

# Guide to Graduate Study in the Department of Philosophy

*(Revised Fall 2019)*



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
**FACULTY OF ARTS**  
Department of Philosophy

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

This Guide outlines the Department of Philosophy's requirements for students entering its MA and PhD programs. These programs are administered in conformity with regulations laid down by FGSR. Students should familiarize themselves with the Department's requirements set forth in this Guide as well as FGSR regulations (available at FGSR's website): <http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/>)

Prospective students interested in applying to the Department of Philosophy's graduate programs will find information on the Department's website, including the following:

- How to Apply: <https://www.ualberta.ca/philosophy/graduate-program/admissions>
- Fees and Financial Support: <https://www.ualberta.ca/philosophy/graduate-program/fees-and-financial-support>
- Graduate Placement Record: <https://www.ualberta.ca/philosophy/graduate-program/placement-record>

### 1. ADMINISTRATION

**The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies (ACG)** serves as the Department's Graduate Coordinator, advising students on issues of financial assistance, appointing PhD Comprehensive Examination Committees Chairs, assisting the Department Chair with the graduate assistantship budget, administering FGSR program regulations, and monitoring the academic progress of all graduate students.

**The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)** supports the ACG in overseeing most aspects of the Graduate Program. The GSC is responsible for making recommendations to FGSR concerning admissions and changes of category; awarding Teaching and Research Assistantships; approving thesis research proposals; and making recommendations to FGSR concerning the composition of Thesis Supervisory Committees and Oral Examination Committees.

**The Awards and Placement Committee** assists current graduate students in applying for awards (e.g., University awards and SSHRC fellowships), and assists graduating PhD students in securing academic employment.

**Graduate Advisors/Supervisors:** Upon entry into the program, every student will be assigned an **interim advisor**, who will then be the first person the student should approach for program-related advice. (There is no presumption that the interim advisor will later become the student's thesis supervisor. Once the student has a thesis supervisor, that person serves as advisor as well.) Thesis advisors/supervisors are assigned after completion of coursework when students are developing their thesis or capstone research projects.

**Annual Meetings:** At the beginning of each year, every student will meet with their interim advisor, or thesis supervisor, and the ACG to discuss the student's course selections or research plans for the upcoming twelve months. Prior to the Annual Meeting, the students will prepare an "Annual Progress Report," which will be shared

with the interim advisor, or supervisor, and ACG. A copy of the Annual Progress Report, amended if needed, will be kept in the student's file. Subsequent changes in the student's program must be discussed with both the ACG and the student's advisor or supervisor.

## **2. THE MA PROGRAM**

The MA in Philosophy can be completed as a thesis-based degree or as a course-based degree. While prospective students have to apply for either the thesis-based or the course-based program, it is possible to change the program based on recommendation or approval by the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies in consultation with the GSC.

There is no language requirement or residency requirement for the degree of MA (thesis-based or course-based).

Students with very little background in Philosophy may be required to enroll in a qualifying year, or as a special student, before being considered eligible for admission to a graduate degree program. Students entering the program with fewer than 12 single-semester courses in Philosophy may be required to take additional courses that the GSC and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies deem appropriate. The GSC may, at its discretion, count courses in other subjects as substituting for Philosophy courses

***Graduate Ethics Training and Professional Development Requirement:*** The University of Alberta requires all graduate students at the University of Alberta to complete 8 hours of Graduate Ethics Training. Those entering during or after Fall 2016 must also complete a Professional Development Requirement (8 hours of professional development activities.) Further information is provided below in Section 4.

### **2.1 Thesis-based MA**

Entering MA students who have completed a BA with a major in philosophy or its equivalent (at least 10 single-semester senior courses in Philosophy) are required to complete **6** single-semester courses (\*18 units of course weight) taken in the first two semesters of study, **a thesis**, and **oral defence**.

#### **2.1.1 Coursework Policies**

The courses taken will be at the 400 or 500 level, at least four of these must be seminar courses (or equivalent) at the 500 level. Required coursework depends on the area of specialization and the undergraduate background of the student. If no courses are available in a student's area of research interest, one Directed Reading course may be substituted for a seminar.

Courses should be selected from those offered by the Philosophy Department unless the GSC has given a student permission to substitute coursework in another department. To qualify, the student must show that the course to be substituted is especially relevant to his or her program of study. (Normally, a recommendation from

the student's interim advisor should be obtained.)

All courses should be discussed with the student's interim advisor prior to the Annual Meeting with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. If mutually agreed, the student's course selection will receive final approval. However, the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, may require any student to amend his/her initial selections to ensure breadth in the student's program of studies, even if this results in the student's having to take more than the minimum number of courses otherwise required.

**Incompletes:** Under normal circumstances, a student will only be allowed grades of "Incomplete" for classes other than Thesis Research courses (numbered 9xx) when facing illness or similar emergency circumstances. If a grade of Incomplete is assigned, the instructor must indicate on the Grade Report form the date by which the course requirements will be met. If an Incomplete has not been cleared by the date shown on the Grade Report form, it will be changed to Incomplete Fail (IN5) by the FGSR. For time limits on Incomplete Grades, consult the Calendar. Students should be aware that outstanding grades of Incomplete may affect their ranking in fellowship competitions and may be regarded as failure to make satisfactory progress.

