



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Graduate Studies Manual

2023-2024

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Part I. Introduction

This manual describes the policies of the Department of Political Science's graduate program. Part II describes the requirements for the Ph.D. and master's degrees. Part III outlines departmental policies relating to the graduate program.

In addition to departmental policies, all graduate students in Political Science must adhere to the rules of the Notre Dame Graduate School, reported in the "Academic Regulations" section of the Graduate School [Bulletin of Information](#). Students are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Graduate School and Departmental rules.

Questions about interpretations of and petitions for exceptions to departmental rules and requirements should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

I. Director of Graduate Studies

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is a regular T&R faculty member appointed by the Chair of the Department to a three-year term. The DGS is charged with supervising the graduate program. Duties include: chairing the Graduate Policy and Graduate Admissions Committees, advising graduate students, curricular revision and development, liaison with field chairs about graduate course offerings and comprehensive examinations, coordination of graduate fellowships and teaching assistantships with faculty, and working closely with our Director of Placement to ensure that we have a truly excellent graduate program from matriculation through graduation and professional placement.

II. Placement Director

The Placement Director is a regular T&R faculty member appointed by the Chair of the Department for a one-year term. The Placement Director works with students on the academic job market to prepare their dossier, plan practice job talks, and otherwise maximize their potential for success. The Placement Director also offers a regular course entitled "The Academic Career" that helps prepare students for the academic job market.

III. Graduate Policy Committee

The Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Director, will appoint members of the Graduate Policy Committee. Three members will be appointed to a term of one year. In appointing members, considerations will be given to a balance of field, rank, gender, and departmental responsibilities. One or two representatives from among the graduate students, with consideration to gender and field diversity, will be elected by PoGO and sit on the Committee in an advisory capacity for a term of one year. The Graduate Director chairs the Committee, organizes its activities, and retains a vote in its deliberations. The Committee's responsibility is to act as an advisory board to the Graduate Director and Departmental Chair. Areas of consideration include: revision of graduate procedures and manual, hearings of graduate student complaints, and requests for late admission. The Committee is charged with consulting with the DGS on funding recommendations for continuing students, and may be asked to advise on the ranking of nominees for departmental awards, e.g., TA awards, Brookings fellowships, University Teaching Fellowships.

IV. Graduate Admissions Committee

The Departmental Chair, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), will appoint the members of the Graduate Admissions Committee. Five members, one from each of the department's five major fields, will be appointed to a term of one year. In appointing members, consideration will be given to a balance of rank, gender, and departmental responsibilities. The DGS chairs the Committee, organizes its activities, and retains a vote in its deliberations. The Committee is charged with making recommendations concerning the admission and funding of incoming graduate students.

Part II: Degree Requirements

I. Ph.D. Requirements

These requirements apply only to students entering the graduate program in Fall 2015 and later. Students entering the program earlier should refer to the 2014-2015 graduate manual for Ph.D. requirements.

The Department of Political Science graduate program is primarily a Ph.D. program. All requirements must be satisfied within eight years of initial enrollment. Petitions for exceptions to these requirements must be made to the DGS in writing.

A. 60 Total Credits

This includes the 42 hours of substantive coursework listed below. Other credits may be non-substantive, including examination preparation and thesis and dissertation research. For policies on credit transfer from other universities, see the Graduate School's [Bulletin of Information](#). All students must be continuously enrolled and registered when they are not on an approved leave, as well as enrolled and registered for at least one credit hour for the semester in which they will be graduating (Fall for January graduation, Spring for May graduation, and Summer session for August graduation).

B. 42 Substantive Credits

This includes all regular courses plus directed reading courses taken for a letter grade; it excludes exam preparation, teaching seminars, thesis preparation, dissertation research and writing, non-resident dissertation research, and directed reading courses taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. With the permission of the DGS, students may take up to 9 hours of 5XXXX level courses for substantive graduate credit.

1. The 42 substantive hours must include at least four courses each in two of the department's five major fields.
2. The 42 substantive hours also must include **two elective courses**. Elective courses outside of the department must be approved by the student's advisor and the DGS.
3. The 42 substantive hours including courses that fit into one of the following tracks:
 - a. **Standard Track**: Four courses each in two of the department's five major fields, three methodology courses (including Proseminar and Introduction to Quantitative Methods), and three electives,

- b. **Theory Track:** Four courses in Political Theory, four courses in one of the department's other major fields, the Proseminar, and five electives, or
 - c. **Methods Track:** Four courses in one of the department's five major fields, two courses in one of the department's other major fields, six methodology courses, and two electives.
4. Courses that can count toward the methodology course requirement (beyond the Proseminar, Introduction to Quantitative Methods, and Regression I) should adhere to the following standards:
- be centrally concerned with the conduct of research and scholarship; and
 - train students in the skills, theories, and tools necessary to conduct political science scholarship; or

Examples of courses and/or topics include (illustrative, not exhaustive):

- Econometrics / statistics
 - Qualitative methods
 - Field research methods (e.g., interview skills)
 - Case study methods
 - Interpretive methods
 - Archival research methods
 - Survey research methods
 - Game theory
 - Peace Studies research methods
 - Language training (approved proposal allows additional language training, beyond the minimum reading requirement, to count for one of the methods course requirements)
- concern epistemology as a philosophical concern. Examples of courses and/or topics include (illustrative, not exhaustive):
 - Philosophy of science / social science
 - Epistemology

The DGS, in consultation with the Methodology field chair, is empowered to certify that courses meet the methodology course requirement. Within our department, established and new courses will be regularly certified as “counts toward methodology course requirement” so that students can plan accordingly. Courses outside of our department are approved on a case-by-case basis by the DGS, in consultation with the Methodology field chair.

