

GRADUATE HANDBOOK
Department of Philosophy
Florida State University
(Revised April 2018)

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1. ADMISSION

The department encourages students who are interested in a Ph.D. program to enroll directly in that program. The department will also admit students into the M.A. program.

To be admitted to either program, a student must ordinarily attain a total score of at least 300 (verbal plus quantitative, new scale) on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and must ordinarily have had at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) during the last two years as an undergraduate student (or graduate student, if applicable). Satisfaction of these requirements is, of course, not a guarantee of admission; indeed the typical student to whom we make an offer of admission has significantly higher GRE scores and GPA than these minimum requirements. Occasionally, however, an applicant who fails to meet these requirements, but who possesses special qualifications, may be admitted. The applicant's baccalaureate degree need not be in philosophy, but, unless the circumstances are exceptional, he or she should have completed some coursework in philosophy.

To receive applications for admission to the program and to the university, please contact the Department of Philosophy, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-1500 (Telephone 850-644-1483).

Further information about the Florida State University may be obtained at fsu.edu Further information about the Department of Philosophy may be obtained at philosophy.fsu.edu

2. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A number of teaching assistantships, carrying taxable stipends, are available to currently enrolled graduate students and to new applicants. A small number of fellowships are also available. Students may apply for assistantships and fellowships by completing the departmental application for admission (see above).

Applications for financial assistance will not be considered until all of a student's application material has been received by the department. To receive priority for teaching assistantships and fellowships, completed applications should be received by **January 10**. Further teaching assistantships may be available for applications received by **March 31**.

Information on other forms of financial assistance (grants and loans) may be obtained at financialaid.fsu.edu

3. M.A. DEGREE

The department offers a thesis M.A. and an M.A. by examination. The thesis option requires the completion of an M.A. thesis (see 3.2 F below), and the examination option requires the completion of additional coursework and an M.A. examination (see 3.2 G below).

3.1 *M.A. Committee*

In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, students will select a major professor toward the end of the first year in residence. In consultation with the major professor, a minimum of two other faculty members will be selected to form the student's M.A. committee. (One member may be from outside the department of philosophy if appropriate for the student's area of study.) The M.A. committee will be responsible either for supervising the M.A. thesis (in which case the major professor serves as chair of the thesis committee and the candidate's thesis advisor) or administering the M.A. examination, depending upon which option the student selects. All members of the student's M.A. committee must have graduate faculty status.

3.2 *Requirements for the M.A.*

A. Cumulative grade point average, incompletes, and evaluation

Each M.A. student must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. Failure to maintain a satisfactory grade point average is a ground for dismissal from the program.

A grade of 'I' ('incomplete') may be given in a course only if the student presents to the instructor a reasonable excuse for not completing course assignments. If there is no agreement with the instructor before grades are due that a grade of 'I' will be given, the student will receive a failing grade. Incompletes may not be extended without the approval of the department. A request for an extension, with justification, should be in the hands of the instructor of record at least 3 weeks before the expiration of the incomplete.

At the end of each Spring semester, all students must prepare a Student Activity Report describing their academic achievements for the preceding year. The department faculty evaluate each student's progress in a meeting normally held during the week in which Spring grades are due. Students then receive a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies reporting the results of this evaluation.

B. Logic requirement

All M.A. students are required to establish qualification in modern logic by passing Modern Logic I (PHI 5135) with a grade of "B-" or better. (PHI 3130 or an equivalent course in symbolic logic is a prerequisite.) Students who do not initially receive at least a "B-" may retake the course only once (under the tutorial number PHI 5998: see section 5). Failure to pass the course on the second attempt constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program (see section 7).

C. Required core courses

- I. PHI 5665, Core Course in Ethics.
- II. PHI 5555, Core Course in Metaphysics & Epistemology.

All M.A. students are required to pass each of these courses with a grade of “B” or better. Students may retake either of these courses only once (under tutorial PHI 5998: see section 5). Failure to achieve a "B" in either course on the second attempt constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program (see section 7).