**Minimum Performance Expectations:** In any course taken for credit a grade of 2.3 is the lowest passing grade. Any student who fails two or more single-semester courses will be asked to withdraw from the program. Students must also maintain minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 throughout the course of the program. In cases where their cumulative GPA falls between 2.3 and 2.7, the Department may request that the student be placed on probation or may ask that the student withdraw. In any case, convocation shall not take place with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.7. Students on academic probation will normally have their departmental funding suspended, and students asked to withdraw from the program will not receive any further funding.

**Colloquia Participation:** In the Fall and Winter semesters, the Department hosts a series of professional colloquia. Regular attendance and participation is expected of all students while they are in residence. Colloquia provide important opportunities (a) to develop expertise in areas not covered in students' course work and (b) to gain facility in professional methods of discussion and debate. These skills are particularly important for students preparing for a career in academia but valuable whatever career path is ultimately chosen.

**Length of Program:** Students usually complete the thesis-based MA within 18 to 24 months. FGSR regulations require that thesis-based MAs be completed within four years of entry into the program.

### **2.1.2 Thesis Proposal Process**

It is the student's responsibility to seek out a potential Thesis Supervisor and Thesis Supervisory committee to help develop a Thesis Research Proposal as soon as possible after coursework is completed, for approval by the GSC.

- **The Thesis Supervisor** must be a continuing member of the Department. With co-supervisors, at least one must be a continuing member of the Department. (Emeriti

professors are not permitted to serve as the sole supervisor.)

- **The Thesis Supervisory Committee** is composed of a Thesis Supervisor and at least one other member, who must be either a continuing member of the Department, a Professor Emeritus of the Department, or possess a PhD in Philosophy. Under some circumstances *at most* one member of the committee may be a person (such as a member of another department) qualified in the field although not satisfying the aforesaid requirements. Even though FGSR does not require Thesis Supervisory Committee for MA students, students in the Department are encourage to work with a Thesis Supervisory Committee.

- **Thesis Research Proposals** vary in length and format depending on the topic area. Nevertheless all proposals should contain a statement of the topic to be explored, address its philosophical significance, and provide a bibliography of texts centrally relevant to the student's prospective thesis. The format to be adopted will be developed in discussion with the student's Thesis Supervisor. The proposed Thesis Supervisor (or Supervisory Committee) must approve the thesis proposal before it is submitted to the GSC. The GSC will then review the proposal to ensure students' competence to carry out the proposed research and the appropriateness of the proposed Thesis Supervisory or Supervisory Committee.

If the direction or content of a student's thesis research changes significantly from that proposed in the thesis research proposal, the student **must** submit a revised thesis research proposal to the GSC and a new proposal for a Thesis Supervisory Committee. Students should be aware that the final oral examination may not be permitted to go forward if the thesis topic differs significantly from that in the most recently approved proposal. In case of doubt, the student should discuss the matter with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies.

The GSC gives due regard to the supervisor's and committee's areas of expertise, experience, other duties that may affect their availability to the student, and any other factors that may be relevant to the successful completion of the student's research project in considering Thesis Research Proposals. Thesis Supervisors must also be approved by FGSR. See the FGSR Graduate Manual: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual>.

### **2.1.3 Thesis Formatting and FGSR Deadlines**

The Department of Philosophy recognizes that acceptable thesis lengths may vary considerably, particularly across different subfields of philosophy. However, in most cases, MA theses will fall within 12,000 and 24,000 words (40-80 pages at 300 words per page), and should rarely exceed 36,000 words (120 pages), exclusive of notes, bibliography, appendices and other supplementary materials.

MA theses must conform to the format approved by FGSR. See the FGSR Graduate Manual for formatting instructions: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/academic-requirements/thesis-requirement-and-preparation>.

FGSR regulations require that a student's thesis be completed within four years of

entry into the MA program. To request an extension, students must submit a petition to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, *supported by a letter from his or her Thesis Supervisor*. The ACG then decides whether to recommend to FGSR that an extension be granted and FGSR makes the final decision. For further information, see the University Calendar. (It may also be possible for students to allow their registration to lapse and then re-apply for admission for purposes of taking their final oral examination only. Note that students must pay a readmission fee and be registered for at least one full term.)

#### **2.1.4 Final Oral Examination**

The Final Oral Examination will be conducted by the student's Thesis Supervisory Committee **plus** one additional arm's length examiner, proposed by the student and his or her supervisor, subject to the approval of the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, and FGSR. Normally, at least four months must elapse between the approval of the thesis proposal by the GSC and the oral examination of the thesis.

For FGSR and University regulations governing Final Oral Examinations, visit: <https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7272#conduct-of-examinations>

### **2.2 Course-based MA**

Entering MA students who have completed a BA with a major in philosophy or its equivalent (at least 10 single-semester senior courses in philosophy) are required to complete **8** single-semester courses (\*24 units in course weight), including **a Capstone Project**. Required coursework depends on the area of specialization and the undergraduate background of the student.

These 8 courses will normally include **6** graduate-level single-semester courses (\*18) taken in the first two semesters of study, **1** (\*3) graduate-level **Directed Reading** course, and **1** (\*3) **Capstone Project** (PHIL 900)

#### **2.2.1 Coursework Policies**

These courses taken will be at the 400 or 500 level, at least four of these must be at the 500 level. Required coursework depends on the area of specialization and the undergraduate background of the student. If no courses are available in a student's area of research interest, one Directed Reading course may be substituted for a seminar.

All courses should be discussed with the student's interim advisor prior to the annual meeting with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. If mutually agreed, the student's course selection will receive final approval. However, the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, may require students to amend their initial selections to ensure breadth in their program of studies, even if this means that a student has to take more than the minimum number of courses otherwise required.