With the permission of the DGS, training conducted elsewhere (e.g., ICPSR, CQRM, EITM) that meets these standards and is of sufficient depth and length to compare to a semester-long course can count as the additional required methods course (students do not receive course credit, only the fulfillment of one methods course requirement). For ICPSR, students are required to take the course for a grade (possible when auditing), and to receive at least a B+. In other cases where a grade is not given (e.g., CQRM, EITM), students must receive pre-approval from the DGS to count the workshop toward a methods requirement,

and must certify their attendance and active participation in the program (with official recognition if possible) to the DGS.

C. Comprehensive Exams

Students must complete two written comprehensive exams, or comps, in American Politics, Comparative Politics, Constitutional Studies, International Relations, or Political Theory. Each field sets the format and details of its respective comp. Field-specific comprehensive exam descriptions are available on the Graduate Program [website](#).

Students who receive fewer than 12 transfer credits are required to take a first comprehensive exam no later than January of the second year. They must take a second exam no later than September of the third year. Students who are able to do so are encouraged to take the second comp one semester earlier than stated above.

Students who receive 12-24 transfer credits must take a first exam no later than September of the second year. They must take a second exam no later than May of the second year. Students who are able to do so are encouraged to take the second comp one semester earlier than stated above.

Students in the joint Ph.D. program in Peace Studies and Political Science also must take and pass two comprehensive exams. However, because one of their comprehensive exams is in Peace Studies, they must take and pass only one exam in Political Science: the comprehensive exam in their first field in Political Science. They do not have to take the comprehensive exam (or complete the methods paper) in their second field in the department. However, they still must take four courses in their second field in the department (five courses if their second field is methods) as well as four courses in their first field.

Written comprehensive exams are offered in January, May, and September. About a month before the exam, the program coordinator sends out an email requesting information about students who wish to take the upcoming comp. Students planning to take the comp must submit the requested form by the assigned deadline. In addition, students planning to take a comp are advised to contact the field chair at least one semester before the comp date.

Eligibility for an ESL (English as a Second Language) accommodation on the comprehensive examinations can be extended, upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies, to both domestic and international students based on classification of primary language. This would include international students from countries that require the TOEFL/IELTS exams and domestic students who were officially classified as English Language Learners during their K-12 education. To receive this accommodation, students must write a letter explaining the rationale for the accommodation by the end of their first semester in the graduate program. The DGS will consult with the GPC to decide whether the student receives the accommodation.

The field chair sends a written notification to the student of the field committee's assessment, normally within three weeks of the examination. If a student wishes to apply their first examination towards a Master's degree, they must contact the program coordinator who will work with them to complete the Application for Admission to Master's Candidacy.

For students seeking the Ph.D. degree, the second comprehensive exam is a departmental requirement only. Forms to be filed on completion of this exam are available through the Graduate Studies program coordinator and are for departmental use only.

In most cases, students either pass or fail the exam. However, when the members of the field grading an exam feel that the answers were borderline or very uneven, they may, at their collective discretion, offer a student the opportunity, in lieu of failure, to write an essay before the next exam on a question of the field's choice. The student may decline this option. The American Politics and International Relations fields do not offer the essay option.

After failing an exam, the student may retake the exam once at the next scheduled date.

In lieu of a field exam, students who take the Methods Track for course work must write and defend a paper that contributes to an area of methodology of their choosing. The paper's status as one that contributes to methodology must be verified in advance by the field chair, so students must be proactive and seek counsel from the field chair prior to beginning the paper. The paper must be original research and include no more than one co-author. If there is a co-author, it must be a peer of the student (e.g., another graduate student). The co-author cannot be someone who holds a PhD at the time the paper is approved. Additionally, the paper must be accepted for presentation at a conference focusing on social science methods (e.g. the annual political methodology conference, the World Conference on Qualitative Research) or a methodology panel of another professional conference. Finally, the student must defend the paper to a committee of two faculty members, at least one of whom must be a current member of the methods field.

D. Foreign Language

This is demonstrated by passing a foreign language exam or by passing one of the summer language courses taught at Notre Dame. Students wishing to pursue significant quantitative training can, with the permission of the primary advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies, substitute two or more quantitative methods courses (beyond the Proseminar, Introduction to Quantitative Methods, and Regression I) for the language exam. Students may count these two courses toward both the language requirement and the four-course methodology requirement. Note that only one of the two quantitative methods courses used to fulfill the language requirement may be taken away from Notre Dame and must be taken for a grade. (As noted above, students also may count a language course as an elective methods course.)

A student's field committee may require that she/he demonstrate competence in a second foreign language if the committee deems knowledge of that language necessary to the student's research. Waiver of the foreign language exam requirement is automatic for ESL students. The language requirement must be completed before the student is permitted to take the oral examination (known as the proposal defense in Political Science; see below).

E. Journal/Grant Submissions

Students are required to prepare two papers suitable for publication in scholarly journals. One must be completed prior to the defense of their thesis proposal (and thus by the end of the summer prior to the student's fourth year in the program), and the other prior to the defense of the dissertation itself. Each paper must be approved by a member of the T&R faculty who will

confirm that the paper meets the criteria of suitability for submission to a peer-reviewed journal, and students are required to submit the articles to journals. This requirement is fulfilled only when students provide a completed [Publication Submission Form](#) to the program coordinator.