D. History requirement

All M.A. students must satisfy a history of philosophy requirement as follows: at least two seminars in different historical periods (e.g., one in Ancient philosophy and one in Modern philosophy). Seminars will be identified by the instructor as fulfilling one of these areas.

E. Breadth requirement

In addition to taking the two seminars required to meet the history requirement, all M.A. students must take at least one seminar in each of two areas: (i) contemporary metaphysics/philosophy of mind/epistemology, and (ii) value theory.

F. Thesis M.A.

1. Credit hour requirements: 33 hours

- 18 hours out of the total 33 must be letter-graded philosophy seminars (these include the 12 seminar hours taken to fulfill the history and breadth requirements; students may repeat a given seminar number up to 3 times (for a total of 9 hours), but repetition beyond this requires departmental approval). (See also section 5.)
- 6 hours out of the total 33 must be thesis hours (PHI 5971).

The logic and core course requirements total 9 hours; thus these courses combined with the required seminar and thesis hours yield the required total of 33 hours. Students may, of course, take additional hours.

2. Thesis prospectus

During the student’s second year in residence, the student is responsible for preparing a thesis prospectus to be approved by every member of the M.A. committee. The thesis prospectus should include a description and defense of a viable research project (5-10 pages) and a bibliography. A graduate seminar paper may be the basis of the prospectus.

3. Thesis

A student’s thesis committee is charged with guiding the M.A. candidate through the successful completion of an original piece of philosophical work of normally 50-100 pages in length. The student must orally defend the thesis before being awarded the M.A.

The following procedures are to govern the preparation and defense of the thesis:

1. Copies of the thesis in the form in which the candidate's thesis advisor and the candidate expect it to be defended shall be made available to all members of the thesis committee, and placed in the departmental office, at least 4 weeks prior to the date of the oral defense.
2. An announcement of the place and time of the oral defense shall be presented to the Office of Graduate Studies and posted around the department at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the oral defense.

G. M.A. by Examination

1. Credit hour requirements: 33 hours

21 hours out of the total 33 must be letter-graded philosophy seminars (these include the 12 seminar hours taken to fulfill the history and breadth requirements; students may repeat a given seminar number up to 3 times (for a total of 9 hours), but repetition beyond this requires departmental approval). (See also section 6.)

The logic and core course requirements total 9 hours; thus these courses combined with the required seminar hours total 30 hours, which leaves only 3 further hours required.

2. M.A. Examination

Each student should select a topic to be the focus of either a four-hour closed book examination, or a take-home examination plus oral defense, at the discretion of the student's M.A. committee.

Written examinations may be given in any semester at a time convenient to both the student and the committee, but leaving a sufficient period for the result to be determined, and transmitted to the student, prior to the deadline for grade submission.

The M.A. examination may be retaken only once. Failure to pass the examination on the second attempt constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program (see section 7).

Students should register for the M.A. examination course (PHI 8966; zero hours) at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to take their M.A. examination.

H. Language requirement

Proficiency in a foreign language demonstrated by satisfactory performance on the Graduate School Foreign Language Test of the Educational Testing Service, or certification by the appropriate language department, or completion of twelve (12) semester hours in a foreign language with an average grade of at least 3.0 ('B'), or four years of a single language in high school.

I. University-wide requirements

Students should consult the current edition of the Florida State University *General Bulletin (Graduate Edition)* to ascertain additional university-wide requirements.

4. Ph.D. DEGREE

Candidates for the Ph.D. fall into three categories:

- (i) Those without an M.A. in philosophy who are admitted directly to the Ph.D. program
- (ii) Those who were admitted to the M.A. program, have completed all of their M.A. requirements (or are about to), and now seek to continue to the Ph.D.
- (iii) Those with an M.A. in philosophy from another institution

The department's M.A. degree is intended to constitute the first part of the requirement for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D.; thus students in category (i) should first pursue, and gain, the M.A. degree (they should consult with their major professor concerning whether to select the thesis or examination option).