The initial **6** graduate level single-semester courses should be selected from those offered by the Philosophy Department unless the GSC has given a student permission to substitute coursework in another department. To qualify, students must show that

any course to be substituted is especially relevant to their program of study. (Normally, a recommendation from the student's interim advisor should be obtained.)

After completing the initial 6 graduate-level single-semester courses, course-based MA students will enroll in a Directed Reading course (\*3 units of course weight), normally during the following Spring Semester, devoted to research on the topic of their Capstone Project. As a rule, this course will expand upon research already undertaken in previous graduate seminars. The Capstone Project will be completed during a 900-level Research Project course (\*3) immediately following completion of their initial \*21 units of course work, culminating in a research paper of approximately 25-35 pages (at 300 words per page).

**Incompletes:** Under normal circumstances, a student will only be allowed grades of "Incomplete" for classes other than Thesis or Research courses (numbered 9xx) when facing illness or other emergency circumstances. If a grade of Incomplete is assigned, the instructor must indicate on the Grade Report Form the date by which the course requirements will be met. If an Incomplete has not been cleared by the date shown on the Grade Report form, it will be changed to Incomplete Fail (IN5) by the FGSR. For time limits on Incomplete Grades, consult the Calendar. Students should be aware that outstanding grades of Incomplete may affect their ranking in fellowship competitions and may be regarded as failure to make satisfactory progress.

**Minimum Performance Expectations:** In any course taken for credit a grade of 2.3 is the lowest passing grade. Any student who fails two or more single-semester courses will be asked to withdraw from the program. Students must also maintain minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 throughout the course of the program. In cases where their cumulative GPA falls between 2.3 and 2.7, the Department may request that the student be placed on probation or may ask that the student withdraw. In any case, convocation shall not take place with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.7. Students on academic probation will normally have their departmental funding suspended, and students asked to withdraw from the program will not receive any further funding.

**Colloquia Participation:** In the Fall and Winter semesters, the Department provides a series of colloquium talks. Regular attendance and participation is expected of all students while in residence. Colloquia provide important opportunities (a) to develop expertise in areas not covered in students' course work and (b) to gain facility in professional methods of discussion and debate. These skills are particularly important for students preparing for a career in academia but valuable whatever career path is ultimately chosen.

**Length of Program:** Course-based MA degree Candidates will require at least 10 months to complete the requirements for the degree, and many will need a full year. FGSR regulations require that thesis-based MAs be completed within six years of entry into the program.

### **2.2.2 Capstone Project (PHIL 900)**

Before enrolling in the directed reading course (PHIL 596 or 597), students must find a faculty member to serve as their Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor will be



selected by the student in consultation with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. They will usually be the same person as the instructor for the directed reading course but need not be. In cases where they are, the Academic Advisor will fill out the “Graduate Student Directed Reading Course” form, and return it to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. If the Academic Advisor is not the instructor for the course, the instructor will fill out the form and return it to the Academic Advisor.

The directed reading course is intended to prepare students to complete their capstone research projects. Thus course work should focus on (i) gaining mastery of the philosophical literature relevant to the student’s project, (ii) assessing the philosophical significance of the issues under discussion in that literature, and (iii) developing a detailed outline of the response to be elaborated and defended in the student’s Capstone Research project.

The capstone research project allows the student to research and explore a topic covered in the preceding course work in greater depth. Capstone research projects are expected to generate research papers of approximately 25-35 pages (at 300 words per page), which will be evaluated by the Academic Advisor and a second member of the Department’s faculty chosen by the student’s Academic Advisor.

Students are not eligible for convocation until the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, has reported to FGSR that all courses and the capstone project have been successfully completed. This information must be received and verified by the FGSR before the student’s name is placed on the convocation list. Failure to meet the deadlines in the Academic Schedule will result in a delay in awarding the degree.

### **3. THE PhD PROGRAM**

#### **3.1 Course Selection**

As noted above, every student entering the PhD program will be assigned an interim advisor, who will then be the first person the student should approach for program-related advice until a thesis supervisor has been selected and agreed. At the beginning of each year, every student will meet with their interim advisor, or thesis supervisor, and the ACG to discuss the student’s course selections or research plans for the upcoming twelve months. Prior to the Annual Meeting, the students will prepare an “Annual Progress Report,” which will be shared with the interim advisor, or supervisor, and ACG. A copy of the Annual Progress Report, amended if needed, will be kept in the student’s file.

The courses taken will be at the 400 or 500 level, and at least six of these must be seminar courses (or equivalent) at the 500 level. Required coursework depends on the area of specialization and the undergraduate background of the student. If no courses are available in a student’s area of research interest, one Directed Reading course may be substituted for a seminar.

Students entering the program with an MA are normally required to take **9** single-semester seminar courses at the 500 level during their first 24 months in the program,

with at least five of those in the first two terms. Students entering the program without an MA are normally required to take **12** single-semester courses in their first 20 months, nine of which must be seminar courses at the 500 level.

Courses should generally be selected from those offered by the Philosophy Department. Students' course selections should ensure breadth across sub-disciplines as well as depth in particular areas of interest. In special cases, the GSC may grant permission to substitute coursework in another department, provided that the student can show that the course to be substituted is especially relevant to his or her program of study. (Normally, a recommendation from the student's interim advisor should be obtained.)

**Graduate Ethics Training and Professional Development Requirement:** The University of Alberta requires all graduate students at the University of Alberta to complete 8 hours of Graduate Ethics Training. Those entering during or after Fall 2016 must also complete a Professional Development Requirement (8 hours of professional development activities.) Further information is provided below in Section 4.

