

Department of Philosophy
Program and Progression Requirements
2015-16

The following is a summary of the requirements for the MA and PhD Programs in Philosophy and guidelines for progress through these Programs (Sections I and II), as well as current Departmental policy regarding Incompletes, Grades, and Appeals (Sections III, IV, and V). This is intended to provide full-time students with a clear understanding of what is expected of them during their graduate career: what course loads are typical; the rate overall at which they should complete program requirements; and the grades that are required to maintain good standing in the MA and PhD Programs. In addition, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) expects the Department to establish explicit benchmarks as a basis for ensuring the fair treatment of students who have problems with progression and may be put on Probation or withdrawn from the program.

In many respects these Departmental guidelines are constrained by School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) regulations. For a detailed account of SGPS regulations governing admission, registration, fees, general program requirements, the graduate student calendar and academic deadlines, thesis regulations, and relevant university policies, graduate students in Philosophy should refer to the SGPS website (<http://grad.uwo.ca/>), and especially to the “Current Students” section of it. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this section.

Graduate students are expected to meet progression requirements in a timely fashion according to the schedule specified in the “Program and Progression Requirements” of the Department of Philosophy. If a student fails to observe these guidelines, the Graduate Program Chair, after consultation with the student and, if appropriate, the student’s supervisor, will draw up a plan of work that the student will be expected to follow in order to make up whatever deficit is at issue. Where the Graduate Affairs Committee determines that a student's progress is especially slow or problematic, the student may be put on Probation, and required to satisfy a specified plan of work by a deadline. If the student should fail to meet the Probationary requirements, the Graduate Program Chair may recommend to SGPS that the student be withdrawn from the program on academic grounds. In highly exceptional circumstances, conspicuous failure to meet the Progression requirements may lead to a student being withdrawn without benefit of any Probationary period. In addition, both the MA and PhD programs have requirements for satisfactory performance in courses, as indicated below. A student who fails to achieve these standards will be considered not to be making satisfactory progress towards the degree and may be required to withdraw.

Under special circumstances these guidelines may be modified to meet the needs of students who are admitted to the program without an adequate preparation in philosophy or who otherwise require a special course of study. In such cases, the students involved will be informed, in writing, before the last day for course registration in the relevant term, of the alternative set of guidelines they will be required to observe.

I. MA PROGRAM AND PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS

Students entering the MA Program typically hold an Honours B.A. in Philosophy, although students trained in related disciplines may be admitted. They are required to complete, within one year:

I. Coursework. All students are required to complete six graduate half-courses in philosophy in which they must achieve an overall average of at least 75% to maintain minimal good standing. At least one of the six half-courses must be in the area of History of Philosophy. Students must also take at least one half

course in each of two of the following areas: Value Theory (including moral, political, legal, and social philosophy), Metaphysics and Epistemology (including philosophy of language and mind), and Philosophy of Science (including logic and foundations of mathematics).

2. Summer research project. Under the supervision of a faculty member who has standing in the Philosophy Department's graduate program, students will produce a paper that will not exceed 10,000 words on a topic agreed upon in consultation with the Graduate Chair and the project supervisor. The project could, but need not, be based on a paper for a course that was taken and completed in one of the previous two terms. (The paper may not significantly overlap with work done or being done on any course that was taken but not completed in either of the previous two terms.) The paper must show substantive engagement with the topic and with the relevant literature, and must be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant by the 15th of August. The project supervisor will assign a grade of pass or fail to the work, depending on its quality.

II. PhD PROGRAM AND PROGRESSION REQUIREMENTS

Students entering the PhD program typically hold an MA in Philosophy, but students with an exceptionally strong record in an undergraduate honours program may be admitted directly to the PhD program. The standard program is four years long; the direct entry program is five.

I. The standard, 4-year stream (for students entering the Ph.D. with an M.A.)

1. Competence in Elementary Logic. All students must demonstrate competence in this area and should aim to do in their first year. This requirement can be met, in the first instance, by writing an examination upon entering the program (typically in September). Students who do not wish to do this, or who fail an initial sitting of this examination, will have the opportunity to strengthen their background as needed and write the examination later in their first year. The examination is written, and is administered by the *Logic and Foundations of Mathematics* Area Committee. Examples of previous examinations are available from the Graduate Program Assistant.