Students in category (ii) should petition the department for admission to the Ph.D. program, and, should they succeed, embark on fulfilling the Ph.D. requirements below after receiving their M.A. admission to the Ph.D. program for students in this category is based on the same criteria as for those in category (iii), namely GPA, GRE, written work (each applicant should submit one or two writing samples) and letters of recommendation.

Students in category (iii) should first meet with the Director of Graduate Studies for the purpose of determining a program of study for their first 2-4 semesters, during which they should plan to satisfy the departmental M.A. requirements 3.2 A-E above. Such students may petition the department to waive up to 24 credit hours for graduate courses and seminars taken at other institutions, and to have some, or perhaps all, of these count toward meeting some of requirements 3.2 A-E. In considering the request, the department will take into account the nature of the course(s) and the grade(s) received.

4.1 *Special Area (Advisory/Examining) Committee*

Once a student in category (i) or (ii) has obtained the M.A., or a student in category (iii) has fulfilled requirements 3.2 A-E, s/he should select a major professor (who must have graduate faculty status) appropriate for his or her planned area of concentration (in the case of students in category (i) or (ii) this may, but need not, be their M.A. major professor). In consultation with the major professor, the student then selects a special area committee comprising the major professor and at least two other members of the department. All of these other members must have graduate faculty status. This committee is charged with guiding the student's progress toward the special area examination (see 4.3 B below), setting this examination, and evaluating the student's performance on it. The special area examination is the final requirement for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. (see 4.3 B below). The special area committee and any subsequent changes thereto must be approved by the department.

4.2 *Dissertation Committee*

After the student has been admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D. (see 4.3 B below) and before s/he reaches the stage of defending the dissertation prospectus (see 4.3 E below), the dissertation committee must be formed. This committee, *all members of which must have graduate faculty status*, must number at least four: at least three from within the department, one of whom will chair the committee and serve as the student's dissertation advisor, plus at least one tenured faculty member from outside the department, who serves as the university representative. The

university representative should be free of conflicts of interest with other members of the supervisory committee. At least two members of the committee are normally drawn from the student's special area committee. Additional outside members may be added as appropriate, but the number of philosophy department faculty on the committee must exceed the number of outside members. The outside member(s) need not be from the College of Arts and Sciences, but, as noted above, must be tenured and have graduate faculty status. It is the student's responsibility to check that all members of the dissertation committee have graduate faculty status – *particularly the outside member(s)*. The dissertation committee and any subsequent changes thereto must be approved by the department.

4.3 Requirements for the Ph.D.

A. Cumulative grade point average, incompletes, and evaluation

As for the M.A. (see 3.2 A above)

B. Admission to Ph.D. Candidacy

As prescribed above, all Ph.D. students must meet M.A. requirements 3.2 A-E, which requires 21 hours at the graduate level. In addition, those in categories (i) and (ii) will have additional graded seminar hours at the graduate level, as may those in category (iii) (perhaps by petition). These hours may all be counted toward the 60 hour requirement below; and the seminar hours may be counted toward the 30 hour seminar requirement.

The requirements, then, for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. in philosophy are as follows:

1. M.A. required

The student must have the M.A. degree in philosophy, and, if the M.A. is from elsewhere, they must have completed M.A. requirements 3.2 A-E.

2. Credit hour requirements: 60 hours (see also 4.3 C)

At least 30 hours must be letter-graded seminars in philosophy.

(Students may repeat a given seminar number up to 3 times (for a total of 9 hours), but repetition beyond this requires departmental approval.) (See also section 6.)

As part of the 60 hour requirement the student may, but need not, take DIS hours, tutorials, supervised teaching hours, supervised research hours, graduate language hours, and/or graduate hours outside philosophy, subject to the following limitations. Of the 60 hours, at most:

- 6 can be DIS or tutorial hours (excluding tutorials that are fulfilling seminar hours: see section 5)
- 3 can be supervised teaching hours
- 3 can be supervised research hours
- 3 can be graduate language hours
- 12 can be graduate hours outside philosophy

3. Special Area examination

Each student, with the advice of their special area committee, should select a series of topics and a related reading list to be the focus of either a four-hour closed book

examination, or a take-home examination plus oral defense, at the discretion of the student's special area committee. This exam should be related to the student's dissertation topic.