### **3.1.2 Course Work Policies and Residency**

**Minimum Course & GPA Achievement:** In any course taken for credit a grade of 2.3 is the lowest passing grade. Any student who fails two or more single-semester courses will be required to withdraw from the program. Students must also maintain minimum cumulative GPA of 2.7 throughout the course of the program. In cases where their cumulative GPA falls between 2.3 and 2.7, the Department may request that the student be placed on probation or may require that the student withdraw. In any case, convocation shall not take place with a cumulative grade point average of less than 2.7. Students on academic probation will normally have their departmental funding suspended.

**Incompletes:** Under normal circumstances, a student will only be allowed grades of "Incomplete" for classes other than Thesis Research courses (numbered 9xx) when facing illness or similar emergency circumstances. If a grade of Incomplete is assigned, the instructor must indicate on the Grade Report form the date by which the course requirements will be met. If an Incomplete has not been cleared by the date shown on the Grade Report form, it will be changed to Incomplete Fail (IN5) by the FGSR. For time limits on Incomplete Grades, consult the Calendar. Students should be aware that outstanding grades of Incomplete may affect their ranking in fellowship competitions and may be regarded as failure to make satisfactory progress. A student should have completed all courses by May 1 in order to take up an intersession assistantship.

**Audit Requirement:** PhD students who have finished their required coursework are expected to register to audit at least one course each academic year, assuming they are in Edmonton. Students who wish that an audited course be registered on their transcript must complete a "Course Audit" form. All official audits are subject to approval by FGSR. The Dean of FGSR may deny an audit if (1) the student is not making satisfactory progress in their degree, (2) the relevance of the course to be audited to the student's program is not clear, (3) the student has already audited three courses. Students are encouraged to discuss their audit plan with their (Interim)

Supervisor and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, e.g., at the Annual Meeting.

**Language Requirement:** There is no general language requirement for the PhD program but PhD students whose field of research involves primary source material in a language other than English **may** be required by the GSC to satisfy a Language Requirement. Students should speak to their interim advisor or the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies about language requirements at their annual meeting.

**Colloquia Participation:** In the Fall and Winter semesters, the Department provides a series of colloquia talks. Regular attendance and participation is expected of all students while in residence. Colloquia provide important opportunities (a) to develop expertise in areas not covered in students' course work and (b) to gain facility in professional methods of discussion and debate. These skills are particularly important for students preparing for a career in academia but valuable whatever career path is ultimately chosen.

**Residency Requirement:** There is a residency requirement of one year of full-time attendance for the PhD program.

### 3.2 PhD Comprehensive Requirements

Students are required by the Department to satisfy three PhD Comprehensive Requirements. The Department adheres to the principle that the purpose of Comprehensive Requirements is to establish that the candidate has the breadth of background knowledge requisite for teaching senior (i.e. above 100 level) undergraduate courses in the fields. In each field, a judicious combination of depth and breadth is required.

#### 3.2.1 Comprehensive Areas

To ensure breadth, no more than two of the three requirements required may be fulfilled in any one group.

<p><b>A:</b> Ancient Philosophy Medieval Philosophy 17th &amp; 18th Century Philosophy 19th &amp; Early 20th Century Philosophy 20th Century Analytic Philosophy 20th Century Continental Philosophy</p>	<p><b>C:</b> Epistemology Metaphysics Philosophy of Science</p>
<p><b>B:</b> Logic Philosophy of Language Philosophy of Mind</p>	<p><b>D:</b> Aesthetics Ethics Social and Political Philosophy Feminist Philosophy Philosophy of Religion</p>

### **3.2.2 Comprehensive Committees**

Comprehensive Requirements in each area are administered by the Chair of each Comprehensive Committee. Students who have decided to satisfy a comprehensive requirement in an area should contact the Chair of the committee for that area to discuss their level of preparation. Committee Chairs may require students to audit appropriate undergraduate level courses if they have not had a basic undergraduate course in the area. Committee Chairs are responsible for putting together an examining committee consisting of two additional members.

### **3.2.3 Options for Satisfying Comprehensive Requirements.**

A candidate may satisfy the Comprehensive Requirement in a given field in any of the following ways:

**1. Standard Examination Method [only for Logic]:** In this case, a standard three or four hour written examination will be administered, followed by the Oral Examination, which will normally take place within a week. Oral examinations follow the same procedure as for the take-home examination method. The decision on a particular examination follows the same guidelines as for the take-home examination method. This method is only available for the Logic Comprehensive.

**2. Course Method:** A student may be deemed to have passed a Comprehensive Requirement in an area on the basis of past work, usually involving a combination of courses. The minimum requirement is two courses at the 500 level (or the equivalent at other institutions), one of which must be a PHIL course taken in the Department. However, sometimes two courses alone will not be sufficiently comprehensive to satisfy the spirit of the requirement. Other courses from previous degrees, other departments and other universities, including undergraduate courses, may be considered. Such courses must be passed with a grade of B+ or better (or the equivalent). Courses taught, papers published or presented professionally, and active participation in rigorous reading groups, may also be considered.

Students should submit evidence of the contents of previous work, such as course syllabi, publications, reading lists, or other materials to the relevant Comprehensive Committee Chair. Decisions regarding the satisfaction of the comprehensive requirement by course method will be made by the Chair of that committee and two other committee members chosen by the Chair among eligible faculty members. In all cases, the committee must use their judgment to ascertain that the aims of the requirement have been satisfied. In very exceptional cases, such as a record of publication in reputable, refereed journals, the Chair of the comprehensive committee may waive the requirement of 500-level courses taken in the Department.

