



**University of Missouri-St. Louis**

**The Doctoral Program in Political Science:  
Policies and Procedures Handbook**

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# **THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE:** *Policies and Procedures Handbook*

## **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

The doctoral program in Political Science emphasizes policy studies, and in particular public policy making. The program fosters a thorough knowledge of diverse analytical skills, alternative approaches to the study of politics, and impartial analysis of political institutions and processes. The program is strong in the areas of urban politics, policy processes and institutions, American political behavior, political economy, comparative politics and international relations. Our public policy focus encourages students to adopt a multi-disciplinary perspective and training that cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Besides advanced courses in political science, such training includes work in related disciplines such as economics, business administration, criminology and criminal justice, sociology, social work, history, biology, and others.

Our faculty provide unusually accessible, creative, and professional Ph.D. preparation. Their active research and publication records contributed to UM-St. Louis' scholars being ranked as the ninth most productive among small research universities.<sup>1</sup>

The Political Science Graduate Committee, consisting of the Department Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and several faculty members, is charged with the administration of the graduate program in Political Science. The graduate program in Political Science is governed by the policies and procedures of the Graduate School at UM-St. Louis. Doctoral students are expected to be familiar with the policies and procedures set forth in this document, the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin*, and the Graduate School's policies.

## **II. ADMISSION AND READMISSION**

The faculty members of the department's Graduate Committee evaluate applications to the Ph.D. program. The deadline for Fall Semester admission is February 15 and October 15 for Winter/Spring admission.<sup>2</sup> The Department of Political Science requires: an undergraduate degree with a background in the social sciences, official transcripts from all universities attended, the TOEFL for international students, a minimum 3.0 GPA overall and in the major on a 4.0 scale, and three letters of recommendation from persons qualified to evaluate the applicant's recent academic work. Applicants may submit the GRE General Test score but it is not required. The statement of purpose should include a brief statement outlining your reason for pursuing a doctoral degree and your future plans. Students have an option to submit a written sample of your work that demonstrates your writing ability. Students interested in funding must apply at the time of application.

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<sup>1</sup>University of Missouri-St. Louis, News Release, "UMSL Rankings and Honors," <http://www.umsl.edu/about/rankings-honors.html>. Date last visited, September 16, 2013.

<sup>2</sup>Students must apply online at <http://www.umsl.edu/admissions/apply-now.html>.

The principle criteria used to judge applications are the likelihood that the student will successfully complete the Ph.D. degree and that the student will contribute positively to the scholarly or policy making community. Indications that the student meets these criteria include: (a) prior success in graduate and undergraduate studies, often indicated by a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or better, (b) a statement of the applicant's reasons for seeking a Ph.D. at UM-St. Louis, (c) letters of recommendation from academics who specifically indicate the likely success of the applicant in our Ph.D. program, and (d) other appropriate evidence. The Graduate Committee may recommend unconditional admission or make admission conditional on the student's achievement of certain academic goals early in the program. While the Political Science Graduate Committee recommends admission, the Dean of the Graduate School makes the final admission decision.

A student who drops out of the doctoral program must apply for readmission and go through the regular admission process. A student may drop out either by formally resigning from the program or by failing to register for at least one of the regular semesters (Fall and Winter) of the academic year. The Graduate Committee may recommend that the Dean of the Graduate School approve a leave of absence for a student for a specific period.

### III. THE DOCTORAL CURRICULUM

The Ph.D. curriculum blends analytical rigor and practical knowledge. Accordingly, the doctoral curriculum includes: (a) the development of a common core of analytical tools, (b) the survey of diverse areas of political inquiry, and (c) the mastery of an individually tailored program of specialized expertise in a subfield of political research.

#### A. Core

Six one-semester courses (18 credit hours) provide a common core of training for Ph.D. students in our program. The courses provide an indispensable framework of research methods, policy processes and institutions.

##### *Methodology*

PS 6401 Introduction to Policy Research (or equivalent)  
PS 6402 Intermediate Techniques in Policy Research  
PS 6403 Advanced Techniques in Policy Research

##### *Process and Institutions*

PS 6430 Proseminar in American Politics  
PS 6440 Proseminar in Public Administration  
PS 6442 The Policy Process

Ordinarily, the student completes this portion of the curriculum in the first four semesters of full-time study.

*Additional Skills.* Each student will develop an individual program for achieving appropriate competence in their areas of specialization, for example in economics, foreign languages and other advanced analytic skills.