A major grant proposal may be submitted in place of one of these two papers to satisfy the requirement. A major grant application is defined as a proposal to an external source for a grant that would provide funding for at least a full academic year stipend (e.g., a fellowship) or a comparable level of support or funding. A completed [Grant Proposal Submission Form](#) must be submitted to the program coordinator. If two articles are submitted, at least one must be single-authored.

F. Departmental service

Students are expected to perform service to the department after their service-free first-year. Such service provides training for students in various aspects of the academic profession. In most cases, service takes the form of a teaching assistantship, but we are in some cases able to offer opportunities for students to serve as research assistants, editorial assistants with professional journals, methodological consultants, and so on. Students are required to perform at least four semesters of service, at least two semesters of which as teaching assistants, as a requirement of the Ph.D. degree. Students who secure full fellowship stipend support from external sources for 3 or more years may defer or reduce service requirements while on those fellowships, but must perform a minimum of two semesters as teaching assistants, as a requirement of the Ph.D. degree. [See Part II: Section IV for more information on departmental service].

G. Oral Examination/Proposal Defense

In the Political Science department, this examination is based on the dissertation proposal and is ordinarily called the **proposal defense**. Students must take their oral examination and have their proposal approved prior to their seventh semester in the program. Specifically, students without 12-24 transfer credits must defend their dissertation proposal by the end of the summer before their fourth year in the program begins, and students with 12-24 transfer credits by May of year 3. This is one academic year earlier than the Graduate School's deadline.

The proposal should define the problem to be researched, review the relevant literature, and outline a preliminary research design. The proposal should be no more than 15 double spaced pages. The oral exam will focus on the proposal submitted by the student, but it will extend to literature in the field perceived by the faculty to be relevant to the problem. Oral exams have an examining committee of three faculty members, who should in most cases be the members of the dissertation committee. A student is permitted to have an examining committee of four faculty members if the student so chooses. One member may be from outside the Department. If a member is from outside the University, a curriculum vita must be obtained and permission sought from the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once there is general agreement that the proposal is ready to be defended, students should establish an examination date in consultation with the faculty members. In order to schedule an oral examination (proposal defense), students must contact the graduate program coordinator at least two weeks in advance, and provide the following information about the defense: date, time,

committee chair, and committee members. Only one member of the committee may attend the exam via telephone or video, all others must be physically present at the defense.

The student begins the exam with a brief (10 minute) statement regarding her/his proposal. Each faculty member then has a fifteen minute period for questioning the student, followed by a second round in which each faculty member has a five minute period. After completion of the exam, the chair calls for a discussion followed by a vote of the examiners. In order to pass the oral exam, the student needs a passing grade from two of the three examiners. A passing grade in the oral examination indicates that the faculty believes the student is prepared for and capable of doing satisfactory Ph.D. work. It does not necessarily mean that the committee members believe the proposal is completely satisfactory. A committee may pass the student but require further revision of the proposal.

The graduate program coordinator provides the committee with a Reporting Form for Results of Oral Candidacy Exams and Dissertation Defenses. At the completion of the oral examination, all committee members must sign the form and indicate their vote. A committee member not physically present should email his/her vote to the coordinator. This form is returned to the program coordinator who submits it to the Graduate School. These results are officially confirmed by the Graduate School in writing to the student and the Director of Graduate Studies.

H. Dissertation Defense

Students ask a Notre Dame Political Science faculty member to serve as their dissertation advisor. When an agreement to advise a dissertation is reached, the faculty member must sign an [Advisor Agreement](#) which is then submitted to the graduate program coordinator. The student and her/his director select the other two members of the committee (these other members are referred to as “readers.”) The student is permitted to select three faculty as readers if the student so chooses. Note that if a student has co-directors of her/his dissertation committee, she/he still must have two readers on the committee. In other words, with co-directors, there must be at least four faculty members on the committee.

One member of the committee may be from outside the Department or University. To invite someone from outside the department or university, the student’s advisor must make a recommendation to the DGS, explaining the reason the person was chosen. If the outside person is not a member of the Notre Dame community, his or her vitae must accompany the advisor’s recommendation to the DGS. A former faculty member may remain in the position of sole advisor as long as the DGS consents to this arrangement.

In order to schedule a dissertation defense, students must contact the graduate program coordinator at least two weeks in advance, and provide the following information about the defense: date, time, committee chair, committee members, and dissertation title. The program coordinator produces Readers Reports which are distributed to all committee members, who must sign and return the Report to the program coordinator within four business days prior to the defense. (Do not submit the Readers Reports directly to the Graduate School). Readers Reports simply indicate that the committee believes the dissertation is ready to be defended.

The dissertation defense follows the same format as the oral examination. As with oral examinations, the program coordinator provides the committee with a Reporting Form for Results of Oral Candidacy Exams and Dissertation Defenses. At the completion of the defense, all committee members must sign the form and indicate their vote. A committee member not physically present should email his/her vote to the program coordinator (Only one member of the committee may attend via telephone or video. All others must be physically present at the defense). This form is returned to the graduate program coordinator who submits it to the Graduate School. Students should be aware that dissertations and Master's theses are available to the public.

Students who have not successfully defended a dissertation within eight years may request an extension of eligibility for the Ph.D. and pay their own tuition. The Graduate School sometimes but not always grants a one-time extension for a maximum of one year. Students must demonstrate extenuating circumstances to justify the extension.

