

University of South Carolina  
Department of Philosophy

Graduate Handbook  
2014–2015



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA

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**University of South Carolina**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**Graduate Student Handbook, 2014-15**

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## ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

The Philosophy Department admits new students into the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the Fall semester of each year. Applications for admission are reviewed during the previous Spring semester. Normally, to be admitted with full standing into either program, a student will have completed 18 hours of course work in philosophy above the introductory level. Applicants also must have met the general admission requirements of the Graduate School.

Applications for admission are handled online through the Graduate School's web site. Instructions are accessible on the Graduate School's web site: <http://gradschool.sc.edu/apply.htm>.

Applicants should arrange for three letters of recommendation, transcripts, and GRE scores to be sent to The Graduate School. Applicants whose native language is not English should also arrange for TOEFL or IELTS Intl. exam scores to be sent to The Graduate School. In addition, all applicants should send a sample of philosophical writing (maximum length 6,000 words) and a brief statement of purpose (400 words) to the department. Letters of recommendation should come from persons familiar with the applicant's academic achievement and potential and should specifically address the applicant's potential for success in a graduate degree program.

Transcripts of prior undergraduate and graduate work must show sufficient promise of ability to do graduate work. Hence the department looks for GPAs in the range from 3.00 to 4.00 for all undergraduate work and 3.50 to 4.00 for all graduate work (on a 4.00 scale).

Although there is no official minimum GRE score that we enforce, we look for GRE scores above 1250 on the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning portions of the exam. Scores of at least 4.5 on the Analytical Writing section are generally acceptable. Note that GRE scores are valid for five years. The GRE exam will have to be retaken if the applicant's scores are more than five years old.

Students are normally admitted into the program only in the Fall semester. The Graduate School's absolute deadline for applying for the Fall semester is July 1. However, to receive full consideration for financial assistance, applications and all supporting material should be received by January 15th. Applicants are informed of the Department's decisions in early March, and are asked to respond to offers of admission by April 15th. All Ph.D. applicants will be considered for Graduate Assistantships, unless they indicate otherwise. Unsuccessful applicants to the Ph.D. program will automatically be considered for admission to the M.A. program unless they indicate otherwise, or are already enrolled in an M.A. program elsewhere.

International applicants whose native language is not English are also required to submit a satisfactory score on the TOEFL or the University of Cambridge's IELTS Academic Course Type 2 exam. For admission to the Ph.D. or M.A. program it is desirable to achieve a TOEFL score of at least 590 (243 computer-based or 96 internet-based ). The minimum acceptable overall band score on the IELTS Academic Course Type 2 exam is 6.5. TOEFL/IELTS scores are valid for two years. Further information about International admissions can be found at the International Programs for Students web site: <http://www.sa.sc.edu/ips/future.htm>.

# THE M.A. AND PH.D. PROGRAMS

## A. Overview of Requirements

The requirements for degrees include those stated in the Graduate Studies Bulletin for all M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. This Bulletin is available only in electronic form.

Requirements specific to the Philosophy Department's M.A. program are:

1. *Thesis option.* Students in the M.A. program may elect either the thesis option or the non-thesis option.
2. *Course requirement.* Students who choose to write a thesis are required to take at least 8 courses prior to the thesis. Without a thesis, at least 11 courses are required.
3. *Logic requirement.* Successful completion of an upper-level course in symbolic logic, taken either as an upper level undergraduate course or as part of the graduate program, is required of all students.
4. *History requirement.* Successful completion of at least two upper-level history-of-philosophy courses: at least one from Ancient or Medieval, and at least one from Early or Late Modern.
5. *Language requirement.* A reading knowledge of one foreign language is required of all students.
6. All M.A. students are required to pass an *M.A. Comprehensive Examination*. Students who choose the thesis option must also write a *Master's Thesis*.

Requirements specific to the Philosophy Department's Ph.D. program are:

1. *Course requirement.* Students must take 16 graduate philosophy courses (other than 899), at least 8 of which are at the 700 level.
2. *Core requirement.* All Ph.D. students must pass the following core courses, normally within the first two years in the program: Logic (511), Ethics (514 or 527), Epistemology (763), and Metaphysics (764).
3. *History requirement.* All Ph.D. students must pass at least one graduate level course in each of three historical periods.
4. *Science requirement.* All Ph.D. students must pass at least one graduate level course in the philosophy of science.
5. *Language requirement.* A reading knowledge of one foreign language is required of all students. When a Ph.D. student's research area demands knowledge of a particular foreign language, the student will be expected to be proficient in that language.
6. In order to be *admitted to candidacy* for the Ph.D. degree, students (a) must have produced written work of a high standard in their courses, (b) must have demonstrated proficiency in their teaching duties, and (c) must have submitted a Doctoral Program of Study to the Graduate School, usually after all or almost all required coursework is done, other than the 12 credit hours of Dissertation Preparation (PHIL 899).
7. Students are required to pass a two-part *Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination* (consisting of both a written and an oral part), and to write and defend a *Doctoral Dissertation*.

## B. Timetables

The M.A. program, with or without a thesis, is a two-year program with a well-defined timetable. Individual Ph.D. programs tend to vary, particularly after course work is completed. Standard timetables for these programs are shown in the following chart.

	<b>M.A. Program (without thesis)</b>	<b>M.A. Program (with thesis)</b>	<b>Ph.D. Program</b>
<b>Year 1 Fall</b>	3 courses, to include logic		3 courses, to include logic
<b>Year 1 Spring</b>	3 courses		3 courses, to include one or two core courses
<b>Summer</b>	Revise and submit Comp Exam paper		
<b>Year 2 Fall</b>	3 courses File Program of Study	2 courses Submit Thesis Proposal. File Program of Study	3 courses, to include one or two core courses
<b>Year 2 Spring</b>	2 courses Take care of graduation requirements	Work on Thesis	3 courses, to include 790 and one or two core courses
<b>Summer</b>		Complete Thesis; Take care of graduation requirements	
<b>Year 3 Fall</b>			2 courses Select dissertation area
<b>Year 3 Spring</b>			2 courses Develop dissertation proposal
<b>Summer</b>			Prepare for Comp. Exam in early Fall
<b>Year 4 Fall</b>			Submit dissertation proposal and take Comp. Exam; File Program of Study
<b>Year 4 Spring</b>			Work on dissertation; Take care of graduation requirements

## **C. Advisory Committees**

### **M.A. Advisory Committees:**

Students in the MA program who initially select the non-thesis option are typically advised by the Graduate Director and one other faculty member. MA students who intend to write a thesis will also be assigned an MA Thesis Committee (consisting of a thesis advisor and second reader) by the beginning of the second year in the program.

### **Ph.D. Advisory Committees:**

Each student in the PhD program will be supervised by three successive advisory committees: an initial advisory committee, a comprehensive exam committee, and a dissertation committee. These committees assist the student in developing an appropriate course of study, evaluate student progress, provide guidance and counsel, certify the completion of various degree requirements, and ensure that professional standards have been met in completing those requirements. The composition of each committee should reflect the student's interests and the area in which the student is likely to write a dissertation, though the constitution of these committees may change as the student progresses through the program.

**Initial Advisory Committee:** Each student is assigned an initial advisory committee upon admission to the PhD program. This assignment is made by the Graduate Director in consultation with the student and the Department's graduate faculty. This committee will consist of three graduate faculty members. The student must confer with his or her initial advisory committee at least twice a year, typically in the middle of each Fall and Spring semester, until the formation of the comprehensive exam committee. The initial advisory committee is primarily responsible for advising the student on his or her overall progress in the first two years of the program. This involves (1) course selection and consideration of options for the language and/or research methods requirement, as well as (2) selecting and finishing materials for the student's portfolio (see below), particularly with an eye on identifying potential dissertation topics compatible with the student's interests and strengths.

**PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee:** At the beginning of the third year, each student is assigned a comprehensive exam committee, consisting of a primary advisor, at least two other graduate faculty members, and one faculty member from outside the Philosophy Department. This assignment is made by the Graduate Director in consultation with the student and the student's initial advisory committee. The primary task of the comprehensive exam committee is to supervise the formulation of a topic and proposal for the doctoral dissertation (typically in the third year), followed by the successful completion of the PhD comprehensive exam (typically at the beginning of the fourth year). This committee will help the student to identify an appropriate research topic, approval depending on (a) the availability of a suitable dissertation director, (b) whether the student has or is able to acquire any specialized skills required for the topic chosen (e.g., familiarity with one of the sciences, or proficiency in a particular foreign language), (c) whether materials and facilities necessary for completing the project are readily available, and (d) whether the project can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. The dissertation topic must be jointly accepted and a formal dissertation proposal jointly approved by all committee members, having determined that the Department can provide adequate support for the proposed research. This committee will aim to anticipate any other needs to develop or strengthen particular skills and areas of expertise crucial to success in the profession and supervise the student accordingly. The student should confer with his or her comprehensive exam committee at least twice a year until the formation of the dissertation committee.

**Dissertation Committee:** After passing the PhD comprehensive exam (typically early in the fourth year) the student, in consultation with the Graduate Director and the student's comprehensive exam committee, will choose a dissertation director, two other graduate faculty members who are competent in the area of the student's dissertation, and one faculty member from outside the Philosophy Department. Members of this committee must be available and willing to serve in this capacity. This committee supervises the student in the preparation of the dissertation, judges whether the dissertation is ready to be defended, examines the student on the dissertation, and informs the Dean of the Graduate School as to whether the student passed or failed the defense. The dissertation cannot be submitted to the Graduate School until it has been approved and signed by members of the dissertation committee. The student should confer with his or her dissertation committee at least twice a year. In addition to monitoring progress on the dissertation, the dissertation committee will gauge the student's overall job placement profile and advise the student on ways to improve that profile.

**General Remarks about Ph.D. Program Advisement:** The following remarks apply to advisement at all stages of the Ph.D. program. The idea of always having a committee of at least three advisors is aimed at ensuring a broad range of advice and minimizing problems associated with contingencies such as sabbatical leave. Advisory committee members are an important source of information and academic guidance. A student should inform his or her primary advisor immediately of any difficulties encountered. Regular meetings with one's current advisory committee provide opportunities to inform the student about his or her overall progress through the program. These meetings also provide opportunities to address complaints and suggestions concerning the program.

A student's funding for a given semester may be withheld until the Graduate Director receives written verification of the student's meeting with his or her advisory committee at least once during the previous semester. Until the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam is completed, the student is also expected to meet with all available members of the advisory committee *jointly* at least once per academic year, typically in the Spring semester, to assess the contents of the student's portfolio at that juncture. On a case-by-case basis, the student may request or the advisory committee may recommend more than one joint meeting per year.

It is the student's responsibility to contact advisory committee members and arrange these meetings. Once per semester, advisors must sign the student's "PhD Student Advising Form" for the given academic year. These forms are to be kept by the student as part of the portfolio, though a photocopy of the completed form should be given to the Assessment Director after the joint meeting in the Spring.

The student may at any time petition the Graduate Director for a change in the make-up of his or her advisory committee. Faculty members may become unavailable, or the student's work may change in such a way that he or she may need to work with other faculty members. Changes in the constitution of the advisory committee must receive the consent of the Graduate Director and a majority of the current committee. Such changes should be avoided upon nearing completion of the dissertation.

In instances of unresolved conflicting advice, the Graduate Director should be consulted. The Graduate Director supervises the graduate program, acting on behalf of the Department in all academic matters concerning graduate students. The Graduate Director interprets the requirements to students and acts to enforce Departmental rules and policies. The Graduate Director also acts as an advocate for the graduate students to the Department.

## **D. Student Portfolios**

Each doctoral student must maintain a “portfolio” of achievements in the program. This portfolio will be an essential tool for tracking and assessing the student’s progress in the program. The contents of the portfolio will be available only to the student and to members of the department faculty.

The portfolio, including yearly writing samples and a dissertation proposal, will serve as the written portion of the Ph.D. comprehensive exam. It will also serve as a working basis for developing a job placement dossier. The student must therefore maintain an up-to-date portfolio at least until their date of graduation. The Department’s annual assessment of the graduate program as a whole will be based to some degree on a summary review of current student portfolios.

Student portfolios will include hard copies of at least the following items (neatly organized in a loose-leaf binder):

1. The student’s statement of purpose and writing sample submitted as part of their application for admission.
2. One or more samples of one’s best writing from each year in the program (at least one expected by August 15 each year) until the Ph.D. comprehensive exam is passed.
3. All signed advisement forms: one per year until the Ph.D. comprehensive exam is passed.
4. A syllabus for each course for which the student is the instructor of record (due within a month after instruction begins).
5. A summary of student evaluations of one’s teaching for each course where one serves either as an instructional assistant (GIA) or as a teaching assistant (GTA), for as long as one is involved in teaching at USC.
6. Copies of all classroom visitation reports for any class for which the student serves in some instructional capacity and for which such a visitation was scheduled.
7. An up-to-date *curriculum vitae*, including (but not limited to) a chronological record of all GSA/ GRA/GIA/GTA duties, a list of publications and works submitted for publication, a list of public presentations at conferences, and any record of service to department, university, community, or profession.
8. A dissertation proposal (expected no later than the beginning of the fourth year).

It is expected that the student will develop professionally while in the graduate program so that earlier contents of the portfolio may not reflect the student’s later capabilities, such as at the time of the Ph.D. comprehensive exam or later when the student begins to actively seek academic jobs. The student if need be will have ample opportunity during the oral portion of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination to discuss how earlier writing samples could be amplified, amended, or disowned. Likewise, it is assumed that the writing samples that serve as part of the student’s placement dossier will be carefully selected by the student (in consultation with the Placement Director) so as to maximize the student’s chances of job placement. The portfolio itself will not serve as a placement dossier though the student may make relevant materials directly available to prospective employers.

Sidenote: The Graduate School may be developing the means by which such a portfolio may be maintained online and made accessible to students’ advisors (perhaps using Blackboard if not other supplementary technologies). Until and perhaps even after such a system is operational, the student should maintain a version of this portfolio in an electronic form (pdf files, etc.) such that portfolio materials can be made available in hardcopy or through email to advisors as needed.



The Graduate School will be using this portfolio system primarily to track each graduate student's progress to graduation <<http://gradschool.sc.edu/degreereq/>>. Each student will be able to access and submit key forms documenting one's progress through the program, including

- Forms designating the members of one's current advisory committee.
- Documentation required for admission to candidacy, including the "program of study" form.
- Forms documenting completion of the comprehensive exams.
- Evidence of passing a language proficiency exam.
- An application for graduation.
- Documentation required for the defense and submission of a thesis or dissertation.

## **E. M.A. Course Requirements**

M.A. students who choose not to write a thesis must complete 11 graduate courses (other than 799). At least 6 of these 11 courses must be at the 700 level. M.A. students under the thesis plan must take 8 graduate courses (other than thesis hours), normally in their first three semesters. At least 4 of these 8 courses must be at the 700 level. In addition, at least 6 hours of 799 (thesis preparation) are required for the thesis option. All M.A. students, thesis or no thesis, must satisfy the logic and history requirements (below).

The Department does not usually offer graduate courses in the Summer terms. Independent Study courses (Philosophy 797) sometimes may be arranged with individual faculty members during the summer months.

All graduate students must maintain at least a B average for all courses taken, and will be asked to leave the program if a grade below B is received in more than two courses. A grade of D is considered a failing grade and cannot be included in a student's Program of Study (see below).

**Logic requirement:** Philosophy 511, *Symbolic Logic*, is an important prerequisite for advanced study in many other areas of philosophy. It covers, at a minimum, first order quantificational logic and philosophical aspects of the formal material, such as the nature of truth and the relation between logical consequence and provability. It should be taken by students during their first semester in the program. Students who have taken equivalent or more advanced logic courses elsewhere may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for exemption from this course.

**History requirement:** In the section on "Ph.D. Course Requirements" below, various history-of-philosophy courses are listed in three parts: I. Ancient to Renaissance; II. Early Modern; and III. Late Modern. Students must pass at least two of these courses, at least one taken from Part I and at least one taken from Parts II or III.

**Limits on Independent Study Courses:** For M.A. students, at most one independent study course (797, *Independent Study*, or 598, *Readings in Philosophy*) may count towards overall course requirements. This does not mean that one has a "right" to one independent study course. Approval to register for such a course must be obtained from the Department Chair and from the Director of Graduate Studies. The decision normally will be based on whether the material covered by the independent study is not part of a course offered during the student's enrollment at USC and whether it is indispensable (a) for the student's thesis work and cannot be considered as part of the usual preparatory reading or (b) for the profile of the

student on the basis of which she/he wants to continue further Ph.D. studies, assuming that the intended topic would not normally be part of such studies. At the discretion of the Graduate Director, an exception for more than one independent study course may be based on shortage of regular course offerings necessary for a student's timely completion of coursework.

A minimum of 6 credits in Thesis Preparation 799 is required of all M.A. students under the thesis plan, and not more than 6 hours of 799 may be used on a program of study for the M.A. degree.

## **F. Ph.D. Course Requirements**

Graduate students in the Ph.D. program normally should take 3 courses in each semester of their first two years at USC, and 2 courses in each semester of their third year. The Department does not usually offer graduate courses in the Summer terms. Independent Study courses (Philosophy 797) sometimes may be arranged with individual faculty members during the summer months.

Ph.D. students who enter the program without an M.A. degree in philosophy must pass 16 graduate courses, of which at least 8 are at the 700 level. Students entering the program with an M.A. degree in philosophy must pass 8 or more courses at USC, of which at least 6 are at the 700 level. In either case, at least 12 additional hours of 899 (dissertation preparation) are required. Courses taken at USC must satisfy various distribution requirements listed below. To satisfy all of these requirements, more than eight USC courses may be required for some students entering the program with an M.A. degree. Graduate work done prior to entering the USC program may, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies, count towards the Ph.D. course requirements.

All graduate students must maintain at least a B average for all courses taken, and will be asked to leave the program if a grade below B is received in more than one of the core courses or more than two courses overall. A grade of D is considered a failing grade and cannot be included in a student's Program of Study (see below).

**Core requirement:** Ph.D. students are required to pass four core courses, normally within the first two years of course work. These advanced courses survey fundamental topics with which Ph.D. graduates should be familiar in order to compete successfully for academic philosophy positions after graduation:

1. Philosophy 511, *Symbolic Logic*, is an important prerequisite for advanced study in many other areas of philosophy. It covers, at a minimum, first order quantificational logic and philosophical aspects of the formal material, such as the nature of truth and the relation between logical consequence and provability. It should be taken by students during their first semester in the program.
2. Philosophy 514, *Ethical Theory*, or Philosophy 527, *Virtues, Acts, and Consequences*, survey fundamental concepts and issues in metaethics and normative ethics, respectively. Each course examines both historical roots and recent developments in ethics. At least one of these should be taken within the first two years in the program.
3. Philosophy 763, *Epistemology*, is a survey of historical and recent trends in the philosophical study of human knowledge, taking a problem-oriented and/or historically-oriented approach to a range of topics from the following open-ended list: different conceptions of knowledge; theories of truth; conceptions of probability; perception; skepticism; epistemic justification; epistemic contextualism; relativism and objectivity; epistemology naturalized; epistemic externalism.

4. Philosophy 764, *Metaphysics*, is a survey of historical and recent trends in metaphysics, taking a problem-oriented and/or historically-oriented approach to a range of topics from the following open-ended list: being and substance; existence and ontological commitment; modality and the theory of possible worlds; universals and the theory of properties; essentialism versus nominalism; realism versus idealism; time, space, and causation; persistence of things in time; personal identity and the persistence of the self; freedom and determinism.

Every effort is made to offer the core courses sequentially in a two-year cycle. Ph.D. students should plan course loads around this cycle so that they complete the four required core courses by the end of their second year in the program. Students who have taken equivalent or more advanced versions of any of these courses elsewhere may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for exemption from those courses.

**Science requirement:** Ph.D. students must pass at least one graduate-level course in the philosophy of science. Several such courses are offered each year. Which courses count as satisfying this requirement is at the discretion of the Graduate Director.

**History requirement:** Ph.D. students must pass at least one course in each of three historical periods:

**History I: Ancient to Renaissance Philosophy**

505	Plato
506	Aristotle
526	Hellenistic Philosophy
701	Studies in Ancient Philosophy
507	Medieval Philosophy
540	Renaissance Philosophy

**History II: Early Modern Philosophy**

501	British Empiricism
502	Continental Rationalism
508	Hume
509	Kant
705	Studies in 17th and 18th C. Philosophy
707	Studies in 19th C. Philosophy
723	Hegel

**History III: Late Modern Philosophy**

503	Analytic Philosophy
504	Phenomenology and Existentialism
534	Contemporary European Social Philosophy
706	Studies in Continental Philosophy
707	Studies in 19th C. Philosophy
709	Studies in 20th C. Philosophy
721	Pragmatism

Philosophy 760, *Special Topics in Philosophy*, and Philosophy 797, *Independent Study*, may count as history courses depending on the material covered in individual cases. Philosophy 707 may count as either early or late modern depending on the material covered in the course. These determinations are made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the instructor.-

**Limits on Independent Study Courses:** For Ph.D. students, a maximum of two independent study courses (797, *Independent Study*, or 598, *Readings in Philosophy*) may count towards overall course

requirements. This does not mean that one has a “right” to two independent study courses. Approval to register for such courses must be obtained from the Department Chair and from the Director of Graduate Studies. The decision normally will be based on whether the material covered by the independent study is not part of a course offered during the student’s enrollment at USC and whether it is indispensable (a) for the student’s dissertation work and cannot be considered as part of the usual preparatory reading or (b) for the profile of the student on the basis of which she/he wants to go on the job market. At the discretion of the Graduate Director, an exception for more than one independent study course may be based on shortage of regular course offerings necessary for a student’s timely completion of coursework.

**Philosophy 790 requirement:** Ph.D. students must pass Phil 790, *Philosophy as a Profession / Teaching Philosophy* (3 credit hours). This course counts toward the 16 courses required for the Ph.D. degree. This course is offered each Spring semester and should be completed by the end of the student’s second year in the program.

At least 12 credits in Dissertation Preparation 899 are required of all Ph.D. candidates. A *maximum* of 12 credits in 899 may be used on a program of study for the Ph.D. degree.

## **G. Language Requirement**

Learning a foreign language is an important part of professionalization as a philosopher. It is therefore expected that students will satisfy a foreign language requirement.

Satisfying the foreign language requirement may entail one of the following: successful completion of an intensive reading course in a language approved by The Graduate School (e.g., German 615), or a passing grade on a language reading proficiency examination administered by the USC Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (DLLC). Students should contact DLLC <<http://www.cas.sc.edu/dllc/>> for language course and testing information. A student may take the competency test in a given language no more than three times.

Students in the Ph.D. or M.A. program whose native language is not English may be able use English in fulfillment of their foreign language requirement. An official TOEFL score of at least 590 (paper-based) or 243 (computer-based) is required as proof of proficiency.

Students in the M.A. program must demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language approved by the Graduate School.

If a doctoral student’s comprehensive examination committee determines that the research area demands knowledge of one or more foreign languages, the student is required to demonstrate proficiency in at least one of those languages (though the comprehensive examination committee may urge the student to learn more than the one, as time allows). This applies to all Ph.D. students, including those whose native language is not English. Only if the required research language is the foreign student’s native language may English be used to fulfill this requirement.

In rare cases, a doctoral student’s comprehensive examination committee may determine that it is advisable for the student to substitute for the foreign language requirement a substantial competence in a research method relevant to the student’s research.

Departmental approval to substitute competence in a research method for reading knowledge of a foreign language will be decided by the student’s Ph.D. comprehensive examination committee. As with

successful completion of the language requirement, the Graduate School must be notified in writing by the Graduate Director of a student's successful completion of a substitution for the language requirement. This will require information about how and not just that this requirement has been successfully completed. Ultimate approval of the substitution will be made by the dean of the Graduate School.

The student should make arrangements to complete the foreign language and/or research methods requirement at the earliest opportunity. The student should discuss options with his or her advisory committee beginning early in the program. Departmental approval of the student's choice of language or research method will be finalized no later than the time at which the Ph.D. comprehensive examination is taken. The topic of that exam will serve as partial evidence for the reasonableness of that choice.

Certification of foreign language competency (and any substitute for it) for doctoral students remains valid for eight years, after which it must be revalidated.

## ***H. M.A. Comprehensive Exam***

The MA Comprehensive Exam is a written exam consisting of a revised version of one of the student's first-year papers or a similar high-quality paper on an approved topic of interest to the student. This paper will be assessed by two faculty members, to be designated by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the student and possible examiners. Normally the paper will be written under the supervision of at least one of the examiners.

The MA comprehensive exam is intended to demonstrate mastery of the skills required for basic philosophical writing. These include the ability to articulate and defend a thesis on the basis of argument and textual interpretation. The standards for assessing the MA exam lie between the standards for evaluating undergraduate work and PhD-level work. While the MA comprehensive exam assesses many of the same skills involved in undergraduate writing, the exam holds students to a high standard, because it requires mastery of these skills. On the other hand, the MA comprehensive exam is less demanding than the PhD comprehensive exam, because the former does not require students to make an original contribution to the literature and, consequently, does not require the level of research needed to show that such a standard has been met. Rather, the extent of research involved in the MA comprehensive exam is variable and depends upon the paper topic and the judgment of the faculty advisor.

These papers will vary in length (15 to 30 pages, 12pt, double-spaced, etc.). A final version must be submitted to the examiners and to the Director of Graduate Studies by August 15 prior to the beginning of the student's second year in the program.

These papers are graded "pass" or "fail". The result will be reported to the Graduate Director and to the student within ten days of the examiners' receipt of the paper. A student whose August 15 paper does not pass may resubmit a revised version at most once anytime before the following January 16. The result of that second assessment will determine whether the student passes or fails the MA Comprehensive Exam.

## ***I. Admission to Candidacy for the Ph.D. Degree***

Every semester members of the faculty are asked to make brief written evaluations of the performance of those graduate students in the Ph.D. program whom they have had occasion to supervise, whether in graduate classes or as instructional or research assistants. Toward the end of the Spring semester of each

academic year the Department meets to review each student's overall progress. By the end of that academic year the student will receive a letter summarizing the results of the latest annual review. In cases where the student's progress falls short of expectations, remedies may be prescribed that must be implemented within a time frame specified in the letter. Failure to resolve the stated problems in the given time frame may result in the student's dismissal from the program. To be *considered* for admission to candidacy, the student must have resolved any problems identified in these annual progress letters for which specific remedies have been prescribed.

To be *recommended* for admission to candidacy, a student must have satisfied several other requirements:

1. The student must have completed all required course work other than Phil 899.
2. The student must have submitted an approved Doctoral Program of Study (DPOS) form to the Graduate School.
3. The student must have submitted an approved Doctoral Committee Appointment Request (G-DCA) form to the Graduate School.
4. The student's written work in graduate courses taken at USC must have been strong enough to justify an expectation of success in the remainder of the program.
5. The student must have demonstrated proficiency in any teaching duties assigned throughout their graduate work, as instructional assistants and as teaching assistants.

Final approval for admission to candidacy for the PhD degree is made by the dean of the Graduate School, who will notify the student of his or her admission to Ph.D. degree candidacy.

## ***J. Applying from the M.A. to the Ph.D. Program***

Current M.A. students may apply for admission to the Ph.D. program. In accordance with Graduate School policy, if it has been more than three years since your last Graduate School enrollment at USC, the student must submit a formal application to enter the Ph.D. program. This application should include an up-to-date transcript, three letters of recommendation, an official record of GRE scores, a sample of philosophical writing (maximum length, 6,000 words), a 400-word statement of purpose, and an application fee. These materials should reach the Graduate School on or before January 15th. M.A. students who are currently enrolled and are in good standing need only submit a "Change of Status" (COS) form to the Graduate School along with a non-refundable change-of-status fee.

Applications from students in the M.A. program will be reviewed by the Department alongside applications from external candidates. Philosophical ability and the level of commitment necessary for success in a doctoral program, as evidenced by course work in the M.A. program, will carry considerable weight. The student's performance on the M.A. Comprehensive Examination will also be taken into consideration, as will any evidence of superior teaching ability. Nonetheless, internal applicants should be aware that the Department admits a limited number of all those who apply to the Ph.D. program in a given year.

## ***K. M.A. Thesis***

For M.A. students choosing to write a thesis: the thesis topic should be chosen in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and a member of the Graduate Faculty. The latter will act as thesis director

and first reader. Another member of the faculty, appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies, will act as second reader. A thesis proposal approved by the two readers should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies, normally within sixty days of the date on which the M.A. Comprehensive Examination is passed. The proposal should be several pages in length, outlining the topic and argumentative structure of the proposed thesis. It should include a title, and be accompanied by a fairly substantial bibliography.

Theses vary in length, but are typically about 15,000 words long (60 pages, double-spaced). Normally a thesis goes through a number of drafts before it is approved. A final draft of the thesis must be submitted to the two readers for their approval at least five weeks before the end of the term in which the student plans to graduate. The Director of Graduate Studies must also at that time approve the citation and reference style used in the thesis. The Graduate School recommends a style of citation specified in the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The thesis in its final form must be filed with the Graduate School at least twenty days before the end of the semester in which the student plans to graduate. All theses and dissertations at USC are submitted electronically. The thesis must be prepared strictly in accordance with guidelines stipulated by the Graduate School. For information about the format to be used and about other aspects of the submission process, students should consult the Graduate School's thesis guidelines at <http://gradschool.sc.edu/thesisdissertation/thesis.htm>.

## **L. Dissertation Proposal and Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**

The Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination is designed to assist the student in writing a dissertation. It is taken after all required course work has been completed, at a stage when a dissertation topic has been selected and a provisional but detailed proposal drawn up. The Graduate School requires that the comprehensive exam be in two parts, written and oral. A dissertation proposal will serve as the cornerstone of the written portion of the comprehensive exam. Procedures for submitting a dissertation proposal and the structure of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination are as follows:

1. Following admission to candidacy, the student in consultation with the Graduate Director and the student's initial advisory committee should select an appropriate and willing Ph.D. comprehensive exam committee from among the department's Graduate Faculty (see section C above).
2. A *dissertation proposal* should be formally approved by the student's Ph.D. comprehensive exam committee, normally early in the Fall semester of the fourth year. This proposal will be some combination of written materials such as a dissertation outline, a multi-page dissertation overview, a synopsis of each chapter, a sample chapter in essentially finished form, one or more finished papers on a similar topic, a substantial bibliography, or a literature review. The exact combination should be determined in consultation with the student's comprehensive exam committee. Overall, this written material should clearly and substantially identify the topic, thesis, and argumentative structure of the proposed dissertation. It should also provide ample evidence of the student's familiarity with relevant primary and secondary literature.
3. In conjunction with an overall review of a student's "portfolio" of achievements in the program up to that point (including yearly writing samples), the combination of written materials constituting a dissertation proposal will serve as the written portion of the Ph.D. comprehensive exam.
- 4.—An oral examination will normally take place in the Fall semester of the fourth year, roughly a

week after approval of the written dissertation proposal. This exam takes as its starting point the written proposal but may range more broadly to ascertain the viability of the proposed research, specifically to determine that the proposed project is worth doing, that it is doable in a timely manner, and that the student is capable of completing the project.

5. Immediately after the oral examination the committee meets to determine whether the student has passed or failed. The decision is made by majority vote. A student who fails may apply to take the examination a second time, and may also apply to have the membership of the committee changed. Changes in committee membership must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Normally the second examination will be taken no more than six months after the first. A student who fails the examination a second time or who chooses not to be re-examined will not be permitted to continue in the Ph.D. program but, upon request, may be awarded a terminal M.A. degree. If approved, the student must have fulfilled all MA degree requirements by the end of the respective academic year, including passing the MA Comprehensive Exam and filing the appropriate Change-of-Status form with the Graduate School.

Completion of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination is expected in the Fall semester of the fourth year, leaving time in the program for the student to work on an approved dissertation topic and to prepare for academic job placement. The program can accommodate different rates of progress, but failure to complete the comprehensive exam in the Fall semester of the fourth year may serve as evidence of inadequate progress in the program and may thus be grounds for forfeiture of funding in the fifth and subsequent years.

Graduate students admitted prior to Fall 2009 who opt for the format of the PhD comprehensive exam described above must put together a portfolio of past written work and teaching evaluations in addition to submitting a dissertation proposal and prospectus as described in section L.2 above. These will constitute the written portion of their PhD comprehensive exam.

## ***M. The Ph.D. Dissertation and Dissertation Defense***

No later than five years after passing the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, a Ph.D. student must complete a dissertation. The dissertation topic must be approved by a committee of graduate faculty members, consisting of the advisor, two other graduate faculty members judged competent in the field, and one graduate faculty member from outside the Philosophy Department. The student is expected to have whatever specialized skills are required for the dissertation topic chosen (e.g., familiarity with one of the sciences, or proficiency in a foreign language). At the time the dissertation is submitted the student must also provide an abstract of the dissertation.

To complete the requirements for the Ph.D., the student must successfully defend his or her dissertation before an examining committee appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The committee will consist of no fewer than four members, of whom at least one is from another department. Typically, these will be the same professors who are members of the student's Dissertation Committee. The dissertation defense should take place not less than thirty days before the date at which the candidate expects to receive his or her degree.

The dissertation in its final form must be filed with the Dean of the Graduate School not less than twenty days before the candidate expects to receive the degree. Well in advance of this deadline, the Director of Graduate Studies must approve the citation and reference style used in the dissertation. The Graduate School recommends a style of citation specified in the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.



All theses and dissertations at USC are submitted electronically. The dissertation must be prepared strictly in accordance with guidelines stipulated by the Graduate School. For information about the format to be used and about other aspects of the submission process, students should consult the Graduate School's dissertation guidelines at <http://gradschool.sc.edu/thesisdissertation/dissertation.htm>.

## **N. Graduation**

As you approach graduation, you must take care to meet all requirements and deadlines imposed by the University Registrar and the Graduate School. A checklist of some of the more important requirements and deadlines is provided below, though you should consult the Graduate School web site for all specific details.

1. Each candidate for an M.A. or Ph.D. degree must file a formal "Application for Degree" with the Graduate School and the Registrar by the third week of the Fall or Spring semester in which the degree is to be awarded, or within the first ten days of the Summer I session for graduation at summer commencement. Late applications require supporting documentation and the payment of a processing fee.
2. The Graduate School requires that students be registered for at least one credit during any semester in which thesis or dissertation progress is made and/or when such University resources as the library, computer facilities, or faculty time are used. This means in particular that you must register for at least one credit during the term in which you intend to graduate. If you intend to graduate in the summer, you must register for at least one credit in either Summer I or Summer II.
3. For Ph.D. candidates, the dissertation defense must take place at least thirty days (a month or more) before the date at which you expect to receive your degree. Well in advance of the defense, you must schedule a date and time for this defense that is acceptable to yourself as well as to all of members of the examining committee. Each of your examiners should receive a copy of your dissertation at least three weeks prior to this scheduled date. For M.A. candidates, the thesis must be approved and signed by your principal advisor and a second reader prior to final submission to the Graduate School. Your readers need ample time (up to three weeks) to assess this work before any approval can be given.
4. Your thesis or dissertation must be formatted according to precise guidelines stipulated by the Graduate School. You are strongly advised to make an appointment to meet with an appropriate person at the Graduate School who will examine the entire format of the thesis or dissertation before you formally submit it to the Graduate School. This should be done as early in the term as possible. The purpose of this early meeting is to identify any problems with the form and appearance of your thesis or dissertation so that you will have plenty of time to deal with these problems before the submission deadline.

You are responsible for meeting any other M.A. or Ph.D. requirements and deadlines imposed by the Graduate School that are not listed here.

## FEES AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Tuition fees vary, depending on whether or not one is a South Carolina resident. In 2014–2015, tuition for a South Carolina resident enrolled full-time (12 hours or more) in a graduate program is \$6012 per semester. Resident tuition for part-time enrollment (fewer than 12 hours) is \$501 per credit hour. Tuition for full-time graduate non-residents is \$12885 per semester. Students holding Graduate Assistantships are assessed at the in-state rate, regardless of residency status. Graduate Assistants normally receive financial assistance with their tuition in the form of a tuition supplement (see Teaching and Graduate Assistantships below). Every new graduate student, and every student seeking to transfer to another program, must pay a non-refundable application fee (\$50 in 2014–2015). Foreign students must pay a one-time International Student Enrollment Fee (\$750 in 2014–2015). All students are charged a one-time Matriculation fee (\$80). All students must pay a Technology fee (\$200 per semester if enrolled fulltime, otherwise \$17 per credit hour) and a fee for use of the Thomson Student Health Center (\$169 per semester). There are also optional fees, such as the athletic event fee (\$86 per semester). A complete schedule of fees and details about how to determine residency status are available on the web site for the USC Bursar's Office.

The University requires that all graduate assistants, full-time graduate students, and international students have health insurance coverage. Students will be automatically enrolled in the university student health insurance plan, and premiums will be charged to their tuition accounts. To waive these charges, students must produce proof of alternative health insurance coverage. This waiver must be completed online through the Health Center's web site before the waiver deadline date. The annual premium for the default university insurance plan in 2014–2015 is \$1457. This will be billed in two installments, the first for Fall and second for Spring and Summer. The Graduate School in the past has subsidized some of this cost, depending on budgetary contingencies in any given academic year. In 2014–2015 that subsidy is \$275.