## **B. Disciplinary Scope**

The student, in consultation with his or her advisor, constructs the remaining part of the curriculum around individual interests and career goals. One part of the curriculum introduces the student to the breadth of the political science discipline. This part of the curriculum requires a survey of diverse areas of political inquiry. To achieve this goal, the student selects four additional courses (12 credit hours) that survey important subfields of political science. In most cases, the student will select from the following list.

- PS 6404 Multi-Method Research Design
- PS 6410 Introduction to Policy Analysis
- PS 6420 Proseminar in Public Law
- PS 6422 Law, Courts, and Public Policy
- PS 6431 Seminar in American Politics
- PS 6448 Political Economy of Public Policy
- PS 6450 Proseminar in Comparative Politics
- PS 6460 Proseminar in Political Theory
- PS 6470 Proseminar in Urban Politics
- PS 6480 Proseminar in International Relations
- PS 6482 International Political Economy

Other courses may be used to satisfy this survey requirement if approved by the student's advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Note that students with a Master's degree in political science from another institution may meet a part of this requirement by transferring courses, subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Studies and the student's Advisor.

## **C. Specialization**

The student completes 6 courses (18 credit hours) in a subfield of political science and, within that subfield, an area of concentration. Subfields in political science include Public Policy (including Comparative Public Policy), Urban Politics, American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Economy, Public Law, and Public Administration. Areas of concentration within Public Policy might include Economic Policy or Health Policy, Social Welfare, Criminal Justice, Labor and Employment, Housing, Environmental Protection, Policy Analysis, Public Budgeting and Finance, or other areas not enumerated.

Students may choose to specialize in two subfields of political science. These students should consult with faculty members in both subfields to develop a suitable program of study.

This list is not exhaustive. Students should consult their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies for additional options tailored to individual career goals. Students may need to acquire knowledge and skills more commonly taught by faculty in another discipline, such as Economics, Public Administration, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Gerontology, Sociology, History, or the sciences. These students should develop a suitable program in that discipline in consultation with the appropriate faculty and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. The Department has explicit agreements for transferring credit to the Ph.D. in Political Science from the UM-St. Louis Master's in Public Policy Administration, the Master's in Economics, and the Gerontology degrees.

## **D. Internship**

Ph.D. students may take an internship, PS 6495 (up to six credit hours) to gain first-hand experience in research and administrative positions. Those credit hours would apply to the area of specialization component of the curriculum. Consult the Graduate Director and Internship Coordinator for further information.

## **E. Grades**

Course grades are important in doctoral study because they: (1) indicate the student's level of professional knowledge and skills, and (2) the student's preparation for Ph.D. examinations and the dissertation. Students are expected to have a GPA of at least 3.5 in courses taken at UM-St. Louis. Students with a GPA below 3.5 in these courses can take examinations only if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee.

## **F. Academic Probation**

The Graduate School's regulations state that, "a department will place a graduate student on probation if the GPA falls below 3.0 or if it regards progress as unsatisfactory." Students whose grade point averages fall below 2.0 will be dismissed. A delayed grade becomes an F grade after a one year period. See the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* for details.

## **G. Course Work at Other Universities**

Graduate work completed at other universities may be credited toward the Ph.D. requirements if these courses meet the curriculum objectives of the doctoral program. A student who has completed such graduate work, or taken a graduate degree at another institution, should request the Director of Graduate Studies to evaluate her or his record to determine the amount of credit that may be transferred to the UM-St. Louis Ph.D. in Political Science. Normally, no more than 12 hours of political science or public administration credit are transferable to the Ph.D. program.

The University requires that all credit hours for a Ph.D., including transfer credits and the dissertation, be completed during a continuous eight-year span. Exceptions to this rule require a written appeal to the Graduate School.

Students enrolled in the doctoral program may take advantage of course offerings at Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis University, or other campuses of the University of Missouri system. For those who wish to concentrate in highly specialized areas, this cooperation expands the number and type of courses available to students in both programs. Students wishing to take courses that are not offered at UM-St. Louis must obtain the permission of the Graduate Director. In such cases, the fees charged are at the UM-St. Louis rates.

## **IV. ADVISING**

To complete the Ph.D. successfully, students must carefully plan their curriculum, prepare for the Ph.D. examinations, and develop their doctoral dissertation. Deciding to pursue a doctoral degree requires long-term commitment, persistence, and effort. Unlike Bachelor's and Master's degrees, the Ph.D. requires much more than the accumulation of successfully completed course work. To succeed, a student must write a doctoral dissertation—that is, she or he must design, conduct, write about, and defend a serious, objective, important, and theoretically informed monograph. Each student does most of this work alone. Unlike discrete



course work that is required for undergraduate and some graduate work, students must find the motivation to work under ambiguous and open-ended conditions. To qualify to write the dissertation, students must pass comprehensive examinations that test each candidate's capacity to understand—and to care about—political science.