Requirement Deadlines in the Ph.D. Program

(Students entering in fall semester)

	Students with 0-11 transfer credits	Students with 12-24 transfer credits
First written comp	January, Year 2	September, Year 2
Second written comp	September, Year 3	May, Year 2
Language Requirement	End of summer before Year 4 (before proposal)	May, Year 3 (before proposal)
First journal/fellowship application submission	End of summer before Year 4 (before proposal)	May, Year 3 (before proposal)
Oral exam and proposal	End of summer before Year 4	May, Year 3
Second journal/fellowship application submission	Before dissertation defense	Before dissertation defense
Dissertation and defense	Within eight years of eligibility	Within eight years of eligibility

Note: Students are encouraged to complete requirements before the above deadlines. In particular, students entering the program with substantial previous graduate work, Presidential Fellows, and other students with substantial external funding throughout their Notre Dame career should complete oral exams and be admitted to candidacy by May of Year 3.

II. M.A. Degree Requirements

We seek to award the MA degree to deserving students whose final degree objective at Notre Dame is the Ph.D. There are two paths to the Master's degree: one requires passing a comprehensive exam, the other involves writing and defending a M.A. thesis. Application for Admission to Master's Degree Candidacy must be filed by the Graduate Studies coordinator and is forwarded to the Graduate School. Eligibility for the M.A. degree expires 5 years after admission.

Here are the requirements for the two M.A. options:

A. Comprehensive Exam Option

1. **At least 30 credit hours** with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Credit is not allowed for 3XXXX or 4XXXX level courses, but a student can take up to 9 credit hours at the 5XXXX level. A student may count no more than 9 credit hours of coursework from another Notre Dame MA program or law degree or any program at another university toward an M.A in the Notre Dame Political Science Department.
2. At least **21 substantive credit hours from courses within the Department** (either in one of the Department's five main fields or in methods courses offered within the Department).
3. Taking and passing a **comprehensive exam** in one of the Department's five main fields. See the description of the comprehensive exams above.

B. M.A. Thesis Option

1. At least **30 credit hours** with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Credit is not allowed for 3XXXX or 4XXXX level courses, but a student can take up to 9 credit hours at the 5XXXX level. A student may count no more than 9 credit hours of coursework from another Notre Dame MA program or law degree or any program at another university toward an M.A in the Notre Dame Political Science Department.
2. At least **21 substantive credit hours from courses within the Department** (either in one of the Department's five main fields or in methods courses offered within the Department).
3. Write and defend a **M.A. thesis**. The M.A. thesis must be defended and approved by a three-person Master's thesis committee, consisting of a thesis director and two readers appointed from among the regular teaching and research faculty of the Department. The M.A. thesis defense follows the same procedures as the Ph.D. dissertation defense. See the description of the dissertation defense in section I.11. above. The M.A. thesis must meet Graduate School requirements (see [Bulletin of Information](#)) and must be recorded with the Graduate School.

III. Joint Notre Dame Degrees

Admission for a joint degree requires advance consent of the DGS.

Students who are obtaining joint degrees may count no more than 9 credit hours of coursework from another Notre Dame graduate program or law degree toward a degree in the Political Science Department. Note that students in the joint Ph.D. program in Peace Studies and Political Science must take only 33 hours of substantive courses within Political Science, including courses that fit into one of the following tracks:

- A. **Standard Track:** Four courses each in two of the department's five major fields, and three methodology courses,
- B. **Theory Track:** Four courses in Political Theory, four courses in one of the department's other major fields, the Proseminar, and two electives, or
- C. **Methods Track:** Four courses in one of the department's five major fields, two courses in one of the department's other major fields, and five methodology courses.

Part III. Graduate Program Policies

I. Good Academic Standing

In order to continue in the graduate program and to be eligible for new or continued financial support, a student must be in good academic standing. The Graduate School sets the minimum standards for good academic standing, including a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (see [Bulletin of Information](#)).

Additionally, the Department considers students to be in good academic standing if they are making good progress toward the degree (as reflected in part by fulfillment of degree requirements according to departmental deadlines—see below for a summary) and are demonstrating sufficient academic promise.

In order to assess students' progress toward the degree and academic promise, the department conducts annual reviews of each graduate student toward the end of each academic year. The annual review is based on three sources of information:

1. An **annual report** on progress in the program. Students should complete the [Academic Year Funding Application & Progress Report](#) and submit a copy to the DGS and program coordinator. Before submitting the report, students must have it approved and signed by their advisor. Advisor approval should come only after the advisor and the student discuss the student's progress in the program and plans for fulfilling degree requirements and professional development.
2. **Semester evaluation forms** completed by faculty members for each graduate student who they taught, advised, supervised as a teaching assistant or research assistant, or worked with in some other capacity over the course of the semester. The evaluation forms ask faculty members to rate students on factors such as research ability, writing ability, methodological ability, and potential for completing the Ph.D. The annual reviews of students will consider semester evaluations for the student aggregated over the entirety of their graduate careers.

Summaries of a student's semester evaluation ratings will be provided to her or him several weeks after the end of each semester.

3. **Field reviews of graduate students.** Each of the department's five major fields meets annually to discuss the progress of its first field students and vote on their continuation in the graduate program. The field chair for each field provides the DGS with evaluations of the progress of each first field student and provides students with a summary of the field's assessment of their progress in the program, their academic strengths, and areas in which they need to improve.