The course method is limited to two comprehensive requirement. No course may be used for more than one comprehensive requirement by the course method. Rejection of a candidate's course proposal does not constitute failure of the comprehensive requirement.

**3. Take-Home Examination Method:** In this case, a take-home examination (requiring the student to write answers to at least three questions) with a strict two-week time limit will be administered, followed by the Oral Examination, which will

normally take place within one week.

**Preliminary Meetings:** Any student taking a take-home examination should contact the Chair of that comprehensive committee to arrange a Preliminary Meeting. The Chair will call upon two other eligible faculty members to form a comprehensive examining committee. The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to set a list of readings and topics for which the candidate is to be responsible. Although the chair will give special consideration to the topics and readings suggested by the student, the committee is not bound by the student's suggestions. If the committee believes that important topics or readings central to the area chosen by the student have been neglected, changes to the reading list may be requested at the Preliminary Meeting.

**Time Limits:** The written portion of any Comprehensive Examination must be completed within **10 weeks** of the date of the Preliminary Meeting unless illness or other exigencies make it necessary to extend the deadline. Normally, the Oral Examination will be held within **10 days** of submission of the written material, however, it may be delayed until the committee is available. It is expected that take-home and standard examinations will be completed within one semester. Failure to complete a comprehensive examination within the allotted period constitutes a failure of the examination. For expected timelines for completing the Comprehensive Requirements, see section 7.2.4.

**Oral Examination:** Satisfying comprehensive requirements by the take-home or standard examination methods include an Oral Examination. This is the last component of the Comprehensive Examination, and should occur no later than **10 days** after the submission of the written portion of the examination (except when delays occur owing to illness, difficulties of scheduling, etc.).

Questions at the Oral Examination are **not** restricted to topics addressed by the student in the preceding part of the examination. A candidate must be able to exhibit knowledge concerning the other readings and topics agreed upon at the Preliminary Meeting, as well as a sufficiently broad knowledge of the field of the Comprehensive, appropriate to teaching a senior undergraduate course.

**Evaluation of Student Performance:** The decision on a particular examination (in the case of the take-home and standard examination methods) will be either to pass or fail the student. A student will pass if there is not more than one dissenting vote.

A satisfactory performance on **both** parts of the Comprehensive Examination is required for the student to pass unless, in the judgement of the examiners, the student's performance on one part is strong enough to compensate for his or her borderline performance on the other. Consequently, if in the judgment of the examiners, the student's performance on the written part is less than borderline, with one or more of the written answers being a clear failure, the student has failed the Comprehensive Examination and no Oral Examination is conducted.

In the case of the take-home method, if in the judgment of the examiners, the oral performance and at least one written answer are clearly of passing standard and the remaining written answers are borderline, the examiners may ask for some or all of

the borderline answers to be resubmitted within two weeks. After receiving this resubmission, the committee reaches a final decision. There is no oral examination on the resubmitted papers. In this special case, the 10-week deadline for completion of the examination is extended by two weeks.

### **3.2.4 Failed Comprehensive Examinations**

A candidate is permitted at most up to two failed attempts to pass Comprehensive examinations. A candidate may retake an examination in a particular area. After a third failed attempt, a candidate will be asked to withdraw from the program. Students should consult the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies about their options immediately should they fail an attempt to pass a Comprehensive Examination.

### **3.3 Thesis Proposal Process**

It is the student's responsibility to seek out a potential Thesis Supervisor and Thesis Supervisory Committee to help develop a Thesis Research Proposal as soon as possible after coursework is completed, for approval by the GSC.

- **The Thesis Supervisor** must be a continuing member of the Department. With co-supervisors, at least one must be a continuing member of the Department. (Emeriti professors are not permitted to serve as the sole supervisor.)

- **The Thesis Supervisory Committee** is composed of a Thesis Supervisor and at least two other members, who must be either continuing members of the Department, Professor Emeriti of the Department, or possess a PhD in Philosophy. Under some circumstances *at most* one member of the committee may be a person (such as a member of another department) qualified in the field although not satisfying the aforesaid requirements.

- **Thesis Research Proposals** will vary in length and format depending on the topic area. Nevertheless all proposals should contain a statement of the topic to be explored, address its philosophical significance, and provide a bibliography of texts centrally relevant to the student's prospective thesis. A tentative chapter breakdown may also be provided. The format to be adopted will be developed in discussion with the student's Thesis Supervisor. The proposed Thesis Supervisor must approve the thesis proposal before it is submitted to the GSC. The GSC will then review the proposal to ensure students' competence to carry out the proposed research and the appropriateness of the proposed Thesis Supervisory Committee.

The GSC gives due regard to the supervisor's and committee's areas of expertise, experience, other duties that may affect their availability to the student, and any other factors that may be relevant to the successful completion of the student's research project in considering Thesis Research Proposals. Thesis Supervisory Committees must **also** be approved by FGSR. See the FGSR Graduate Manual: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual>.

If the direction or content of a student's thesis research changes significantly from that proposed in the thesis research proposal, the student must submit to the GSC a revised thesis research proposal and a new proposal for a Thesis Supervisory

Committee. Students should be aware that the final oral examination may not be permitted to go forward if the thesis topic differs significantly from that in the last approved proposal. In case of doubt, the student should discuss the matter with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies.