Another option for meeting the logic competency requirement is to attend specified honours undergraduate courses in logic and pass the required course examinations with a strong mark.

Students will receive an exemption from the logic requirement if they can prove to the Chair of the *Logic and Foundations of Mathematics* Area Committee that they have obtained an "A" grade in a logic course that deals with the topics covered in the exam. These topics coincide with the contents of *The Logic Book* by M. Bergmann, J. Moor and J. Nelson.

2. Coursework. Students must complete seven half-credit courses, one of which is the prospectus course (see below).

Distribution: There is a distribution requirement that assumes students have a specialization in one of the following areas:

- a) History of Philosophy
- b) Value theory, including moral, political, legal, and social philosophy
- c) Metaphysics and epistemology, including philosophy of language and mind
- d) Philosophy of science, including logic and foundations of mathematics

The requirement is that students take at least one graduate half-credit course in each of two areas outside of their area of specialization. It is required that History of Philosophy be one of these areas for students who lack a demonstrable competence in History of Philosophy. Whether students have the requisite competence in the History of Philosophy will be determined by the Graduate Chair, in consultation, if need be, with the chair of the *History of Philosophy Area Committee*.

The same course could satisfy different requirements (e.g., a value theory requirement or a history requirement). But students cannot count the same course twice. The graduate course listing online identifies which courses meet which requirements.

Completion deadlines: Students must complete all of their required coursework, with the exception of their prospectus course, by the end of program Year 1.

Prospectus course: The prospectus course, normally supervised by the department's placement officer, is offered in the Winter term in each academic year. It is graded on a pass/fail basis. The course will begin with a discussion of the format and goals of the prospectus and will often include a review of anonymous sample prospectuses. As the term progresses students will take turns presenting, commenting on, and discussing one another's prospectus materials. It is incumbent on presenters to make their materials accessible to the entire audience, and on each audience member to comment constructively on the materials. It is expected that students will have met regularly with their supervisors prior to taking the course and will begin the course in a position where enough preliminary work has been done to allow the student to produce a first draft of a prospectus by a third of the way through the term. Students admitted during the Winter term will be given the opportunity to present their material after other students to allow them more time to consult with their supervisors. The course will end with a conference at which students will present revised versions of their prospectuses and another student in the course will serve as commentator. Faculty members other than the course supervisor may participate in the course from time to time.

Reading courses: The equivalent of a half-course may be taken as an independent study or reading course with approval of the Graduate Program Chair.

External courses: Students may receive credit towards their PhD program requirements of one half-course, or, in exceptional circumstances, up to two half-courses taken in disciplines other than philosophy, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Chair.

Grades: The Department expects that students will maintain appreciably better course grades than the minimum 70% average required by SGPS. To be considered in good standing in the 4-year stream, students must earn grades of A in the equivalent of at least 4 of the 6 half-credit courses that they are required to take in addition to the prospectus course. If a student receives less than 70% in any course, the Graduate Affairs Committee reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program.

3. Comprehensive Examination. All PhD students must pass one comprehensive examination in the area of specialization in which they plan to write a dissertation. The areas for which comprehensive exams are currently available are more specific than the areas that govern the distribution of courses. These are the examination areas:

- Feminist Philosophy
- History of Philosophy

- Logic and Foundations of Math
- Moral, Political, and Legal Philosophy
- Philosophy of Mind and Language
- Philosophy of Science

Format: Each area committee will decide on the format for the exam in its area and will administer this exam. Possible formats include, 1) having each student write a 4-hour sit-down exam on campus; 2) having each student write a 24-hour take-home exam with or without a short oral exam; and 3) giving each student the option between writing a 4-hour sit-down exam or a 24-hour take-home exam (again, with or without an oral exam). Exams are offered, as demand requires, in October, January, March, and August. Sample examinations are available from the Graduate Program Assistant, and information about the exams is available from the Chairs of the Area Committees.

Students are expected to pass the comprehensive examination in their intended area of dissertation research by the end of their second year in the PhD program.

4. Dissertation Prospectus and Prospectus Defence.

Prospectus. Students are required to develop a prospectus outlining their dissertation project, which they must successfully defend in an oral examination by their Thesis Advisory Committee. Examples of successful prospectuses are available from the Graduate Program Assistant. The maximum length for a prospectus is 4500 words, including notes, but excluding the bibliography.