Students should seek faculty advice about their dissertation early in their doctoral careers. The program faculty at UM-St. Louis has a firm commitment to working with individual doctoral students to ensure careful, and realistic, planning for the degree program. This commitment includes providing opportunities for individualized counseling to: (a) help the student develop clear and realistic objectives in the program, and (b) provide clear and timely feedback concerning individual progress in the program. To meet these commitments, the program incorporates organized mechanisms for advising students in the doctoral program.

In addition to these formal advising opportunities, each student must make a special effort to introduce herself or himself to a wide array of faculty and consult with them informally.

### **A. Director of Graduate Studies**

Entering students must meet with the Director of Graduate Studies in Political Science for initial orientation and program planning. The Graduate Director keeps records on individual progress in the program and advises students in meeting the formal requirements for degree progress in the Graduate School. The Graduate Director is available to respond to questions regarding program requirements and activities. The Director of Graduate Studies maintains a Political Science Graduate Studies web portal on Canvas, the UM-St. Louis course and organization management system. Doctoral students will have access to a range of information about the doctoral program, department and campus events, funding opportunities, fellowships, job opportunities, political science conferences and the discipline of Political Science. Information about the program is also available on the Department's website: <https://www.umsl.edu/~polisci/>.

### **B. The Advisor and Subfield Committee**

In the semester before they take the general examination and in consultation with the Graduate Director, each student selects an Advisor and a two member Subfield Committee chaired by the Advisor (Subfield Chair). Students must ask Political Science faculty to serve on their Subfield Committee (three members) and the Methods Committee (two members). The faculty will serve if their workloads permit it but they are not required to do so.

The Advisor should be a Political Science faculty member in the student's major field of interest. The Advisor and the student will select two additional members from the Department of Political Science. If the student's work requires additional expertise she or he may draw on faculty members from other departments or universities, subject to the approval of the Advisor and Graduate Director.

The Advisor and the Subfield Committee have the following responsibilities:

1. To help the student prepare for the General Examination, especially the subfield section.
2. Normally, this committee forms the nucleus of a student's dissertation committee, although that is by no means mandatory. Accordingly, the student should also consult it regarding dissertation topics, research questions, and appropriate methodology.

### C. Annual Review

Once a year, usually in the spring, the Graduate Committee will review the record of doctoral students. The Committee will solicit from the faculty written evaluations of: (a) performance in specific courses, and (b) overall potential for completing the doctorate. The Graduate Committee will note particular strengths and areas for improvement and prepare a written evaluation. The Graduate Committee uses these evaluations when it makes decisions about financial assistance and about continuing students in the program.

## V. THE PH.D. GENERAL EXAMINATION

The student must successfully complete the General Examination before she or he advances to candidacy. The General Examination has three parts: a week long written examination, an oral examination, and an oral defense of a dissertation plan. The written examination has three parts: (a) methodology, (b) policy process and institutions, and (c) a subfield.

The General Examination requires students to demonstrate three kinds of knowledge:

- Students must show a comprehensive understanding of the literature in the core program fields and in their individual fields of study.
- Students must prove that their critical analytic skills and research capability are sufficient to undertake original dissertation research.
- Students must display appropriate mastery of a political science or policy subfield and within that subfield an authoritative command of one area of specialization *or* appropriate mastery of two subfields of political science.

### A. Qualification for the General Examination

Students usually take the General Examination at or near the completion of course work. All students who plan to take the General Examination must meet with the Graduate Director approximately one semester before the semester in which the student wishes to take the exams to discuss the examination process.

The Director of Graduate Studies determines eligibility to take the General Examination. To qualify for examination, the student must have completed all courses in the required core curriculum of the doctoral program. The student must, at a minimum, have completed at least 54 credit hours toward the degree by the scheduled examination date. Students are expected to have a GPA of at least 3.5 in courses taken at UM-St. Louis. Students with a GPA below 3.5 in these courses can take examinations only if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the student's Advisor.

Students are *not* permitted to take the General Examination if: (1) they have delayed grades, and (2) if their methodology paper has not been approved by the Methodology Committee at least two weeks prior to the General Examination.

The Graduate School Form, *D-1: Appointment of Comprehensive Examination Committee*, must be submitted to the Graduate School prior to taking the General Examination. The *D-2: Appointment of*

*Doctoral Dissertation Advisor*, must also be submitted to the Graduate School. Both forms should be completed as soon as students have taken 54 hours of course work. The Graduate Program's administrative assistant will assist students regarding the submission of the appropriate forms to the Graduate School.