### **3.4 PhD Oral Candidacy Examination**

The PhD Oral Candidacy Examination should be taken within **eight months** of the completion of the Comprehensive Examinations, and at least six months before the student's final (oral) Dissertation Defence. For expected timelines for completing the Candidacy Examination, see section 7.2.4. FGSR policies stipulates that PhD Oral Candidacy Examinations shall test a candidate's knowledge of subjects relevant to their fields of research.

At least two weeks prior to the examination, the student must provide the Examining Committee with a candidacy paper. The candidacy paper will normally consists of a draft chapter of the dissertation and should include a revised proposal that takes into account the development of the project since the submission of the original proposal as well as an updated bibliography.

The examination will be conducted by the Thesis Supervisory Committee plus two arm's length examiners. Normally at least one of the arm's length examiner will be from outside the Department. A student may pass only if there is not more than one dissenting vote.

#### **3.4.1 Advancement to the PhD Candidacy**

When a candidate has satisfied the Language Requirement (if any), the GET and PD Requirements (see Section 4), the Comprehensive Requirements, and has passed the PhD Oral Candidacy Examination, the Department will send a notice to the FGSR indicating successful completion of the candidacy and all program requirements save for the thesis.

### **3.5 Thesis Formatting and FGSR Deadlines**

The Department recognizes that acceptable thesis lengths may vary considerably, particularly across different subfields of philosophy. However, in most cases, a PhD thesis will fall within 36,000 and 75,000 words (120 and 250 pages at 300 words per page), and should rarely exceed 90 000 words (300 pages), exclusive of notes, bibliography, appendices and other supplementary materials.

PhD theses must conform to the format approved by FGSR. See the FGSR Graduate Manual for formatting instructions: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/academic-requirements/thesis-requirement-and-preparation>.

FGSR regulations require that a student's thesis be completed within **6 years** of entry into the PhD program. Students seeking an extension of this deadline must submit their petitions to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, *supported by a letter from their Thesis Supervisors*. The ACG then decides whether to recommend to FGSR that

an extension be granted and FGSR makes the final decision. Students should consult the University Calendar concerning the conditions under which extensions may be granted.

### **3.5.1 Final Oral Examination**

The Final Oral Examination will be conducted by the Supervisory Committee plus at least two arm's length examiners, at least one of whom shall be a reader or examiner external to the University and recognized as an authority in the special field of research of the candidate. The two additional examiners are recommended by the Supervisor in consultation with the candidate and the Supervisory Committee and are subject to the approval of the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, and FGSR. (FGSR has a number of regulations which may disallow the selection of external examiners who have a past or current relationship with either the candidates or their supervisors. When there is any doubt about the eligibility of an external examiner, the ACG, and, if necessary, the Associate Dean of FGSR should be consulted.) The examining committee will be chaired by a Department member who is not an examiner. The Chair will ensure that all applicable FGSR and Department regulations are respected, and that the rights of the candidate and the examiners are safeguarded.

In order for the examination to be held, each Supervisory Committee member must declare in writing to the supervisor that the thesis is of adequate substance to proceed to the Final Oral Examination.

For FGSR and University regulations governing Final Oral Examinations, visit: <https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=29&navoid=7272#conduct-of-examinations>

## **4. THE GRADUATE ETHICS TRAINING REQUIREMENT (GET) AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENT (PDR)**

### **4.1 Graduate Ethics Training Requirement**

Graduate degree requirements include a mandatory component that provides training in the areas of academic integrity and ethics. For general information on this requirement see: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/academic-requirements/ethics>. The Department is required by FGSR to verify completion of the requirement on the student's program completion form at the end of a student's program.

All graduate students must complete **8 hours** of structured academic activity to meet this requirement. The requirement has two components: the FGSR training component and the Department training component and

(1) The **FGSR training component** consists of a web-based course (equivalent to **5 hours** of training) which provides the student with a print out of their test results. A copy of the printed score sheet must be provided to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. Students completing the FGSR web-based course must still complete a further **3 hours** of training through the Department.



(2) The **Department Training Component** consists of an eClass course where students read about issues affecting the profession and contribute to the discussion by posting responses. This component can be used in conjunction with the FGSR training component to satisfy the remaining **3 hours** of training or it can be used to satisfy all **8 hours** of training. Topics covered include underrepresentation in the profession, costs of journals and predatory publishing, implicit bias, and sexual harassment. Detailed instructions are available at the beginning of the eClass course. To enroll, contact the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. The Department can also organize workshops that satisfy portions of the GET requirements, for example Sexual Assault Education and Awareness Workshops.

#### **4.2 Professional Development Requirement**

All graduate students entering a graduate program in or after Fall 2016 must fulfill this requirement. The PDR includes an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and the completion of **8 hours** of professional development activities inspired by your career plan. An IDP should be completed in students' first semesters and approved by their interim advisors and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. Completion deadlines for the IDP part of the requirement are as follows:

- Within 12 months of program commencement for full-time MA students
- Within 18 months of program's commencement for full-time PhD students

The IDP workbook can be accessed via this link: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professionaldevelopment/professional-development-requirement/individual-development-plan>.

FGSR offers workshops (both in person and online) to help students create their IDPs: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/events/idp-sessions> (Note: these sessions count as PD activities).

Students can complete this requirement by participating in activities proposed or inspired by their IDPs and approved by their interim advisors or supervisors and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. To help you navigate the many PD opportunities available to you, FGSR compiled a PD Opportunities guide. The 8 hours of PD activities must be completed by the time of degree completion for master's student and within the first 3 years for doctoral students.