Prospectus defence: The prospectus defence provides an opportunity for a draft of a thesis prospectus to be reviewed by several faculty members who are knowledgeable about the proposed area and topic of the student's thesis before the final version is approved and the student begins to write the dissertation. The intended thesis supervisor is responsible for assembling qualified faculty members, who will then ordinarily serve as readers on the student's Thesis Advisory Committee. The aim is to examine the prospectus, collectively and collegially, to identify omissions and weaknesses and to suggest ways in which content, method, and organization can be improved. The desired outcome is a prospectus that presents a clear, coherent, promising plan of research that can successfully guide a student through the process of writing a thesis.

The procedure of the defence will be as follows:

1. A solid draft of the prospectus must be submitted to the examiners at least two weeks prior to the prospectus defence date.
2. The intended thesis supervisor(s) is/are responsible for assembling qualified faculty members who are knowledgeable about the proposed area and topic of the student's thesis. These faculty members will usually be the intended advisory committee (ordinarily two faculty members plus the supervisor(s)). The intended supervisor will both chair and participate in the defence.
3. Once the examiners and the student have assembled for the defence, the student will ordinarily be asked to leave the room so that the examining committee may determine the order of questioning, the number of rounds, and the length of each round (recommended: two rounds, first round 15-20 minutes per examiner; second round 5 minutes per examiner). The student will be invited back into the room. This step may be skipped if the examining committee has agreed upon the format in advance of the meeting.

4. The committee will ask the student to give a brief (5-10 minute) overview of her or his prospectus.
5. Then it will proceed to rounds one and two of questioning in the pre-determined order and for the pre-determined length of time per examiner.
6. The student will be asked to leave the room so that the examiners may discuss the prospectus and the defence. The examining committee determines the revisions that need to be made before the prospectus may be considered approved.
7. The student will then be invited back into the room and the committee will explain the expected revisions and the expected timeline for completing them.
8. If the required revisions are minor, the revised version of the prospectus will need to be approved only by the student's supervisor(s). The revised version must be submitted to the supervisor for approval within two weeks of the defence, unless other arrangements have been made. If the required revisions are substantial, the revised version of the prospectus will be reexamined by the committee, at a time arranged by the supervisor in consultation with the student and the other members of the committee (ordinarily within six weeks of the first defence).
9. When the supervisor(s), in the case of the prospectus requiring only minor revisions, is/are satisfied with the revisions, or the committee, in the case of the prospectus requiring substantial revisions, is satisfied with the revisions, the supervisor will report the successful prospectus approval to the Graduate Chair and to the Graduate Affairs Committee at its next meeting.

5. *Dissertation Research and Thesis Defence.* The central research requirement of the PhD program in Philosophy is the dissertation. This work should exhibit significant scholarly research and originality, and must be submitted and examined in accordance with regulations set out by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: see the *Thesis Regulation Guide* (available on the SGPS website under "Current Students"). In addition, the Department requires the following:

- that dissertations in Philosophy not exceed 250 pages in length,
- that students give a departmental talk on the subject of their thesis prior to their defence.

Annual deadlines for all stages of thesis submission and defence, and a checklist for the presentation of a thesis to SGPS, are available from the Graduate Program Assistant.

6. *Special Requirements.* In addition to the general requirements set out above, the following considerations may be relevant for students pursuing PhD work in Philosophy.

Language and technical competence: students in the PhD program are not required to meet a foreign language requirement or to demonstrate competence in areas other than logic and history of philosophy. Students often find it necessary, however, to acquire a reading knowledge of a language other than English, or to establish other forms of technical competence (e.g., in specific areas of statistics or mathematics), in order to do PhD level research in their chosen areas of specialization. In principle a student may be required to demonstrate competence in the relevant languages or areas of technical expertise before their dissertation topic is approved. Various arrangements can be made to support students in establishing such competence. For example, instruction in philosophical Greek and Latin can be provided, and the French and the German sections of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures offer intensive reading courses designed for graduate students who require

a basic knowledge of these languages. The Graduate Program Chair can advise about what arrangements can be made for acquiring competence in other languages or areas of technical expertise.