## **B. Scheduling the Examination**

The General Examination is scheduled three times a year: in April, August, and December. The Graduate Director determines the actual date approximately one semester in advance of the examination. The examination dates will be posted on the Graduate Studies portal and students will be notified individually. Students who plan to take the General Examination should organize their schedule around this date well in advance. Only in *extraordinary* circumstances will any student be permitted to take the General Examination on a different date. The student must petition the Graduate Director for the change, in writing or by e-mail, and state the reason why a change is requested. The Graduate Director will respond to the student's request by e-mail within one week.

## **C. Content of the General Examination**

The General Examination consists of three sections:

**Methodology.** This section consists of a paper that addresses research design and methods applied to political science and policy analysis as well as analytic frameworks for formulating and analyzing public policy. Students should prepare this paper a few months in advance of the date set for the other two sections in close consultation with the faculty who specialize in quantitative research methods. The paper must be of "passing" quality at least two weeks in advance before a student may proceed with the rest of the General Examination.

The Methodology faculty have approved the following criteria in grading methods papers for the General Examination:

"Methods graders expect an answer to address a topic of interest to the student, using techniques or tools learned in their methods courses. The answer may be an original work (e.g., written from scratch) or not (e.g., a replication of a published article or a revision of a paper). However, the analysis must use empirical data.

An acceptable answer must be organized along the lines of a published analysis—there must be a literature review, a research design, and an intelligent discussion of the methods used. The paper needs to demonstrate proficiency in the methodological technique used, which includes an explanation of the method and an exploration of any assumptions.

A student may revisit a paper written for a previous course, but any such paper must improve upon the methodological technique used in the original. Improvements could be, for example, collecting/using additional data, additional variables, or a different modeling technique. Graders will expect to see the original version for comparison purposes. A replication must also add

value to the original analysis. A student should consult with the grading committee prior to handing in the first draft. Graders expect the first draft to be relatively complete.”

***Policy Process and Institutions.*** These questions address political and administrative processes through which public policy is formulated and implemented. Answers should integrate knowledge from the core, subfield, and, where appropriate, specialization courses. The student will have some choice in selecting questions to answer on this section of the examination. These questions are not provided in advance, but questions asked on previous examinations are available to all students and they are strongly encouraged to look over these questions.

The Graduate Director will appoint two faculty members to write and grade these two sections of the General Examination. One of the members will serve as Chair to supervise the examination.

***Subfield and Specialization.*** At least two weeks before the scheduled General Examination, the student must have an approved literature review paper in his or her area of specialization. Besides comprehensively reviewing the scholarly literature in the area of specialization, the paper should identify gaps in knowledge and opportunities for research. The literature review is designed to help the student identify the questions and research methods for the dissertation. This paper must be approved by a faculty member in Political Science, normally the student’s Doctoral Dissertation Advisor. Typically, the comprehensive literature review paper will be written in an independent study course supervised by the Dissertation Advisor.

- Students must also take an exam in their Subfield. These questions address the student’s area of expertise, defined in consultation with his or her advisor and subfield committee and with the Director of Graduate Studies. Normally, the student will choose a subfield that includes, but is not limited to, the student’s field of policy concentration (the 18 credit hour program of course work). Subfields in political science include Public Policy (including Comparative Public Policy), Urban Politics, American Politics, International Relations, Public Law, Public Administration, Comparative Politics, or Political Economy. Students whose substantive work is heavily multidisciplinary should define their subfield appropriately.

Students have the option to take the General Examination in two subfields of political science, subject to the approval of the student’s Advisor. Students are expected to have extensive preparation in both subfields. Students who plan to take the General Examination in two subfields must have two faculty members whose areas of expertise lie in both subfields.

Three faculty members write and grade the subfield section of the General Examination. The Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the student, appoints these subfield examiners. Membership of the Examination Committee often is identical to the membership of the student’s Advisory Committee for the dissertation, but it need not be. Students whose subfield lies in Political Science may nominate one member of the Committee from outside the Department of Political Science. Students whose subfield is essentially multidisciplinary should nominate up to two faculty members from other departments when it is appropriate. The Subfield Committee is responsible for question content, number, and format. The student will have some choice in selecting questions to answer on the examination.