### **5. QUALIFYING YEAR STUDENTS**

Students without sufficient background in philosophy (normally fewer than 8 single-semester courses in Philosophy or equivalent) may be admitted to the graduate program as Qualifying Year Students if they are judged to show sufficient promise in Philosophy. (The GSC may at its discretion count courses in other subjects as substituting for Philosophy courses). During the Qualifying Year, students take additional Philosophy courses so as to bring their backgrounds up to a level

appropriate for admission to the MA program. Time spent in residence and fees paid during the Qualifying Year are not applicable toward any subsequent degree program. The normal course requirement for a full-time Qualifying Year Student is **8** single-semester courses.

In order to be considered for advancement to the MA program, Qualifying Year Students must achieve a GPA of at least 3.3 in courses required during the Qualifying Year. No student who receives a grade of 2.7 or less in more than two courses (or equivalent) shall be considered for advancement. Recommendations for advancement are subject to the approval of FGSR.

The Department normally does not provide financial assistance for students in the Qualifying Year. Further information concerning financial assistance may be found below or on the Department's website.

## **6. PART TIME REGISTRATION AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

**Part-Time Students:** Graduate students may register as part-time students. For the PhD, however, they must meet the Department's requirement of one year in residence, (an academic year being defined by FGSR as the 8-month period from September through April). Changes or exceptions to the departmental residence requirement must be submitted to the Dean, FGSR for approval. Students who are admitted to the MA or PhD program and who initially register as full-time students in these programs must register full-time for the remainder of their program. The Department may be able to provide financial assistance for part-time students in some circumstances.

**Temporary Absences from the Program:** Students in the thesis-based MA program and in the PhD program must be continuously registered and pay tuition until program completion, except during a term in which a leave of absence has been granted by FGSR. Failure to do so will necessitate readmission to the program and the payment of a readmission fee. Students should consult the University Calendar to determine the best plan for their particular circumstances. Students who are receiving support must consult with the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, before taking a temporary absence; deferral of support may be possible, but should not be presumed.

## **7. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

There is a variety of sources of government, university and departmental support that are offered on a competitive basis. Normally only to full-time students are eligible for such support. Applicants will be automatically considered for nomination to University entrance scholarships and recruitment funds. Canadians and permanent residents are expected to apply for SSHRC fellowships each year they are eligible. Other University awards, which require special applications, will be advertised by the Awards and Placement Committee. **All students are required to apply for those awards for which they are eligible** before they can be considered for departmental support, and their continued support may be jeopardized by failure to apply for awards for which they may be eligible. Students will be reminded each year of relevant deadlines for awards. However, it is the student's responsibility to initiate such applications in

consultation with their Interim Advisor or Supervisor, the Chair of Awards and Placement, and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies.

### **7.1 Graduate Assistantships**

Graduate assistantships are normally awarded by the Department only to full-time students. New applicants and continuing students are automatically considered for graduate assistantships. Graduate assistantships are awarded on the basis of a candidate's academic qualifications.

A Graduate Assistant's duties amount to an average of no more than **12 hours** per week.

**Types of Graduate Assistantships:** There are two types of graduate assistantships. Graduate teaching assistants assist with a course being offered by a faculty member or teach a course independently as the principal instructor. Assisting with a course usually involves leading discussion groups, grading of assignments, and sometimes some lecturing. Graduate research assistants are normally assigned to a faculty member holding an agency grant or a research chair. Specific duties are assigned by the faculty member and can involve producing literature reviews, reviewing manuscripts for publication, copy-editing, and so on. Failure to perform one's duties in the timeframe assigned can result in withdrawal of support.

In addition to teaching assistantships and research assistantships, teaching a course as principal instructor is an option for senior PhD students. Given the workload and compensation received (equivalent to Fall term or Winter term), Spring session teaching counts as 4 months of support.

No MA candidate may hold an assistantship for more than one year after the completion of required course work. A PhD candidate may not normally hold an assistantship for more than two years after the completion of the Oral Candidacy Examination, except when the program is interrupted by extra duties.

### **7.2 Departmental Requirements for the Renewal of Assistantships**

Renewal of assistantships from year to year depends on the availability to the Department of necessary funds and on satisfactory academic progress. Students who are required to take extra courses or who enter the program in January should consult with the ACG concerning expectations for satisfactory progression through the degree requirements.

Students whose performance fails to meet expectations may find themselves subject to review by the GSC and loss of departmental financial support.

#### **7.2.1 Department Regulations Applicable to all Graduate Students:**

(1) Students are considered to be supported for a term just in case they receive financial support from any granting source officially in the business of supporting graduate students at (at least) the amount they would receive from a teaching or

research assistantship. Included sources are SSHRC, the Province of Alberta, the University of Alberta, and the Department. If a student is supported, but not to the extent equivalent to an assistantship, the time he or she is considered to be on support will be reduced proportionally. Students who support themselves by employment other than an assistantship, or through bursaries or personal savings are not deemed to be supported.

(2) Students who are eligible for renewal of an assistantship and who have taken at least four graduate courses at the University of Alberta in their previous two terms will normally not be considered to be making satisfactory academic progress if their grade average for those two terms is less than 3.5.

(3) Students may opt to support themselves by taking on teaching duties for another department or faculty at the University of Alberta, or at other colleges and universities, while foregoing their scheduled assistantships in the Department. Normally relevant deadlines for completing program requirements (see below) will be extended accordingly and assistantships may be deferred accordingly. However, it is essential that students consult with and provide as much advance notice as possible to the ACG as deferring of assistantships may, in rare circumstances, not be possible given the Department's future commitments.