Each field also will hold a formal vote on whether each of the first field students should be allowed to continue toward Ph.D. candidacy or should be moved to a terminal M.A. path. The DGS presents information to the field about the student's progress—either in person or in writing, as requested by the field—but only votes on student continuation in her/his own field. When continuation votes are held on students who are in the joint Ph.D. program in Peace Studies and Political Science, at least one Political Science faculty member who is affiliated with the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies must be present. The DGS and the Graduate Policy Committee consider the continuation votes alongside the other information evaluated during the annual reviews to make a recommendation to the department about whether students should continue in the Ph.D. program.

In short, the department also takes into account potential for successful completion of the degree at each stage; making good progress and meeting deadlines are part of that evaluation, but only part. A student may have the minimum cumulative GPA and have met the required deadlines and still be judged as not making satisfactory progress. The department does not guarantee funding, even to students with good academic standing, beyond the fifth year. In some cases, additional funding is available past the fifth year, but these cases are rare and typically involve unusual circumstances.

Departmental standards for good academic standing, by program year, include the following. Students who enter with a master's degree or substantial transfer credits are expected to make speedier progress. These are the expectations for a typical case; different circumstances and opportunities may affect the exact expectations for any particular student in any particular year.

End of First Year

- Successful completion of 24 substantive credits (8 courses or equivalent), including the proseminar, math course, and introductory statistics course

End of Second Year

- Successful completion of the additional 18 required substantive credit hours (6 courses or equivalent; 42 cumulative credits). Note that the degree requirement is 60 credit hours total, of which 42 must be substantive. It is permissible that some substantive course requirements and credit hours will be earned past the second year, and that in the later years, many of the credits will be non-substantive dissertation research credits.
- Pass first written comp (by January of 2nd year; Sept. of 2nd year if 12-24 transfer credits)
- Competent and responsible performance of TA or other duties if required
- Attendance at Kaneb Center TA training workshop if TAing
- Attendance at (at least) two Kaneb Center teaching workshops if TAing

End of Third Year

- Completion of second written comp (by September of 3rd year; May of 2nd year if 12-24 transfer credits)
- Competent and responsible performance of TA or other duties if required
- Successful defense of the dissertation proposal by the end of the summer after the third year (before the start of the fourth year; by May of the third year if 12-24 transfer credits)
- Before dissertation proposal defense, must:
 - Show evidence of reading knowledge of a second language (ESL students exempted)
 - Submit one paper to an academic journal or submit a major grant proposal (both with faculty approval)

End of Fourth Year

- Clear progress on dissertation research
 - Competent and responsible performance of TA or other duties if required

End of Fifth Year

- Successful defense of the dissertation (or preparing to defend in the summer after the fifth year)
- Before dissertation defense, must:
 - Submit a second paper to an academic journal or (if one paper already has been submitted to an academic journal) submit a major grant proposal (both with faculty approval)

II. Course Registration and Full-time Status

Students are expected to complete **12 substantive credit hours per semester** in the first year, **9 substantive credit hours per semester** in the second year, and to **finish all 42 substantive credit hours by the end of the fifth semester** unless approval to take one semester longer has been obtained from the Director of Graduate Studies.

Throughout their graduate careers, students must register for at least **9 credit hours per semester (substantive and/or non-substantive) to qualify for full-time status**, which is required to receive any funding.

III. Financial Support

The Department seeks to offer financial aid—usually a fellowship and tuition but at least tuition—to all funding-eligible students in the Ph.D. program who make good progress. All students making good progress should generally be funded during their first five years of graduate studies. Depending on availability, we are sometimes able to offer tuition support to our few terminal M.A. students, but stipend support is not provided to any terminal M.A. student.

A. Forms of financial assistance

The program offers the following kinds of regular stipend assistance:

1. Graduate Assistantship: Most graduate students receive a fellowship in the form of a Graduate Assistantship. First-year students are not required to perform any service to the department. Students on a departmental Graduate Assistantship are required to render services to the Department, usually as a teaching assistant (but sometimes as a research assistant, the sole instructor of an undergraduate course, or a co-instructor, with a faculty member, of an undergraduate course), in subsequent years. More details regarding service to the department are described below.
2. Dissertation Year Fellowships (DYF): Service-free dissertation fellowships are semester or year-long fellowships given to students who are working on their dissertations. Students at the dissertation stage must apply for these fellowships and must have defended their proposal prior to the semester they take the DYF.

Students who have already received the equivalent of a Notre Dame funded DYF (through opportunities such as the Kellogg Institute dissertation fellowships or a prior departmental DYF) are not normally eligible for a departmental DYF; however, they are welcome to apply in the event such funds may be available.

The Graduate Studies Coordinator will send out DYF applications in early spring for the following academic year. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the DGS and GPC.

3. Other: In addition to regular stipend support, the department, college, and university are sometimes able to offer other financial opportunities to graduate students:
 - University Writing Program Graduate Fellowship: The Graduate School and the College of Arts and Letters award a number of University Writing Program Teaching Fellowships on a competitive basis to students who will be in their sixth year or less of enrollment and who are expected to graduate within 12 months. Students teach one course in the First Year Writing program each semester, in exchange for tuition support and a fellowship. These fellowships are not earmarked for any particular department.
 - Adjunct Teaching: Through the College of Arts and Letters, the Department sometimes offers adjunct teaching positions for advanced graduate students who no longer qualify for regular stipend support. The pay for adjunct teaching tends to be less than a full-semester stipend. Adjunct positions do not include tuition support.
 - Other university fellowships: Other units on campus, particularly the Kellogg and Nanovic Institutes, offer service-free fellowships and other funding opportunities on a competitive basis. Students are strongly encouraged to pursue these opportunities. Fellowships (stipends) received from other Notre Dame units such as Kellogg, Nanovic, or the University Writing Program and stipend funding received directly from a faculty member (e.g. through a research grant that she or he has earned) count toward the student's five years of guaranteed funding eligibility. However, students whose departmental funding eligibility has expired still may be eligible for fellowship funding from other university units.