#### **D. Preparation for the General Examination**

Students are expected to consult their Advisors and Subfield Committee members about their subfields and area of specialization well in advance of the General Examination. In addition, students should talk to the Institutions and Policy Process graders about what they should be expected to know. Students should consult faculty reading lists and course syllabi when available. Previously asked General Examination Questions are available on the Graduate Studies Canvas page. These questions are updated on a regular basis. Early preparation and organization help students to perform well on the General Examination.

#### **E. Writing the Examination**

Students will have one week to write the General Examination. The student will obtain the examination questions at the designated time and place from the Graduate Director and will turn in the answers one week later according to the instructions. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations to take the General Examination should inform the Graduate Director in writing or by e-mail well in advance of the General Examination date. Students must have an approved methods paper at least two weeks before the scheduled comprehensive examination.

The take-home format allows access to resource materials. Students turn in typed and professionally written answers. The faculty will not grade handwritten answers or carelessly written essays. Only in exceptional circumstances will answers to any one of the three sections of the examination exceed 12 pages, typed and double-spaced.

If a student turns in the General Examination, it must be assigned a grade. Requests for exceptions, delays or extensions relating to the General Examination are not permitted. If a student does not turn in the General Examination at the designated time and place, it will be counted as a failure. The student will be permitted to take the next regularly scheduled General Examination. Failing the General Examination under these circumstances will not be counted under the retake policy (see Section F. Grading the Written Examination). If a student believes that the examination was turned in on time, s/he must petition the Graduate Director in writing with an explanation within five days. The Graduate Director will review the student's request and reply in writing within five days. Appeals from the Graduate Director's decision regarding failure to turn in the examination on time must be made in writing to the Graduate Dean.

The Department of Political Science does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Students are expected to complete their General Examination individually. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty (which includes but is not limited to plagiarism or receiving outside assistance from another person) will immediately be dealt with according to university policy under the University of Missouri's *Collected Rules and Regulations*, Chapter 200: Student Conduct.

#### **F. Grading the Written Examination**

The faculty members who wrote the examination will read and evaluate the answers. Each faculty member grades the written work as: (1) Pass With Distinction, (2) Pass, (3) Rewrite, and (4) Fail. Each member also writes an evaluation that provides the reasons for assigning the grade. The entire examination, taken as a whole, will then receive a formal grade. A "Passing" grade must be unanimous. A "Pass With Distinction" grade must be given by a minimum of two-thirds of the readers. If judged helpful, the Chair may convene the responsible faculty members for a thorough review of the examination. The Chair then informs

the Graduate Director of the examination grade within two weeks of completion of the examination when possible. The Director of Graduate Studies informs the student of the results in writing.

A “rewrite” grade must be given by a majority of the readers. If a student receives a “Rewrite” grade for any section, the student can revise sections of the examination, and in these cases the examiners must specify the revisions and the due date for them. In situations where the revisions are unacceptable to the examiners, students may be asked to rewrite the sections again.

A “fail” grade must be given by a majority of the readers. If a student receives a “Fail” grade, the student may retake the entire examination at a time no less than three months and no more than one year after the original examination date. Examiners may agree that only one or two sections of the General Examination should receive a “Passing” grade, and that the student must retake only one or two sections rather than the entire examination. For retakes, students will receive the same grading options as the first examination.

The General Examination may be retaken only once. A second failure on the examination requires expulsion from the doctoral program.

### **G. The Oral Examination**

The oral examination is the final component of the General Examination. The oral examination must occur within one month of the successful completion of the examination. The student must meet with his or her Subfield Chair and schedule the Oral Examination. The oral examiners may include: (1) the three members of the student’s Subfield Committee, (2) the methods graders, and (3) the Institutions and Policy Process graders. Individual faculty members determine the questions, and these questions may address topics covered in the written examination, or new questions in the relevant fields. Students are expected to be conversant about any feedback from the General Examination or new areas of inquiry.

Students will also be asked to discuss preliminary dissertation plans including: (a) the central question, (b) possible alternative explanations or interpretations of the question, (c) appropriate evidence to evaluate these alternative answers, (d) appropriate methods that may be brought to bear on evaluating this evidence.

The faculty will assess the student’s performance on the oral examination immediately upon its completion, and they will use the same grading format described for the written examinations. If more than one member of the Oral Examination Committee assigns a failing grade, the student cannot pass the exam. The Subfield Chair will inform the student of results, and prepare a written evaluation of the examination to be placed in the student’s file. Following successful completion of the Oral Examination the *D-3: Application for Candidacy* form must be signed by the the Subfield Chair and the Graduate Director and submitted to the Graduate School.