Progression. To be in good standing, students in the four-year stream must ordinarily complete the program requirements according to this schedule:

Year 1: Complete the six non-prospectus half-courses*; satisfy the logic requirement.

Year 2: Complete the prospectus course; write and defend the prospectus; write the area comprehensive exam.

Year 3: Dissertation research and writing.

Year 4: Dissertation writing and defence.

* maintaining the minimum grades requirements outlined above, under Courses.

II. The 5-year direct-entry PhD program stream

The 5-year PhD program is designed for students who have a BA in Philosophy but who have not completed an MA in Philosophy (or a cognate field). The extra year is spent on additional coursework. The requirements are the same as in the 4-year stream, except as follows:

Students in the 5-year direct entry Ph.D. stream must complete 12 half-credit courses, subject to the following conditions and options.

Distribution: There is a distribution requirement for courses that assumes students have a specialization in one of the four areas listed above in the four-year stream. The requirement is that students take at least **two** half-credit courses in each of two areas outside of their area of specialization. It is required that History of Philosophy be one of these areas for students who lack a demonstrable competence in History of Philosophy. (As is the case in the four-year stream, whether students have the requisite competence in the History of Philosophy will be determined by the Graduate Chair, in consultation, if need be, with the chair of the *History of Philosophy* Area Committee.)

Completion deadlines: students must complete all of their required coursework, with the exception of their prospectus course, by the end of program Year 2.

External courses: Students may receive credit towards their PhD program requirements of 2 half-courses, or, in exceptional circumstances, up to three half-courses taken in disciplines other than philosophy, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Chair.

Grades: the Department expects that students will maintain appreciably better course grades than the minimum 70% average required by SGPS. To be considered in good standing in the 5-year PhD stream, students must earn grades of A in the equivalent of at least 7 half-credit courses out of the 11 half-credit courses that they are required to take in addition to the prospectus course. These must include grades above 80% in at least 4 of the courses taken in the first year. If a student receives less than 70% in any course, the Graduate Affairs Committee reserves the right to withdraw the student from the program.

To be in good standing, students in the five-year stream must ordinarily complete the program requirements according to this schedule:

Year 1: Complete six half-courses.*

Year 2: Complete the five remaining non-prospectus half-courses*; satisfy the logic requirement.

Year 3: Complete the prospectus course; write and defend the prospectus; write the area comprehensive exam.

Year 4: Dissertation research and writing.

Year 5: Dissertation writing and defence.

* maintaining the minimum grades requirements outlined above, under Courses.

III. INCOMPLETE COURSES

Incompletes will be granted *only* on the basis of documented medical or compassionate grounds. And incompletes are granted at the *exclusive* discretion of the Graduate Program Chair. Students should let the Graduate Program Chair know as soon as possible if they are going to request an Incomplete. The student and instructor must petition for a mark of Incomplete (INC) by completing an official “Request for an Incomplete” form and submitting it to the Graduate Program Chair. The “Request for an Incomplete” form must contain the reasons for requesting the INC, the required documentation, a detailed account of the work to be completed, and the date by which that work will be submitted. The petition should be delivered to the Graduate Program Chair as early as possible and in any event, *no later than one week before the date on which grades are due to be submitted for the course in which the student is requesting an INC.*

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies regulations specify that a student may be assigned an INC for *no longer than one term* following the end date of a course. SGPS also requires that, if you fail to meet the Deadline for Completion specified in an approved “Request” form, your INC will automatically be revised to an ‘F’ (fail). The Department specifies that a student may carry *no more than two incompletes at any one time.* These regulations must be followed in any assignment of an INC in Philosophy.

Under normal circumstances, a student who receives a failing grade in a graduate course is required, by School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies regulations, to be withdrawn from the program.

IV. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

The *School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies* requires students to maintain a minimum average of 70% in their graduate coursework.

For *Departmental purposes* a student is considered to be “in good standing” if he or she is proceeding towards the degree in accordance with the progression requirements set out above, including the program-specific requirements for minimal acceptable grades. In addition, the Graduate Affairs Committee reserves the right to withdraw students from the program if they receive less than 70% in any course.

