography)	7,000 words	4,000 words

Suggested Objectives	Explore key ***debates*** and ***themes*** in the field in relation to the student's research; situate the student's research in the context of the field	Explain why this **concept** has been important within the field and the role it will play within your own research.
Examples	• Populism • Human rights • Indigenous feminisms • Indigenous governance • Canadian politics • Immigration • Climate change • Statelessness • Gender and politics	• Identity Politics • Extractivism • Degrowth • Biopolitics • Intimacy/kinship • Surveillance • Disability • Nationalism • Religion • Secularism

Appendix 3: Candidacy paper and exam procedures

See GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.1, 8.2 and § 8.3.

After passing comprehensive exams, normally in the spring of year 2 of the PhD, students start work on a candidacy paper. The supervisor – as chair of the supervisory committee -- should notify the Graduate Office of the proposed composition of the doctoral supervisory committee. GPS requires the appointment of supervisory committees as soon as possible after the start of the program and well in advance of the candidacy examination (see GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.1). The supervisor should schedule at least one formal supervisory committee meeting following the comprehensive exams. Formal supervisory committee meeting should be held at least once a year with the student.

The candidacy paper is an initial foray into the research topics and skills that will be required to conduct doctoral research, and its primary goal is to indicate to a candidacy committee that the student is adequately prepared to advance to working on their dissertation. The candidacy paper should be 8000-10,000 words, like the comprehensive exams, but unlike those essays it constitutes a thesis proposal, and should focus exclusively on defining a research problem, isolating a research question, and demonstrating knowledge of the literatures, archives, methods, data, and narrative

strategy that will be used to answer that question. It should include a comprehensive bibliography. Most candidacy papers include a provisional sketch of the different chapters, appendices, etc. that the dissertation will include. Students should follow the stylistic guidelines set out in the GPS Minimum Thesis Formatting Requirements. The supervisor works with the student on the candidacy paper and the full supervisory committee decides when it is ready to progress to oral examination.
The supervisor notifies the DGS.

The candidacy exam is an oral exam in which at least five examiners ask questions about a candidacy paper. These examiners are: the supervisor, two faculty members who are supervisory committee members, and two arms-length examiners from within the University of Alberta. See GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.2 for more information about the structure of examining committees.

In the exam itself, all the parties are introduced to each other by the Chair, who then asks the candidate to leave the room for a few minutes. The committee discuss the order in which questions will be asked and the time allocated to each examiner. The candidate is invited back into the room, and offered the option of presenting the project for a maximum of 10 minutes. The Chair indicates when each examiner should begin their questioning, and when their time is up. In general, more time is allocated to examiners who are further away from the research project, who ask questions first—so the arms-length examiners precede the supervisory committee members, and the supervisor goes last. Arms-length examiners may take about 15-20 minutes to ask questions and have them answered, while the supervisor takes 5-10, for example. A second round of less formal and more conversational questions usually follows. When all examiners believe they have sufficient information to make a judgment, the exam concludes, and the candidate is again asked to leave the room. The committee deliberates and makes a decision, which may be: adjourn, pass, conditional pass, or fail. The candidate is invited back into the room and informed of the outcome. An average candidacy examination will be completed in two hours.

In the case of a pass, there is a candidacy exam completion form that must be signed by the supervisor and DGS and submitted to GPS. For more information on these decisions and their consequences see the GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.3.3.

Appendix 4: Thesis-based MA and PhD oral defence exam procedures

See GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.2 for more information about the structure of examining committees.

MA theses and PhD dissertations are both evaluated by oral exam, which marks the final formal milestone in the degree. The MA oral examining committee consists of the supervisor and two other faculty members who are supervisory committee members, usually with another faculty member in attendance as the Chair.

The PhD oral examining committee consists of at least five examiners: the supervisor, two faculty members who are supervisory committee members, an arms-length examiner from within the University of Alberta, and an external examiner from outside the University. Another faculty member chairs the exam. For information on who may serve as a doctoral external examiner and the process for inviting them and soliciting their evaluation, see GPS Graduate Program Manual §

8.3.4.