### **H. Master’s Degree Awarded to Doctoral Candidates**

Ordinarily, the doctoral student’s Ph.D. course work satisfies the requirements for a Master’s degree in Political Science. With the successful completion of examinations, the Department can submit the student’s application for a Master’s degree to the Graduate School (M4 form).

## VI. THE DISSERTATION

The doctoral dissertation provides the capstone for professional training in political science. The doctoral dissertation has five goals. First, it should establish the student's ability to formulate a substantial research question about politics or public policy. Second, it should demonstrate the student's ability to define and assess alternative answers to the central question based on a thorough knowledge of the literature relating to the area. Third, it should reveal the student's ability to use appropriate methods to analyze, interpret, and synthesize information bearing on the central question. Fourth, it should present results in a sequential and logical manner. Fifth, it should display the student's ability to discuss fully and coherently the meaning of the results.

The dissertation is the beginning of one's independent professional work, not its culmination. Dissertation research should provide students with hands-on, directed experience in the primary research methods of the discipline. It aims to prepare students for the types of research and scholarship that will be expected of them after they receive the Ph.D. degree.

### A. Early Preparation

Students should seriously consider and discuss dissertation topics early in their program. From the first year on, both formal and informal advisory sessions should consider possible dissertation topics. By the midpoint of the second year of study, students should identify a dissertation topic (subject to revision), prepare a brief written description of their ideas, and discuss the work with potential dissertation committee members. In addition, those students who seek Departmental funding for the third year should submit a brief written description of their dissertation plans to the Graduate Director. The topic selected early in the program is understood to be preliminary and subject to change.

Under the supervision of the Dissertation Chair and with the approval of the Committee, the candidate will then prepare the dissertation. The dissertation project represents a substantial piece of research, an original contribution to the discipline. It thus demands a sustained commitment of time, energy, and intellect. Students might ordinarily expect to spend from one to two years in the research for, and the writing of, the dissertation.

### B. The Dissertation Chair and Committee

At the time of the General Examination, the Ph.D. student should meet with her or his advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to select a Dissertation Chair and a Dissertation Committee. Often, the members of the student's Subfield Committee also constitute the Dissertation Committee. The committee should consist of four members. Three, including the Dissertation Chair, should be Graduate Faculty members from the Department of Political Science. The fourth member may be from our department, from Political Science at another university, or from another department at UM-St. Louis. The Dissertation Chair provides the main guidance for the student's dissertation work, and the student should choose this advisor carefully. All committee members, including the Chair, will serve on a voluntary basis. While the composition of the Committee is a matter of mutual agreement among the student, the Graduate Director, and the Committee members, the formal appointment lies in the hands of the Graduate Dean.

### **C. The Dissertation Proposal**

In consultation with the Dissertation Advisor and the committee members, the candidate must prepare a written proposal. The proposal should outline the theoretical issues and the research design that will form the core of the dissertation. The proposal should contain: (a) a precise statement of the research question to be investigated and its theoretical significance; (b) a literature review of the directly relevant literature, (c) a discussion of the research methods to be employed, including a discussion of information sources, data collection methods, and analysis plans; (d) a preliminary outline of the dissertation; and (e) a proposed time line for completing the research and writing tasks. The dissertation committee determines the details of the proposal preparation and review. Students are expected to complete the dissertation proposal within one semester after passing the General Examination.

### **D. The Oral Defense of the Dissertation Proposal**

Upon approval of the dissertation proposal, the Dissertation Chair should schedule the oral defense of the proposal. The student then should file the dissertation proposal with the Dean of the Graduate School, using the appropriate form.

### **E. Dissertation Proposals Involving Human Subjects Research**

According to the Office of Research Administration, human subjects research includes *any* data gathering on humans for scientific purposes. Research of doctoral students that involves data gathered from human subjects through interviews, mail surveys, or telephone surveys requires review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Failure to comply with human subject guidelines could jeopardize the University's federal funding. Dissertation proposals *must* be approved before applying to the IRB. Doctoral students should request assistance from their dissertation chair in filling out the IRB Review forms. Human subject application forms may be found at: <http://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/Compliance/human-subjects-irb.html>.

### **F. Maintaining Candidacy**

Graduate School regulations require that when students advance to candidacy, they must remain in continuous enrollment until the degree is awarded. If they are away from campus, students must enroll for at least one credit hour each semester. The University regulations also stipulate that the student must complete the dissertation within eight years after first enrolling in the doctoral program.