B. Funding Decision-Making

1. Stipend funding decisions are made by the Graduate Admissions Committee for newly admitted students and by the Department faculty as a whole for all other students. The Graduate Admissions Committee, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, makes decisions about the Department's recommendations for University fellowship offers to newly admitted students. The Department's faculty as a whole meets toward the end of the spring semester to review recommendations of the DGS regarding the funding of continuing students. The DGS, in consultation with the Graduate Policy Committee, makes recommendations to the Department to continue, change, or discontinue funding based on materials in a student's written file, including evidence of whether or not a student is meeting Ph.D. requirements on schedule.
2. In awarding assistantships, priority is given to students already at Notre Dame. We will not admit or offer assistantships to incoming students if doing so means not being able to provide academic-year funding for deserving students who are already in the program.

3. Students are strongly encouraged to apply for outside funding. Every semester of funding from outside Notre Dame that a student is awarded *after* enrolling extends his or her eligibility for departmental funding by one semester up to a total of 6 years of funding, as long as the student is not beyond his or her sixth year in the program and other university requirements for funding eligibility (making satisfactory progress, maintaining a 3.0 GPA, continuous enrollment and registration, the 8-year limit, etc.) are met. The university does not provide stipend funding beyond a student's sixth year in the graduate program, although students may secure external funding (including from ND entities not funded by the College of Arts and Letters or the Graduate School) beyond that time. There can be no absolute guarantees that appropriate funds will be available.
4. Outside funding that a prospective or admitted student is awarded *before* enrolling at Notre Dame does not extend his or her eligibility for departmental funding. Rather, it is factored into budget projections so that the department can afford to admit a larger number of students and make commitments to them in future years.
5. The Department will generally not award new funding to students who came into the program without funding. The Graduate School provides no fellowship support beyond the sixth year or tuition support beyond a student's eighth year.
6. Summer courses at Notre Dame are usually tuition free and the Graduate School provides a tuition waiver. Students must complete a [Summer Tuition Scholarship Application](#) for all summer courses and must meet the Graduate School eligibility requirements. Any students taking summer courses for credit must inform the graduate program coordinator.

C. Part-time Employment

The Graduate School has strict rules disallowing part-time employment (see [Bulletin of Information](#)). It does, however, allow the departmental Director of Graduate Studies some discretion, following discussion with the student and the student's advisor.

If a student feels mitigating circumstances warrant an exception, she or he should discuss the possibility of employment with their adviser and then the Director of Graduate Studies before committing to a part-time job. Mitigating circumstances might include the opportunity to do research related to one's primary field of inquiry on the part-time job, family financial pressure, or other compelling hardship.

International students should be aware that federal laws strictly limit the number of hours of paid employment they may work. Please consult the [Office of International Student Services and Activities \(ISSA\)](#) for more information.

D. Conference Funding

The graduate program is able to offer limited support for graduate student travel to professional conferences. The DGS sets the amount and policies each year. The policy will be announced via email and posted on the website. Information about reimbursable expenses may be found on the Graduate School website and on [TravelND](#). **Reimbursement forms must be submitted to the program coordinator within 50 days of having been incurred.** After 50 days, the expense will not be reimbursed.

Students are recommended to refer to the [Department Conference Funding Policy](#) for more details regarding departmental support and reimbursement.

IV. Service to the Department

Graduate students are required to perform service for the department after their first service-free year as part of their professional training. Students who receive a full stipend from an external source (no departmental stipend support at all) have the option of not performing service. Students also are eligible to compete for university service-free dissertation year funding.

Several units of the university make annual awards recognizing excellent TAs. The DGS solicits nominations from members of the faculty. The DGS, in consultation with the GPC, makes the Department's recommendations.

A. Teaching Assistants

Given the Department's strong teaching needs, graduate assistants are usually assigned to assist faculty members in the teaching of undergraduate courses. TA responsibilities should not exceed 18 hours a week.

Assignments for teaching assistants are determined by the DGS in consultation with the Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies. The DGS consults students and faculty regarding their preferred assignments and attempts to make assignments that are satisfactory to both. These assignments are made after pre-registration is closed so that we know approximately how many students will be enrolled in different courses. This means that they occur toward the end of any given semester for the following semester.

Teaching assistants are required to attend the TA Orientation organized by the Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning at the start of the school year before their first semester as a TA.

In addition, all students are required, in or before the first year in which they TA, to attend a minimum of two additional Kaneb workshops on teaching. Continuing students are also encouraged to attend additional workshops.

B. Other Service Opportunities

In addition to teaching assistantships, there are occasionally other opportunities for service in the department. Examples include research assistantships, the graduate statistical consultant position, and editorial assistants to journals. These positions are awarded by taking into account student and faculty preferences as with teaching assistant positions. This service should not exceed 18 hours a week.