Written examinations may be given in any semester at a time convenient to both the student and the committee, but leaving a sufficient period for the result to be determined, and transmitted to the student, prior to the deadline for grade submission.

The special area examination may be retaken only once. Failure to pass the examination on the second attempt constitutes grounds for dismissal from the program (see section 7).

Students should register for the preliminary examination course (PHI 8964; zero hours) at the beginning of the semester in which they intend to take their special area examination.

C. Further credit hour requirements for the Ph.D. (see also 4.3 B 2)

Beyond the 60 hours required for admission to candidacy, a further 30 are required for the Ph.D. At least 24 of these further 30 hours must be dissertation hours.

As part of the total 90 hours required for the Ph.D., the student may, but need not, take DIS hours, tutorials, supervised teaching hours, supervised research hours, graduate language hours, and/or graduate hours outside philosophy, subject to the following limitations. Of the 90 hours, at most:

- 12 can be DIS or tutorial hours (excluding tutorials that are fulfilling seminar hours: see section 5)
- 5 can be supervised teaching hours
- 5 can be supervised research hours
- 3 can be graduate language hours
- 12 can be graduate hours outside philosophy

D. Language requirement

While there is a university language requirement for the M.A. degree (see 3.2 H), there is none for the Ph.D. However, when knowledge of a particular foreign language is deemed necessary for a student's chosen dissertation focus by either the special area or dissertation committee, the student must demonstrate a reading knowledge of that language.

E. Dissertation Prospectus

Within two semesters after admission to candidacy, the student must submit and defend a dissertation prospectus. The prospectus should include a description and defense of a viable research project (5-10 pages) and a bibliography. The prospectus is to be defended before the student's dissertation committee.

Upon successful defense of the dissertation prospectus the student must submit to the main office the signed Thesis/Dissertation Research Approval Form along with a copy of the defended prospectus.

F. Dissertation

A student's dissertation committee is charged with guiding the doctoral candidate through the successful completion of an original piece of philosophical work, usually during the last year or 18 months of residence, but the dissertation may be written in absentia. The student must orally defend the dissertation, and receive a unanimous vote of approval from the dissertation committee, before being awarded the doctorate.

The following procedures are to govern the preparation and defense of the dissertation:

1. Copies of the dissertation in the form in which the candidate's dissertation advisor and the candidate expect it to be defended shall be made available to all members of the dissertation committee, and placed in the departmental office, at least four weeks prior to the date of the oral defense.
2. An announcement of the place and time of the oral defense shall be presented to the Office of Graduate Studies and posted around the department at least two weeks prior to the date of the oral defense. The oral defense may be conducted remotely if the student or members of the dissertation committee cannot all be physically present on campus on the defense date. The department must be given at least two weeks notice if this is to be the case.

G. Scholarly Engagement

There is a university requirement that doctoral students actively participate in the scholarly community. Doctoral students in philosophy can satisfy this requirement by completing their 30 hour seminar requirement (see 4.3 B 2).

H. Further university requirements

Students should consult the current edition of the Florida State University *General Bulletin (Graduate Edition)* to ascertain additional university requirements.

5. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Under special circumstances, graduate students may apply for a leave of absence from the university for a specific period of up to three consecutive semesters (includes summer term). The circumstances justifying a leave include, but are not limited to: personal or family medical conditions, call to active military duty, parental leave, death in immediate family, or completion of an off-campus internship. The student must provide appropriate documentation and a rationale for the leave request.

Before applying for leaves of absence, students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, who can provide details on the process.

6. TUTORIALS

If a graduate student wants to pursue a topic with a faculty member outside the regular curriculum of courses and seminars, among the options are: (a) directed independent study (DIS) and (b) a tutorial.