### **G. Approval and Defense of the Dissertation**

The Dissertation Chair will inform the candidate when the dissertation committee finds the dissertation complete, provisionally acceptable, and ready for oral defense. The student should then submit one copy of the dissertation (and of the abstract) to the Graduate School, at least three weeks before the expected oral defense and six weeks before the expected commencement. The Dean of the Graduate School may assign the dissertation to other readers, on or off campus, or seek such other advice as the dean feels pertinent.

Upon preliminary acceptance of the dissertation, the Dean of the Graduate School approves the date, time, and location of the dissertation defense before the student's faculty committee. The Dean approves members of the dissertation committee and such other members of the graduate faculty as appropriate. The student will schedule the defense in consultation with the members of the committee.

The committee may invite other members of the faculty to participate. Acceptance of the dissertation requires the signed approval of each committee member after an evaluation of the written dissertation and



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the oral defense. The defense may be repeated if necessary. Students are eligible for graduation upon receipt of the appropriate Graduate School form.

The Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science will be awarded to the candidate at the next graduation period following acceptance of the dissertation.

**H. Manual of Style Requirement**

Political Science graduate students are required to use the American Political Science Association's *Style Manual* (Revised 2018 edition) for all dissertation proposals, Master's theses and doctoral dissertations. The objective of this requirement is to ensure that all proposals, theses and dissertations use a uniform method of style and citation. The APSA's *Style Manual* is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Almost all major political science journals use some variation of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

**I. Electronic Submission of Dissertation Proposals, Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations**

All political science graduate students are required to electronically submit their final version of dissertation proposals, master's theses and dissertations to the Graduate Program's Administrative Assistant for recordkeeping purposes. Files submitted in a word processing format will be converted to pdf format.

**VII. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE****A. Graduate Assistantships**

The Department makes available a limited number of graduate assistantships. The Department's Graduate Committee reviews the applicant's records and awards the financial assistance on a competitive basis. The primary criteria include the student's progress toward the doctorate, the quality of the student's academic work, the student's previous performance as a graduate assistant, and the student's overall career potential. The Graduate Committee also may consider other factors deemed necessary.

Subject to financial constraints, the Department funds the first 3-4 years of graduate study for full-time Ph.D. students who make excellent progress toward their degree. For fourth year students, funding is contingent upon passing the General Examination and making excellent progress on the dissertation, as determined by the appropriate faculty committee. Occasionally, when funds are available, other assistance may be awarded. All this, of course, is subject to a resource constraint: the Department has limited funds and, occasionally, may not be able to meet its goals of full funding.

**B. Graduate Assistant Assignments and Expectations**

The Graduate Assistantships are intended for full-time Ph.D. students. These half-time appointments carry a serious professional work commitment and funded students may not work outside of the University. Graduate assistantships aim to provide a wide range of professional training. Graduate assistant duties may include: (a) assisting in teaching or preparing a course, (b) collecting data or otherwise assisting in original research, (c) or assisting in the management of professional publications. The Director of Graduate Studies,

in coordination with the Department Chair, assigns the Graduate Assistant to a specific faculty member. All assignments are made for one semester. Graduate Assistants and faculty should work out explicit agreements about expectations and schedules before the beginning of the term.

Graduate assistants must be enrolled in at least nine credit hours except during the summer session. Duties require approximately 20 hours per week and typically last from two weeks prior to the semester to two weeks after final grades are posted. All graduate assistants must attend the department's orientation session at the beginning of the Fall Semester. Students with graduate teaching assistantships must attend and participate in the Center for Teaching and Learning's professional development programs and workshops.

Normally, every effort will be made to match the interests of both the student and the faculty member. These graduate assistantships provide a stipend and tuition remission.

In addition to specific tasks under the supervision of a particular faculty member, students are expected to attend research presentations by fellow students and faculty, attend a substantial number of the department sponsored seminars and talks given by visiting faculty and guests, help out occasionally when faculty need an exam proctor, attend department receptions and other functions, and assist in orienting new graduate students to the department and the profession.

### **C. Teaching Opportunities**

Where possible, the department provides opportunities for Ph.D. candidates to teach sections of undergraduate courses on their own. According to Graduate School policies, graduate instructors must have ABD (all but dissertation) status and have approved dissertation proposals. Normally, these opportunities will be available only to students who are making excellent progress on their dissertations. The Department Chair will make these staffing decisions, balancing the needs of the individual graduate student against the teaching requirements of the Department.

### **D. External Support and Funding Opportunities**

The faculty strongly encourages students to seek external grants to support their dissertation research. Faculty help students prepare grant proposals and applications.

In addition, individual faculty members may make research employment opportunities available to graduate students. Typically, several members have graduate assistantships funded through external grants. The individual faculty member may award those positions on the basis of the individual members own criteria. The Department will make every effort to coordinate such opportunities with the departmental graduate assistantships.