C. Independent Teaching and Team-Teaching

In rare instances, advanced graduate students fulfill their service responsibilities to the department by teaching their own course, rather than serving as a TA. The DGS, in consultation with the DUS, determines if a student can fulfill his or her service by teaching their own course by considering departmental curricular needs, student progress in the program, and the recommendation of the student's advisor as to the impact of solo teaching on the student's research progress and job market

prospects. In addition, there are occasional opportunities to team-teach a course with a faculty member, which also replaces serving as a TA as fulfillment of a student's service responsibilities for a semester. Whether or not such opportunities are made available to students is determined through the same process used to consider students for independent teaching as well as the willingness of the faculty member to team-teach with the graduate student.

V. Advising

Students are encouraged to seek advice from their colleagues and from a wide range of faculty members. Formally, the Director of Graduate Studies acts as the default advisor to all first-year students. All incoming students also are assigned a mentor from their first field, who is responsible for advising them and monitoring their progress until they choose a formal advisor.

By March of their second year, students are *required* to choose an advisor, who signs an [Advising Agreement form](#) indicating her or his agreement to assume that responsibility. Students may change advisors after this initial choice, but they must inform the Director of Graduate Studies of this change.

The Director of Graduate Studies is available for advice to all students in the program. Field chairs and relevant faculty should always be consulted well in advance of the time when students plan to take a comprehensive exam. Students should seek to build a close working relationship with faculty in their field during their first two years, even before they are required to make a formal choice of advisors.

VI. Coursework

A. Incompletes

Students should complete the work of graduate courses at the 60000-90000 level during the regular academic term in which they are taken. This expectation of students should also guide faculty members who teach graduate courses. That is, faculty are obligated to evaluate and grade graduate work by the end of the term in which the course is offered.

A grade of "Incomplete" (I) should be given *only in exceptional circumstances* when there are compelling reasons. When a student receives a grade of "I," he or she has 30 days from when grades were due (for the semester in which the "I" was given) to complete the coursework for a grade. If the coursework is not completed by this date, the grade of "I" will be changed permanently to a grade of "F." Students whose G.P.A. falls below a 3.0, even for this reason, can be denied funding. Extensions for Incompletes require formal approval from the associate dean of students in the Graduate School.

The department and the Graduate School will review a student who receives more than one "I" in a semester or an "I" in two or more consecutive semesters, to determine his or her eligibility for continued support and enrollment.

B. Credit Transfer

See the Graduate School's [Bulletin of Information](#) for information on credit transfer policy. Students must petition the DGS to apply specific coursework completed elsewhere to departmental requirements (e.g., courses applied toward the field requirement or the methods requirement).

Students should consult with the DGS regarding the application of specific transfer credits to specific Ph.D. requirements.

Please note the various consequences of credit transfer described throughout this document, including for funding eligibility.

C. Papers Submitted for Multiple Courses

In courses requiring submission of a paper, the paper must be substantially different from papers previously submitted for course credit or submitted for credit in other courses currently being taken by the student. This rule may be waived if the student has the written approval of the instructor (in the case of a paper that had been submitted for course credit in a prior semester) or all of the instructors (in the case of a paper being submitted for credit for multiple courses in the same semester).

VII. Search Committees

When the department is engaged in a faculty search, a student from that particular field will serve on the committee. Students on search committees will have access to the same information as the faculty members of the committee. Their opinions regarding who should be interviewed and hired will be of an advisory nature. Student search committee representatives also are responsible for reporting to the committee on graduate student feedback on job candidates after the interviews are completed.

VIII. Violations of Academic Integrity

When an instructor or advisor believes that a graduate student may have violated academic integrity, the instructor or advisor should report the case in writing to the Chair. The Chair will appoint a committee to review the case. After a hearing involving the instructor/advisor and the student, the committee will make a recommendation. The Chair will inform the student of the committee's ruling and will specify a time within which the student may appeal. A penalty against a graduate student must be approved by the Graduate School.

A student who has had recourse to the departmental grievance procedure may appeal to the Graduate School. See the Graduate School policy regarding academic integrity in [Bulletin of Information](#).

IX. Grievance Procedures

Students who wish to file a formal grievance on academic matters should begin the process by contacting the Director of Graduate Studies, the Chair, or their advisor. These three individuals or some subset thereof will designate a committee of three to five faculty members to evaluate the grievance. A student may appeal the decision of the departmental committee to the Graduate School (see the Graduate School's [Bulletin of Information](#) for details on the grievance procedure).

X. Interruptions of Progress to Degree

A. Medical Separation from Academic Duties

The Graduate School has a policy on Medical Separation from Academic Duties for students who experience a "serious medical condition," including childbirth. Please see the Graduate School's

[Bulletin of Information](#) for full details. You are encouraged to consult with the DGS regarding any adjustments of degree deadlines that may be necessary. For students experiencing childbirth or adoption, please also see the Childbirth and Accommodation Policy described below.

B. Leave of Absence

Students should consult with their advisor and the DGS before submitting a request to take a leave of absence. Students should consult the Graduate School's [Bulletin of Information](#) for details regarding Leave of Absence.

XI. Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation Policy

The Graduate School's [Childbirth and Accommodation Policy](#) provides a framework for assisting students who are new parents. Students should read the policy carefully and then consult with the DGS and their advisor to develop an appropriate accommodation plan.

XII. Dismissal

One of the realities of graduate experience is that not everyone who begins a doctorate completes it. The process described here is restricted to academic issues; issues of personal misconduct are handled by Student Affairs.