In rare circumstances, a student may seek approval from the Graduate Office to open up the student presentational portion of an MA and PhD oral exam to the Graduate Student community. The examination itself remains in-camera. The request should be made a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the scheduled exam and requires prior approval from the DGS. In the exam itself, all the parties are introduced to each other by the Chair, who then asks the candidate to leave the room for a few minutes. The committee discuss the order in which questions will be asked and the time allocated to each examiner. The candidate is invited back into the room, and offered the option of presenting the project for a maximum of 10 minutes. The Chair indicates when each examiner should begin their questioning, and when their time is up. In general, more time is allocated to examiners who are further away from the research project, who ask questions first—so the arms length examiners precede the supervisory committee members, and the supervisor goes last. Arms length examiners may take about 20 minutes to ask questions and have them answered, while the supervisor takes 10, for example. A second round of less formal and more conversational questions usually follows. When all examiners believe they have sufficient information to make a judgment, the exam concludes, and the candidate is again asked to leave the room. The committee deliberates and makes a decision. The candidate is invited back into the room and informed of the outcome.
An MA oral defence will normally be completed in two hours while a PhD defence normally takes up to three hours.

In the case of an MA oral defence, the available decisions for the examining committee are: adjourn, pass, pass subject to revisions, or fail. See the GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.3.2 for more information.

In the case of a PhD oral defence, the available decisions for the examining committee are: adjourn, pass, pass subject to revisions, or fail. See the GPS Graduate Program Manual § 8.3.4 for more information. See also the department's handout "Tips for Completing Your PhD," which specifies the stages from draft to submission that a dissertation goes through in the final six months of the degree.

Appendix 5: Graduate student funding

Doing a graduate degree is a demanding and time-consuming commitment, and the department works very hard to assure students that their education will be supported either by scholarships or by paid employment as a Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, Practicum Student, Intern, or (for PhD students post- candidacy) as a Principal Instructor. With this in mind, the department applies the following guidelines with regard to funding graduate students.

- The department has a policy of offering full funding to admitted PhD students for years one through five of the program.
- The department may offer a first year of funding to full-time MA in Political Science students but also may make offers of admission to the MA in Political Science without funding.
- Applicants to the course-based MA in Political Science who intend to take the degree part time (or students who switch from full-time to part-time status after being admitted) are not eligible for funding.
- The department does not normally extend funding offers to applicants to the course-only

and practicum-based MA in Policy Studies.
- The department will support students admitted to the practicum-based MA in Policy Studies to identify and secure paid work placements as part of POL S 802 and POL S 803.

Upon admission to the program all new graduate students are issued an offer letter. This letter contains the terms of any funding offer and you should read it carefully. The GPS website includes estimates of the cost of living in Edmonton as well as the latest schedules for tuition and fees. The department considers a "full funding offer" to be any total annual income in excess of GPS's minimum estimate of the annual cost of living for a single person in Edmonton. Department funding is always in principle superceded by scholarships or awards, and students in receipt of department funding are required to apply for all major scholarships or awards for which they are eligible. These are: SSHRC Doctoral or Masters scholarships; Killam and/or Andrew Stewart awards; and Vanier or Trudeau scholarships for those students nominated by the department. The department offers extensive mentoring and editorial assistance for these applications.

Students who enter year 2 or higher of the MA in Political Science or Policy Studies, or year 5 or higher of the PhD, are usually expected to find their own source of funding for tuition and living expenses. Students in year 2 of the MA who have performed satisfactorily as TAs may be offered additional funding if available; similarly, students in the PhD who have passed candidacy may be offered work as a TA or PI in years 5 and 6 if such opportunities are available. The department has a policy of only offering academic employment of any kind to PhD students who are in extension (i.e. in PhD Year 7 or higher including accounting for approved leaves) under exceptional circumstances where completion of the degree has been unavoidably delayed.

Teaching Assistantships are assigned by the Graduate Office, in consultation with the Undergraduate Chair. TAs are employed on four-month contracts usually at either six or twelve hours per week. (Twelve hours of academic-related labour is the university's maximum permitted for full-time students.) In practice this means that you will be assigned as a TA during the September-December and/or January-April semester, working on one or two courses, and possibly as an RA during the May-August semesters. The department makes every effort to assign graduate students to TA positions at an appropriate level and in courses related to their research interests. (POL S 101 is considered a suitable TA assignment for any graduate student.) The department cannot normally accommodate course or scheduling preferences from prospective TAs, except to avoid conflict with existing University of Alberta academic commitments (e.g. the first year graduate student whose class meets at the same time as the class they have been assigned to TA).

The first goal of Teaching Assistant assignments is to enhance undergraduate education, and the second is to provide training and mentoring to graduate students in how to teach undergraduates. Supervising professors are responsible for ensuring that the tasks assigned to TAs can be done satisfactorily within their paid hours of work.

The Association of Employed Graduate Students collective agreement can be found on the university's website as well as through the Graduate Student Association, and it includes up-to-date pay schedules. Note that the total pay for the semester is calculated by adding an "award" portion

(which is untaxed) and a "salary" portion (which is taxed) together. Students whose performance is judged satisfactory receive a 5% merit/seniority increase to salary every year.