The Graduate Student Association provides funding to help offset travel expenses for Ph.D. students who are presenting scholarly papers at professional conferences. In special cases the Department of Political Science may also support such travel. The Department supports two Ph.D. students each summer to attend workshops provided by the Inter-University Consortium on Political Science Research (ICPSR) each summer, when funding is available.

### **E. Termination of Funding**

The Graduate Committee will terminate funding for students who fail to make normal progress toward the Ph.D. or who receive unsatisfactory assistantship evaluations.

## **VIII. DELAYED GRADES**

Normally, students whose record includes more than one incomplete (or delayed grade) at the time of the decision will not receive funding for the next year. The Graduate Committee may, but need not, choose to make an award that is conditional on the student's having completed the unfinished work by the beginning of the next fall semester. More generally, the Graduate Committee will evaluate the student's overall record in comparison with the department's standards and make decisions accordingly.

## **IX. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY**

The Department of Political Science and the University of Missouri-St. Louis recognize that academic honesty is essential for the intellectual life of the University. Doctoral students are expected to adhere to responsible and ethical conduct in scholarship, research or teaching activities. Doctoral students are subject to sanctions and dismissal from the Ph.D. program if they fail to satisfy the Department's and the University's standards of ethics and intellectual integrity. According to the University's Standard of Conduct 200.010, conduct for which students are subject to sanctions include academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism or sabotage.

According to the Graduate School Student Handbook, sanctions for graduate students are always stiffer than for undergraduate students. Students who are charged are given due process. That means that they have the right to know about the charge and give their side of the story. If the investigation finds that the student is guilty of academic dishonesty, administrators write a formal disciplinary letter stating the sanction. Included in the disciplinary letter is a separate sheet on which students who are given sanctions can agree to them or not. If they appeal, they face a hearing committee. They can also appeal the committee's decision to the Chancellor.

## **X. GRADE GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL POLICY**

The Department of Political Science follows the University's Grade Appeal policy as stated in the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin*. In cases of course grade disputes between students taking graduate political science courses and their instructors, graduate students are expected to discuss the grade with the instructor and request that the instructor review the grade. Every effort should be made to resolve the grade dispute without further intervention. The instructor is free to change the grade or not as is appropriate. If the grade dispute is not resolved informally, a student may initiate a formal grade grievance procedure within thirty working days of the start of the first regular semester (fall or spring) following the semester for which the grade was given, or thirty days after the assignment of the grade (whichever is later) (see the UM-St. Louis the *Bulletin* for the grade appeal procedure).

## **XI. DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS POLICY**

The graduate program's administrative assistant maintains an academic file on each student in the Ph.D. program. Academic files contain the records of doctoral students' application materials, academic progress in the program, grades, courses, student evaluations, graduate assistant evaluations, general examination results, documentation pertaining to the formation of general examination committees, dissertation committees, dissertation proposals, and other relevant information. Doctoral students should add their curriculum vitae and research agenda to their files that faculty may use in writing letters of recommendation for them. Doctoral students have a right to see the material placed in their own academic files *except* for letters of recommendation or other information where the student waived their right to review the material. In order to review one's academic file, the student should submit a request to the Graduate Program's administrative assistant.

## **XII. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY**

Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on behalf of graduate students, faculty and staff. According to the University's Standard of Conduct, 200.010, graduate students are expected to behave in a manner compatible with the University's function as an educational institution. Issues of disruptive graduate student conduct are dealt with according to the rules and procedures under the Student Conduct Code, 200.020(c). The University can take appropriate action against students for conduct on or off campus in order to protect the physical safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors. See the UM-St. Louis *Bulletin* for details.

Doctoral students should communicate with their advisor/dissertation chair on a regular basis in order to inform them of their progress. Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies about their concerns or problems they might be encountering in the doctoral program. At times, conflicts may arise between doctoral students and faculty, advisors or dissertation chairs. If the student is unable to solve the conflict with the faculty member, the student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the problem. If the matter cannot be resolved informally by the Graduate Director, the Graduate Director will make a formal recommendation to the student. If the student disagrees with the Graduate Director's recommendation, then the student has a right to appeal to the Graduate Dean within five days after receiving the Graduate Director's recommendation.

Conflicts between graduate students are handled informally by the Graduate Director. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to work out solutions to their problem on their own before they develop into an intractable situation. If the conflict persists, the matter will be addressed in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations, Section 200.010 and Section 200.020.