Students may be dismissed either by failing a comprehensive examination twice or through poor performance in the graduate program.

A. Dismissal for failing a comprehensive exam in a field twice.

Students who fail a comprehensive exam in one field have the opportunity to retake the exam the next time comprehensive exams are offered (e.g., if you fail an exam in September, you *must* retake the exam in January). If a student fails an exam twice, s/he will be notified by the DGS that s/he will not be allowed to progress to Ph.D. candidacy.

B. Dismissal for performance that fails to meet expectations for excellence.

Students whose performance does not meet expectations for excellence and/or who are otherwise judged by the faculty to not meet the standards for appropriate and successful graduate performance are at risk of dismissal. Less than excellent performance in classes, in the execution of service responsibilities (e.g., as a TA), in the fulfillment of Ph.D. requirements, and/or in the quality of research (including dissertation) are all cause for possible dismissal. Students may be considered for possible dismissal due to failure to fulfill degree requirements: failing to fulfill course requirements in a timely manner, failing to produce a dissertation proposal that a faculty committee deems defensible, failing to produce a journal article for submission before the oral examination and again before the dissertation defense, and so on (see Part II: Degree Requirements).

Students also may be considered for possible dismissal by failing to maintain good academic standing (see Part III: Section I). As noted above, student performance in the program is evaluated through semester evaluations completed by individual faculty members, through the fields' annual evaluations of first-field graduate students each spring, and through the fields' continuation votes on its first-field students. If a student receives a negative continuation vote from her or his field,

receives poor semester evaluations, is evaluated negatively by the field, or is otherwise judged to fail to meet expectations for academic excellence, the DGS, in consultation with the GPC, the student's field, and the student's advisor, may recommend to the full department that the student be dismissed from the program. The full department makes decisions on whether or not a student will be allowed to continue in the Ph.D. program.

XIII. The Appeal Process

If a student is dismissed for academic reasons, he or she may appeal the department's decision. This procedure is not to be used to address issues of sexual or discriminatory harassment or disability-related grievances (see [Graduate Student Life](#)) or of academic fraud (see 'Academic Integrity' section of the Graduate School's [Bulletin of Information](#)).

The appeal is a two-step process; the first is through the program or department. If the student does not agree with the department's decision, she or he may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School, who makes the final determination. The Graduate School's grievance process can be found in the Graduate School [Bulletin of Information](#). The following is intended to provide guidance for the first appeal or the local appeal.

Complaints must be initiated by a written statement from the student to the chair of the department within 14 days from the time when the student is informed of dismissal. To hear the appeal, the department chair appoints an *ad hoc* committee composed of him/herself and at least two faculty members unconnected factually with the case or the reasons for the appeal, and one graduate student. If the department chair has been involved in the case, the appropriate associate dean of the college should appoint the committee and designate the person to serve as its chair.

The student's statement should indicate details on the nature of the problem, the date(s) during which the problem occurred, the grounds upon which the appeal is based, background information that the student considers important and the relief requested.

The appeals committee will promptly and thoroughly investigate the appeal to determine whether the relief requested is warranted. The investigation may include interviews and/or written statements from the student, any student witnesses, faculty or staff members who may be able to provide pertinent information about the facts, as well as a review of any pertinent documents. In most situations, the appeals committee will complete the investigation in 30 business days (Note: Business days do not include weekends or employee holidays as recognized by the University). There may be some reports that cannot be investigated within 30 business days. In such cases, the chair of the appeals committee will communicate to the student that the investigation is going to take longer than 30 business days and will also include a statement indicating when the committee anticipates completing the investigation. The department chair will notify the student in writing of his/her decision. If the chair has been involved in the case, the decision will be made by the designated chair of the *ad hoc* committee.

XIV. Political Science Graduate Organization (PoGO)

The Political Science Graduate Organization has four main purposes:

1. To foster and develop activities, meetings, and workshops designed to increase professionalism of Political Science graduate students;
2. To serve as a social organization for Political Science graduate students;

3. To increase communication between graduate students and faculty;
4. To represent the views of graduate students to the department.

Officers are elected on an annual basis for a one-year term, and meetings are announced to all students.

XV. Placement

Students are strongly encouraged to work closely with the Placement Director, as well as their dissertation committee and other faculty advisors, in preparing to apply and interview for academic positions. Students planning to go on the job market should begin to prepare themselves by enrolling in “The Academic Career,” a graduate seminar designed specifically for this purpose. Students are encouraged to take this course after most of their substantive coursework is complete but as early as possible (perhaps the third or fourth year), and no later than the spring before they intend to be on the academic job market. This course will help students prepare materials—including a curriculum vitae, dissertation abstract, letters of recommendation, and a teaching portfolio—to send out to prospective employers.

In the late summer or early fall of the year in which a student enters the job market, students should provide the Office of Graduate Studies with a paragraph description of themselves along with a current CV to be posted on the department’s website. They should also arrange to have their letters of recommendation and other materials uploaded and sent out through an internet service like Interfolio.

Finding Out about Job Openings. “eJobs” is APSA’s year-round online source for information about jobs. It is free to APSA members. The Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Placement Director often receive announcements about positions; such announcements are sent by email to the graduate student listserv. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* lists some positions that are not posted in eJobs.

XVI. Graduate Student Participation at Faculty Meetings

One or two representatives from among the graduate students, elected by PoGO, may be invited by the GPC to attend the first 15 minutes of Faculty Meetings to relate students’ concerns regarding agenda items pertaining to the graduate program.