(4) Any student on financial support from fellowships, scholarships or assistantships should discuss in advance with his or her Interim Advisor or Supervisor any plans to engage in extra employment. The ACG should be notified. Students should be aware that departmental support through assistantships can be withdrawn if outside employment is judged to interfere with academic progress. Further, the Department is usually asked by outside funding agencies to verify that the student has limited outside employment in accordance with certain regulations. The Department may withhold such confirmation if it judges the regulations are being violated.

(5) The Department reserves the right to terminate, or not renew, an assistantship at any time in a student's program if a student is found to violate the Code of Student Conduct by committing an academic or a non-academic offence. (See <https://www.ualberta.ca/governance/resources/policies-standards-and-codes-of-conduct/code-of-student-behaviour> for a current version of the Code.) In accordance with the definition of plagiarism, no student shall submit the words, ideas, images, or data of another person as the student's own in any academic writing, essay, thesis or thesis proposal, research report, project, assignment or examination, including comprehensive and candidacy examinations, and preliminary drafts of work submitted for discussion and criticism as well as final versions of work submitted for evaluation.

### **7.2.2 Department Regulations Specific to MA students:**

(1) The Department in most cases admits MA students to the thesis-based program with a funding guarantee of a cumulative total of 16 months. Students who are required to take six courses must complete at least five in their first two terms (not including the intersession).

(2) The Department in most cases admits MA students to the course-based program with a funding guarantee of a cumulative total of 8 months. Students who are required

to take six courses must complete at least five in their first two terms (not including the intersession).

### **7.2.3 Department Regulations Specific to PhD students:**

(1) The Department in most cases admits PhD students with a funding guarantee of a cumulative total of 48 months. There is no further commitment on the Department's part.

(2) PhD students who entered the program with an MA and who are eligible for renewal of an assistantship are normally expected to have completed all the requirements for candidacy, excepting their thesis proposals (i.e. course requirements, three comprehensive examinations, and any foreign language competency test) within 20 months of entry into the program. For PhD students who entered the program without an MA, completion of these requirements is normally expected within 24 months. If a student fails to meet the appropriate requirement within four months of the specified period, his or her performance will be reviewed by the GSC; support may be suspended until the requirements are met or may be withdrawn entirely. Allowance will be made for students who have been required to take or teach extra courses, and allowances may be made for failed comprehensive examinations for students whose progress has otherwise been clearly satisfactory. Delays due to difficulties of scheduling will not count against the student.

(3) A PhD student who entered the program with an MA and has not passed the candidacy examination within 32 months may be denied further departmental support until the candidacy examination is passed. A PhD student who entered the program without an MA and has not passed the candidacy examination within 36 months will be denied further departmental support until the candidacy examination is passed. Allowance will be made for students who have been required to take or teach extra courses, and allowances may be made for failed comprehensive examinations for students whose progress has otherwise been clearly satisfactory. Delays due to difficulties of scheduling will not count against the student.

(4) If a PhD student is asked to teach a course for one term prior to candidacy, this is counted as a term on financial support. If a student teaches more than one term before candidacy, only one of these terms is counted as a term on financial support. The Department will try to keep to a minimum requests for students to teach before candidacy. Terms in which the student teaches in this Department after candidacy are counted as terms on support. In order to allow for supplementation of income in special circumstances, a student who is making good progress may be permitted to teach one course as a sessional instructor while performing full-time assistantship duties. In such cases, the term will count as a term on support. Students should be aware that if progress appears to be impaired by such duties, FGSR is unlikely to consider the extra duties as grounds for an extension.

## 7.2.4 Expected Progression To Degree

### Thesis-based MA

<b>Year 1</b>	
<i>Fall</i>	3 courses
<i>Winter</i>	3 courses
<i>Spring/ Summer</i>	n/a
<b>Year 2</b>	
<i>Fall</i>	Thesis proposal and thesis
<i>Winter</i>	Thesis and defence

### Course-based MA

<b>Year 1</b>	
<i>Fall</i>	3 courses
<i>Winter</i>	3 courses
<i>Spring</i>	Reading course
<i>Summer</i>	Capstone project

### PhD

	<b>with MA</b>	<b>without MA</b>
<b>Year 1</b>		
<i>Fall</i>	3 courses	3 courses
<i>Winter</i>	3 courses	3 courses
<i>Spring/ Summer</i>	n/a	n/a
<b>Year 2</b>		
<i>Fall</i>	3 courses (+2 comprehensives by course method)	3 courses
<i>Winter</i>	Take-home comprehensive	3 courses (+ 2 comprehensives by course method)
<i>Spring/ Summer</i>	n/a	n/a
<b>Year 3</b>		
<i>Fall</i>	Thesis proposal	Take-home comprehensive
<i>// Winter</i>	Candidacy examination	Thesis proposal
<i>Spring/ Summer</i>	n/a	n/a
<b>Year 4</b>		
<i>Fall</i>	Thesis	Candidacy examination
<i>Winter</i>	Thesis	Thesis
<i>Spring/ Summer</i>	Thesis	Thesis
<b>Year 5</b>		
<i>Fall</i>	Thesis defence	Thesis
<i>Winter</i>	n/a	Thesis defence

## **8. APPEALS**

Procedures for appeals of certain decisions on individual cases exist within the University. Details are available from the University Calendar or the Chair of the Department. Procedures also exist for appeals of decisions on individual cases based on the Department's internal regulations. Details are available from the Chair of the Department or the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies.