

PHILOSOPHY, PHD

An undergraduate major in Philosophy is desirable for graduate study in philosophy, but it is not essential. However, students admitted with insufficient background in ethics or logic or the history of philosophy will be required to take courses in these areas without graduate credit.

Transfer course credit for previous graduate work in philosophy is possible.

There are two tracks in the Ph.D. Program, the standard track and the specialty track in Moral Philosophy.

The two tracks differ in the coursework requirements for them. Students may either take the standard Ph.D. track or the specialty Ph.D. track in moral philosophy, and may opt into or out of the specialty track at any time.

Requirements

The Ph.D. Degree (Standard track and Moral Philosophy track) has three components:

- Satisfactory completion of 48 hours (16 courses) of coursework in accordance with departmental distribution requirements (see below).
- Submission of one satisfactory Qualifying Paper. Students are subject to dismissal should the qualifying paper be deemed unacceptable.
- Presentation and defense of a Doctoral Thesis.

Students in the PhD program must submit all materials for any incomplete class grades by September 1 of the following year. For example, materials for any incomplete from courses during the 2019-2020 academic year would have to be submitted by September 1, 2020.

Students in the PhD program are subject to an annual review, described below.

Deadlines for the Qualifying Paper and Dissertation Progress are described below. No student may miss a deadline without a strong excuse presented to the Director of Graduate Studies (such as a documented medical or family emergency). A failure to meet one of these deadlines is cause to bring the issue of the student's performance before the department as a whole.

Distribution Requirement for Coursework (Standard Track)

The distribution requirement for coursework in the Standard track is as follows. Students must take at least one course in three of the following areas:

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Science

In addition, students are required to take three courses in the history of philosophy (at least one in Ancient as well as one in Modern), one course in Moral/Political/Legal Philosophy and one in Logic.

The distribution requirement in Logic may be waived if a student demonstrates graduate-level competence by passing an examination in this subject after joining the program.

Of the remaining eight courses, two may be taken in another department, with approval of the Philosophy Department Graduate Studies Committee.

Distribution Requirement for Coursework (Moral Philosophy Track)

The distribution requirement for coursework in the specialty track in Moral Philosophy is as follows. Students must take at least one course in three of the following areas:

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Science

In addition, students are required to take three courses in the history of philosophy (at least one being the History of Ethics or the History of Political Philosophy), and one in Formal Methods (which may include logic, game theory, rational choice theory, or another course in the methodological tools relevant to the student's philosophical work). The distribution requirement in Formal Methods may be waived if a student demonstrates graduate-

level competence by passing an examination in this subject after joining the program. Of the remaining nine courses, six must be in moral and political philosophy, with at least one course each from four of the following subdisciplines:

- Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of Law
- Moral Psychology
- Agency and Responsibility
- Metaethics
- Normative Ethics
- Applied Ethics
- Feminist Ethics

Two of these courses may be taken in another department, with approval of the Philosophy Department Graduate Studies Committee. Students in this track are also expected to attend and participate regularly in Murphy Institute seminars and lectures in moral philosophy.

The Qualifying Paper

Purpose of the Qualifying Paper

The purpose of the project is to evaluate the student's ability to produce a "professional" quality paper. The paper may be the result of reworking a term paper from a course. Students are encouraged but not required to write the qualifying paper on the topic of their dissertation. The paper must represent new work written by the student. It is not allowed, for instance, simply to submit a previous MA thesis. Any old work must be substantially revised.

Quality

Students are subject to dismissal should the Qualifying Paper be deemed unacceptable. It is therefore important to approach the task of writing this paper with a sense of the quality of work that is expected and how this may be achieved. The qualifying paper should provide strong evidence that the student is willing and able to produce publishable work. An acceptable paper will demonstrate ability to engage your own philosophical thinking in relation to the relevant literature and competence with that literature.

This might be achieved by:

- Presenting an argument dialectically among several writers and entering the discussion with your own view.
- Providing an illuminating account of a philosopher's argument(s) or contention(s)
- Interpreting a philosophic text in order to bring to light its argument or teaching
- Tracing the historical development of an idea that you analyze and evaluate

It is *not* acceptable to:

- Simply review several books or articles on a given topic
- Present different philosopher's claims or arguments and merely opt for one of them.

The Committee

The Qualifying Paper is evaluated by a committee consisting of three faculty members. The Director will be a faculty member agreed upon by the student, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and the faculty member. The Second and Third Reader on the Committee will be assigned by the DGS in consultation with the Director.

The student is advised to make arrangements with the director of the paper about how the interchange between them shall work out as the composition of the paper progresses. Different professors may wish to do this in different ways. A general understanding between director and student should be reached before the summer vacation that precedes the year in which semester in which the paper is due. With the approval of the director, topics may be modified or changed.

Deadlines

The day two weeks before the last day of Spring semester classes is the target date for submitting a proposal for the Qualifying Paper to the DGS. For example, if the Qualifying Paper is due on October 1, 2019, the student should submit a proposal two weeks before the end of the Spring 2020 semester. The proposal should include a brief description of the project (at least several lines) and the name of the faculty member who has agreed to serve as director.

The Qualifying Paper must be submitted by October 1 during the student's third year (or second year if the student entered with a transferable MA degree).

It is expected that one or more drafts of the paper would have been submitted before the deadline and the final version would reflect responses to comments from members of the committee.

Evaluation

The members of the committee will evaluate the paper and independently submit to the DGS a judgment on it, with comments and justification for the judgment. Faculty must report grades for the Qualifying paper by November 15.

The original submission will be evaluated as "Pass," "Fail," or "Revise and Resubmit." Two "Fail" votes on the original submission results in a failed paper. Only one "Revise and Resubmit" or "Fail" vote is needed to force revisions, and in that case, the revised paper will be due on February 1. After that date a majority vote will decide whether the paper passes or fails. The final grade for the Qualifying Paper must be submitted by the faculty members by March 1.

A failed paper will result in dismissal from the doctoral program, subject to a review by the whole department.

The faculty committee members may not inform the student of his/her evaluation until the Director of Graduate Studies or the Philosophy Department faculty releases the information.

The Dissertation

Students should complete an "Admission to Candidacy" form to the DGS after completing all requirements but the dissertation.

Students should seek a dissertation supervisor and in consultation with that professor form a committee with two other faculty members.

Students must submit to the DGS the dissertation prospectus, along with a "Dissertation Prospectus Approval" form by October 1 of the 4th year (3rd year if the student entered with a transferable MA degree).

Students must submit to the DGS a dissertation chapter that shows significant progress beyond the Qualifying Paper by February 1 of the 4th year (3rd year if the student entered with a transferable MA degree).

Students must submit to the DGS an additional dissertation chapter that is different from the first one by February 1 of the 5th year (4th year if the student entered with a transferable MA degree).

For more information about graduation requirements see the Dissertation Guidelines at the Tulane Graduate Studies (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/academics/graduate-studies/>) website.

Annual Review

The Department will conduct an annual review at which faculty members review the progress of graduate students. The meeting will be held during the spring semester, typically around March 1, and at the meeting a warning might be issued to a student to either

1. end funding or
2. terminate a student from the program.

A student will be automatically dismissed from the program, subject to a review by the whole department, if

1. he or she failed the qualifying paper,
2. has a preponderance of B grades (or lower),
3. has two B- grades (or lower), or
4. a C+ grade (or lower) in their classes.

In addition, the department can vote to warn the student that

1. funding will be terminated or
2. the student will be dismissed from the program if – among other possible reasons –
 - a. the student has three or more B grades (or lower),
 - b. misses one of the deadlines stated above,
 - c. has a weak qualifying paper, or
 - d. shows insufficient progress in his or her dissertation.

The department has to state the cause for concern in the warning letter, and after being warned, students would have a semester to markedly improve their performance as well as present any evidence that might put their performance in a different light. Without this, the initial department vote would take effect after the semester is over, and either

1. the funding would be terminated, or
2. the student would be dismissed from the program.

Progress Requirements for Students Receiving External Fellowships

Students on a fellowship or leave for a year must show substantial evidence of work they have completed. This would typically be two chapters of the dissertation, or one chapter along with papers for publication or presentation, which should be submitted to the dissertation Director and Graduate Director. Further support in the program, such as continuation of the graduate stipend or adjunct teaching, will depend on meeting this requirement.

Summary of Deadlines

Coursework

September 1: all materials for any "Incomplete" grade from a course during the previous academic year are due

Qualifying Paper

- Two weeks before the last day of the Spring semester of the 2nd year (1st year if the student entered with a transferable MA): proposal for the Qualifying Paper due to the Director of Graduate Studies
- October 1 of the 3rd year (2nd year if the student entered with a transferable MA): Qualifying Paper due
- November 15: Faculty must report grades on the Qualifying Paper
- February 1 of the 3rd year (2nd year if the student entered with a transferable MA): revised Qualifying Paper due (if the original submission must be revised due to receiving one "Fail" grade or one or more "Revise and Resubmit" grades)
- March 1: Faculty must submit the final grade for the Qualifying Paper to the Director of Graduate Studies

Dissertation

- "Admission to Candidacy" form due to the Director of Graduate Studies upon the completion of all requirements for the Ph.D. except the Dissertation
- October 1 of the 4th year (3rd year if the student entered with a transferable MA): the Dissertation Prospectus, and a "Dissertation Prospectus Approval" form, due to the Director of Graduate Studies
- February 1 of the 4th year (3rd year if the student entered with a transferable MA): a Dissertation chapter that shows significant progress beyond the Qualifying Paper due to the Director of Graduate Studies
- February 1 of the 5th year (4th year if the student entered with a transferable MA): Additional Dissertation chapter due to the Director of Graduate Studies

Annual Review

- March 1: Annual Review of graduate students conducted by the faculty

Contact

For more information, contact the School of Liberal Arts (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/philosophy/about/contact-us/>).