V. APPEALS PROCEDURES

DEFINITION: An *appeal* is a request for exemption from a Senate regulation or program-specific requirement, *or* a request for revision of a grade on a particular piece of work or in a course, or reassessment of final standing in a program. In the case of the first sort of appeal, the grounds for

exemption from an existing regulation may be compassionate or medical, or extenuating circumstances; in the latter case, the grounds for appeal may include bias, inaccuracy, or unfairness.

PROCEDURES:

The successive levels at which a graduate student may make an appeal are:

- Course Instructor (informal consultation);
- Graduate Program Chair;
- Vice-Provost of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies;
- Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA)

Appeals relating to a specific course (e.g., against a mark, grade, appropriateness of assignments or examinations, or grading practices) must be initiated with the appropriate course instructor; they may be taken to each of higher levels only if resolution has been attempted and has failed at the immediately preceding level. *Note:* course grades confirmed by the Dean of Graduate Studies after appeal may not be appealed to the SRBA. Appeals on other matters (e.g., against a requirement or regulation of the program, or an assessment of standing in the program) should be initiated in the office having immediate jurisdiction for the particular requirement or regulation in question. Students in doubt as to the appropriate level at which appeals should be initiated should consult the Graduate Program Chair.

The initial step of the appeals procedure should be completed as soon as possible but no later than *six weeks* from the date of the action or decision giving rise to the appeal. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate an appeal at the earliest possible opportunity, and of the university officer concerned to act upon the request as expeditiously as possible.

Legal counsel is not permitted below the level of the SRBA. However, the student making an appeal does have the right to be accompanied by a colleague.

In the case of an appeal relating to a specific course:

- A resolution of the problem should first be attempted through informal consultation with the instructor. If the instructor fails to act, or if the instructor cannot or will not make himself or herself available within a reasonable time period, the appeal may be forwarded directly to the Graduate Program Chair.
- If the student is dissatisfied with the decision reached at this initial level of consultation, a formal appeal may be initiated. This must take the form of a written statement of appeal, complete with all necessary documentation, and must be presented to the Graduate Program Chair within *three weeks* of the date of the previous decision.
- Within *three weeks* of receipt of the formal appeal, the Graduate Program Chair will call a meeting of an Ad-Hoc Appeals Committee which will consist of at least the following:
 - Graduate Program Chair; Department Chair; a member of the Departmental Graduate Affairs Committee who is also a member of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies but is not the instructor being challenged; a Philosophy graduate student
- The Appeals Committee may ask the persons concerned to appear at the meeting.
- If the complaint is against the Graduate Program Chair, the Department Chair or designate will act in the Graduate Program Chair's place.
- The proceedings of the appeal hearing are confidential.

- The Graduate Program Chair, on behalf of the Appeals Committee, will notify the student and the course instructor, in writing, of the Committee's decisions and recommendations (including their reasons for these decisions and recommendations) within one week of the meeting.
- If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached by the Appeals Committee, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

In the case of an appeal which is a request for exemption from a Senate regulation or program-specific requirement:

- A resolution of the problem should first be attempted through informal consultation with the Graduate Program Chair. If the Graduate Program Chair fails to act, or cannot or will not make himself or herself available within a reasonable time period, the appeal may be forwarded directly to the Department Chair (referred to below as the Graduate Program Chair's 'alternate').
- If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of consultation at this initial level, he or she may initiate a formal appeal. This must take the form of a written statement of appeal, complete with all necessary documentation, and must be presented to the Graduate Program Chair (or alternate) within *three weeks* of the date of the previous decision.
- Within *three weeks* of receipt of the formal appeal, the Graduate Program Chair (or alternate) will call a meeting of an Ad-Hoc Appeals Committee which will consist of at least the following:
 Graduate Program Chair (or alternate); Department Chair (or alternate); a member of the Graduate Affairs Committee, who is also a member of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; a Philosophy graduate student
- The Appeals Committee may ask the student concerned to appear at the meeting.
- The proceedings of the appeal hearing are confidential.
- The Graduate Chair (or alternate), on behalf of the Appeals Committee, will notify the student and the course instructor, in writing, of the Committee's decisions and recommendations (including their reasons for these decisions and recommendations) within one week of the meeting.
- If the student is not satisfied with the decision reached by the Appeals Committee, he or she may appeal to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.