Graduate students may be nominated by the Department for a Graduate School Fellowship, for a Graduate School Research Assistantship, for a Graduate Incentive Fellowship, or for one of the USC Educational Foundation fellowships administered by the Graduate School. Students must be enrolled at least half-time during the tenure of any of these awards. Final awards are determined by special University committees. Only in-coming students are eligible for some of these fellowships, as they are designed to attract top quality students to the University.

Students interested in being nominated for one of the fellowships listed above should consult the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department. Students are of course encouraged to explore other sources of funds. For more information about financial aid and fellowships, consult the web site of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships.

Beginning with the Fall semester of the fifth year, Graduate Assistants should apply for Z-status. This allows the student to enroll for only one credit hour but be classified as full-time. Students who request this exemption from full-time enrollment for financial aid purposes must submit the Special Academic Enrollment Release form (F 6.2) available from the Office of Financial Aid. International students must also submit the approved Exemption from Full-time Enrollment form from International Programs for Students. To qualify for Z-status, the student must have completed all coursework on the program of study except possibly for dissertation preparation (899); the student must be working on the dissertation at least half-time and thus be employed no more than half-time otherwise; and the student may not be employed outside of their Graduate Assistantship. Failure to meet these three conditions may result in the student's having to pay out-of-pocket for all but one credit hour's worth of tuition.

## TEACHING AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Incoming Ph.D. students are offered graduate assistantships, which are renewed annually, usually for a total of five years, provided the student's progress in the program is deemed satisfactory. Funding after the fifth year is subject to budgetary constraints and is determined on a case-by-case basis. Decisions about assistantships for the Fall semester are made the previous April or May at the same time that progress reviews of current students and offers of admission to new students are made.

Entering students should note that the University requires every new teaching or instructional assistant to attend a two-day seminar on teaching prior to taking up the assistantship. This seminar is held in mid-August, during the week before regular classes begin. The schedule for this workshop is generally made available on the Graduate School website a month or so in advance. During the same week, international graduate students must also attend another two-day seminar devoted to assessing oral English proficiency.

A regular financial aid package for a GA in our Ph.D. program pays up to \$28,000 per academic year, with an average of \$28,826 in 2014–15. (The amount varies depending on overall budget caps set by the College, on our successes and failures to obtain funds from sources outside the department, on tuition rates and enrollment levels, and on individual factors pertaining to the student's timely progress through the program). This amount includes a stipend paid bimonthly, as well as a tuition and fee supplement credited to the student's university bill at the beginning of each semester.

All or part of a student's tuition costs may be covered by a tuition supplement, which is included as a part of the student's financial aid package. Decisions on the awarding of tuition supplements for the academic year are made at the time at which decisions are being made regarding graduate assistantships, in April or May of the preceding academic year.

Foreign students with an F1 or J1 visa are eligible to work as graduate assistants. If a student is admitted into the Ph.D. program and is made an offer of an assistantship, the Department will provide a written offer of employment and statement of anticipated earnings, in compliance with Immigration regulations. Foreign students are responsible for obtaining the necessary visas and work permits. Visa applications and financial certification forms can be obtained from the International Programs for Students office.

Graduate assistants in their first two years in the program will generally be required to assist a professor with the grading of essays and examinations, or to lead discussion sections in large courses taught by a professor. From their third year onwards, students who are performing well may be assigned to teach courses of their own. Students with graduate assistantships must pass Phil 790, *Philosophy as a Profession / Teaching Philosophy* (3 credit hours). Among other things, this course offers guidance in course design, the construction of a syllabus, the choice of texts, and so forth. Topics covered in Philosophy 110, 111, and 211 courses are somewhat constrained and should be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the department chairperson, or another designated faculty member. Topics and methods for teaching Philosophy 102 are more flexible but also should be approved by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the department chairperson, or a designated faculty member.

On occasion graduate students also teach during the summer sessions. However the demand for these courses is unpredictable, and students should not assume that summer teaching is always available. Students teaching or otherwise employed by the Department during the summer are required to register for at least one credit hour in either or both summer terms during which they are paid.

## PLACEMENT

The award of the Ph.D. in Philosophy effectively acts as a professional accreditation. Those who hold the degree are seen as *bona fide* candidates when they apply for teaching positions in North American colleges and universities. Students should recognize, however, that obtaining a teaching post in higher education is a very competitive business. In 2000, for example, when the Department advertised a post in epistemology, there were about 120 applicants of whom nearly all were well qualified for the position. The American Philosophical Association collects statistics on the profession, <<http://www.apaonline.org/profession/data.aspx>>, including data intended to assist those who are considering a career in philosophy.

The Department has set up an advisory service under a Placement Director (in conjunction with dissertation supervisors) to help graduating Ph.D.'s prepare for the job market. Early in the program, Ph.D. students will meet with the Placement Director to discuss the structure of the job market, e.g. how and when interviews are conducted and what prospective employers are looking for, student goals, i.e. what kind of job a student is aiming at, and steps students should take to prepare a competitive CV. Students should be aware that the preparation of a competitive CV is a long-term project. Besides writing a solidly respectable dissertation, throughout their graduate education students should begin to present aspects of their work at appropriate conferences, get to know and become known to others working in their area, submit their work to recognized philosophy journals, and teach a broad range of courses. In the spring and again in the autumn before a Ph.D. student goes on the job market they will meet with the Placement Director to receive further information and guidance on the development of a professional dossier and interview guidance.

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