Tutorials may be letter-graded (A-F), or, with a request from the student approved by the faculty member, they may be taken S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). DIS's may only be taken S/U.

A graduate student may count up to **one** three credit hour tutorial toward the letter-graded philosophy seminar credit hour* requirement for the M.A. or Ph.D. provided that (1) it is letter-graded rather than S/U and (2) is approved **beforehand** by the instructor (who must be a member of the philosophy faculty) as being equivalent to one philosophy seminar. The instructor should request the department office to record the seminar-equivalence in the student's file. (DIS's may not count toward the seminar requirement since they are not letter-graded.)

*Tutorials may **not** count toward the history (3.2 D) or breadth (3.2 E) requirements, nor in lieu of the logic requirement (3.2 B) or core courses (3.2 C). When this handbook states that a course may be retaken under the tutorial number PHI 5998, this means that the student may retake the course, but only under PHI 5998, since students may not take the relevant courses more than once under the course number.

7. DISMISSAL

The University reserves the right to terminate progress in an academic program and dismiss a student whose conduct is deemed improper or prejudicial to the interest of the University community or whose academic performance is substandard, regardless of GPA. Dismissed students will not be permitted to register for graduate study, including registering as a non-degree student.

Program terminations (dismissal for a reason other than GPA) are processed at the departmental level and may occur for a number of different reasons, including but not limited to:

- Inability to conduct research in a manner appropriate to philosophy;
- Inability to function within a team environment to the degree that it negatively affects the learning and/or research of fellow graduate students;
- Behavior that is not acceptable with the general community in which the student would be practicing should he or she graduate;
- Failure to meet one or more milestone requirements (such as failure to achieve the required grade in one or more of the core courses, or Modern Logic I, on the second attempt, or, for PhD students, the special area exam or prospectus defense);
- Failure to make adequate progress towards the graduate degree;
- Extensive petitions for candidacy extension.

In the philosophy department, should concerns about a graduate student that may warrant dismissal from the graduate program arise, the following steps will be followed:

Step 1: The student will be identified by the department as not making sufficient progress towards the degree, as failing to complete the degree within the specified time-period, or as failing to meet the department's academic standards, regardless of GPA.

Step 2: The student will meet with his/her major professor and the Director of Graduate Studies to develop a remediation plan.

- The department will provide a written remediation plan or written academic “warning” to the student.
- The remediation plan/academic warning will be tailored to the student, and documented. The annual evaluation letter is one opportunity to document unsatisfactory progress.
- The Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will also be notified of the situation, the deficiencies, and the remediation steps presented to the student.

Step 3: If the student fails to resolve/remediate the specified and documented deficiency, the department may initiate a program termination. If the department chooses to dismiss the student, the following steps will be completed prior to notifying her or him.

- The department will consult with the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the intent to pursue program termination. The consultation will include the remediation steps taken, the student’s efforts to date to resolve or address the deficiencies, and the grounds for the program termination.
- At the time of dismissal, the major professor and/or department chair may petition the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for consideration of special circumstances that the professor/department chair thinks constitute justification for an exception to this termination.
- The Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will inform the Registrar’s Office and the Graduate School of its intent to move forward with program termination. In conjunction, the three offices will tailor a letter specific to the circumstances of the student, including language and alternatives, if any.
- The department may, at its discretion, offer the student the opportunity at this point to change her/his degree program level.

Step 4: A letter will be sent to the graduate student being dismissed that specifies the following:

- The reasons for termination;
- The fact that an academic hold will be placed on registration, and the effective date/semester;
- The fact that dismissal from the program constitutes dismissal from the University;
- Any limitations on future enrollment in courses offered by the department/college, should the student reapply to the university in a different program;
- Alternatives a student could request, e.g., graduating with a master’s instead of a Ph.D. (assuming coursework and degree requirements are met);
- Timeline to complete specific coursework, if any;
- Notification of the right to appeal to the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies, and information about how to do so;
- A deadline for any appeal submittal.