Some key provisions of the current (2018-2020) collective agreement as interpreted by Political Science:

Vacation and availability. Each four-month contract includes one week of paid vacation. As students are frequently not required to work at the very beginning and end of their contract period as well as during university breaks such as fall break and reading week, we expect students to be available for TA work during all teaching weeks. TAs must be resident in Edmonton for the duration of the teaching semester.

As summer research assistance needs can be very variable, depending on a supervising professor's schedule and travel plans, we ask students assigned to summer RA positions to consult with their supervisor in April about the appropriate week(s) when they may take vacation or otherwise be absent from Edmonton. The default contractual position is that students work 12 hours per week for the May 1 to August 31 period with one week's vacation; students who leave Edmonton or are otherwise unavailable to work during the summer without seeking permission from their supervisor will be assessed as having unsatisfactory performance.

Paid leave. There is a provision for paid medical leave within the agreement, provided you have a doctor's note specifying the period for which you are unable to work. Please use this provision if you expect to be away from work for more than one week rather than expecting the department to accommodate absence from work ad hoc. There is also a provision for paid compassionate leave, and for both paid maternity and parental leaves. Students who are unable to do their TA or RA work due to family emergencies, childbirth, or parenting responsibilities should use these leave provisions.

Performance evaluation. Your performance is evaluated by your supervisor—the principal instructor of the course(s) you are TA-ing, or the professor for whom you are working as an RA. At the beginning of every semester you must meet with your supervisor and complete a Time Use Guideline that specifies in writing what you will do and when within the terms of your contract. At the end of the semester every supervisor will complete a form evaluating your performance and rating it as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If your performance is rated unsatisfactory, you'll be asked to meet with the DGS to discuss what went wrong. If the same problems recur in a later contract, progressive discipline will be applied as per the collective agreement. In practice this means that if your performance is rated as unsatisfactory by more than one supervisor and you have been unresponsive to feedback, you may not be awarded further contracts.

Criteria in selecting graduate students for employment as an AEGS:

The following guidelines govern appointments to Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant positions funded by the operating budget of the Department of Political Science. They do not govern appointments to Principal Instructor positions under the CAST agreement, nor RA appointments made at the discretion of individual faculty members who hold grants.

1. TA and RA contracts will first be offered to all students who are still within the terms of their

offer letters (e.g. PhD students in years 1 through 5) and who have performed satisfactorily in any past TA or RA employment.

2. Any operating funds remaining in the TA/RA budget will be awarded competitively on the basis of applications (CV, statement of interest, past supervisor and student evaluations) from interested graduate students. Any graduate student in satisfactory academic standing, who has met program milestones, and will definitely be registered full-time in the period in which they will be working (e.g. an extension has been approved) may apply. The department will not normally award surplus TA/RA positions to MA students in year 3 or beyond or PhD students in year 7 or beyond.

In awarding such positions, the department will use the following criteria, in order of priority:

a. Satisfactory performance at past TA or RA assignments.
b. Teaching needs in undergraduate courses.
c. Satisfactory progress to degree completion by the applicant.
d. Availability of other funding, with priority going to applicants who are not in receipt of a major award.
e. Students who have secured funding outside the department during a prior period when they would otherwise have been within the terms of their offer letter and who now wish to return to department funding.

3. The DGS will endeavour to match TAs to undergraduate courses in their areas of interest and RAs to scholarly projects connected to their own research, but cannot guarantee such matching. If a student declines any reasonable offer of a TA or RA position they forfeit the contract but may reenter the pool in the next contract period without prejudice.

Student-based internships

The department also coordinates work-based internships with external employers like the Alberta Public Service, Canada Public Service, City of Edmonton, and various Indigenous, non-profit, and private sector organizations. These paid, not-for-credit work experience opportunities are available to full-time graduate students in the Department of Political Science.

An internship is considered a practicum placement if the student receives course credit through POL S 802 or 803. Students in the practicum-based MA in Policy Studies program will be given priority for placements that will allow them to fulfill their degree requirements. We work closely with all of our graduate students to increase their chances of successfully competing for internship positions. Should a student be successful in obtaining an internship coordinated by the department, it is subject to consideration as part of the department's financial commitment under the student's letter of offer. While internships are excluded from the terms of the AEGS collective agreement, the Department strongly encourages students to abide by the spirit of the Agreement's cap on weekly work hours (twelve hours of academic-related labour is the University's maximum permitted for full-time students). This may mean declining TA or RA positions and associated funding in order to pursue an internship placement.