

UBC Department of Philosophy
Graduate Degree Regulations

April 2012

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Other Sources of Information

1.1 Precedence of the University Calendar

Students admitted to UBC graduate programs should familiarise themselves with the contents of the *UBC Calendar*. In particular, special care should be made to consult those sections outlining regulations and deadlines concerning graduate degree admissions, fee payments, and programs. In any case in which these *Regulations* are at variance with the *Calendar*, it is the *Calendar* which shall have precedence.

1.2 Other Philosophy Department Documents

The following documents are available through the Department or on the Department web site at <http://www.philosophy.ubc.ca>.

Guide for New Students: information useful to new philosophy graduate students

Graduate Regulations: policies governing the MA and PhD in Philosophy

Requirements for the MA

2.1 Registration

Once accepted into the program, a student must maintain continuous registration unless leave is granted.

2.2 Duration of Programme

MA candidates have a maximum of five years in which to complete their programmes. *Only under exceptional circumstances* are extensions recommended. Extensions require the recommendation of the research supervisor and the Graduate Advisor as well as the approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and are for a maximum of one year.

2.3 Residency

A minimum of one year's study (September to April) at UBC is required for the MA degree.

2.4 Course Requirements

The normal course load for MA students is 9 credits (3 courses) per term.

Course Only Option. 30 credits, including 24 at or above the 500 level.

Thesis Option. 30 credits, including 18 credits awarded through course work. Of these, 6 credits must be at the 300 level or above, and 12 credits must be at the 500 level or above. The remaining 12 credits are awarded upon the successful completion of an MA thesis.

MA students must obtain a minimum grade of B– (68%) for course credit, although a maximum of 6 credits as low as 60% may also be accepted. To remain in good standing an average of at least 72% is required.

During their first term, all MA students must complete at least 6 credits at the 500 level or above, and at least 6 credits with an average of 76%. Failure to meet both criteria by January 31st of their first academic year will result in a finding of ‘not making sufficient progress.’ During their second term, all MA students must again complete at least 6 credits at the 500 level or above, and at least 6 credits with an average of 76%. Failure to meet these criteria by August 31st of their first academic year will result in a finding of ‘not making sufficient progress.’

2.5 Languages

There is no automatic language requirement. However, the Department, in consultation with the supervisor, may require MA candidates to show competence in one or more foreign languages needed for their work.

2.6 Thesis Prospectus

In order to exercise the thesis option for the MA in Philosophy, a student must submit, with the proposed supervisor’s approval, a thesis prospectus on or before May 1st in the student’s first year of residency.

The thesis prospectus indicates adequate preparation to begin detailed work on a specific thesis topic. It is the kind of document that academic are often be required to write. Like a grant application, or paper or book proposal, it should be clearly written and focused on a well-defined topic or problem. The prospectus includes each of the following elements:

Abstract. A summary, not exceeding 300 words, of the thesis proposal.

Background. An outline, not exceeding 1000 words, of the nature and importance of the topic, issue, or problem discussed in the thesis. Relevant literature should be cited or discussed in appropriate detail.

Proposal. A description, not exceeding 1000 words, of how the topic, issue, or problem that is the subject of the thesis will be dealt with. Indicate what hypothesis will be defended or what goal will be reached. Indicate the expected significance of the thesis as a contribution to scholarship.

Preparation. A brief account of the student's preparation to undertake this project. For example, list relevant courses, term papers, presentations, publications, and language skills.

Bibliography. A list of writings, in standard bibliographic format, especially relevant to the prospectus, including all works discussed elsewhere in the prospectus.

The thesis prospectus will be evaluated on the basis of the following: (1) The student's academic excellence as demonstrated by academic transcripts, publications, awards, and distinctions. (2) The quality of the student's analytical skills, ability to think critically, ability to apply skills and knowledge, judgement, and originality. The quality of the student's communication skills. (3) The breadth and suitability of the student's background in philosophy as preparation to undertake the proposed thesis. (4) The student's initiative, autonomy, and determination as indicating an ability to complete the thesis within one year. (5) The manageability of the proposed thesis project as a one-year project, the significance of its outcomes, if realized, as a contribution to scholarship, and its potential for presentation or publication.

2.7 MA Thesis

Deadline. Students wishing to graduate at Spring Congregation are required to submit their theses to the Graduate Advisor for examination by March 18th.

Format. Each thesis must conform to the format required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This format is described in the *Instructions for the Preparation of Graduate Theses* available on the Faculty of Graduate Studies web site.

Examination and Defense. Upon submission of the thesis, the Graduate Advisor, upon recommendation of the supervisor, appoints an Examining Committee. In most cases this Committee consists of the candidate's supervisor together with one additional University Examiner. This committee has the option of requiring an oral examination.

Lodging of Theses. Theses, once completed, are lodged in the UBC Library Special Collection and the Department Reading Room, and are publicly available. One signed copy is required for each depository. The Library's copy is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. It is also customary for the student to present a copy to his or her supervisor.

2.8 Transfer to the PhD

Students accepted into the MA program may apply to transfer into the PhD program without completing the MA degree. The application to the department must be made by January 15 of the student's first year of study in the MA program. Students must have completed 9 credits with an average of A- or better, and must have demonstrated clear evidence of research ability. Applicants must submit a writing sample, a brief research statement, and the name of a potential supervisor.

Successful applicants will be granted conditional approval for transfer to the PhD, the condition being that students must complete their first year of MA studies with 18 credits, an overall average

of A– or better, at least 10 credits at the 500 level, and at least 10 credits with A– or better.

Requirements for the PhD

3.1 Registration

Once accepted into the programme, a student must maintain continuous registration unless leave is granted.

3.2 Duration of Programme

Ph.D. candidates have a maximum of six years in which to complete their programmes. *Only under exceptional circumstances* are extensions recommended. Extensions require the recommendation of the research supervisor and the Graduate Advisor as well as the approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and are for a maximum of one year.

3.3 Residency

For students who have already obtained a master's degree, a minimum of two years' residence (September to April) at UBC is required. For all other students, a minimum of three years' residence is required.

3.4 Course Requirements

The normal course load for PhD students is 9 credits per term.

For students who enter the PhD program with a master's degree, a minimum of 24 credits at the 500 level or above are required. For all other students, a minimum of 30 credits, including at least 24 credits at the 500 level or above, are required.

During their first year, all PhD students must complete at least 12 credits at the 500 level or above, and at least 12 credits with an average of 80%. Failure to meet both criteria by August 31st of their first academic year will result in a finding of 'not making sufficient progress'. During their second year, all PhD students must again complete at least 12 credits at the 500 level or above, and at least 12 credits with an average of 80%; or they must complete the PhD coursework requirement. Failure to meet these criteria by August 31st of their second academic year will result in a finding of 'not making sufficient progress'.

PhD students must obtain a minimum grade of B- (68%) for course credit. To remain in good standing an average of at least 72% is required.

These are minimum requirements and philosophy students are typically required to complete two full years of course work prior to being admitted to candidacy.

3.5 Pro Seminar

The Pro Seminar is required of all students in the first year of residence. **March 2010: The proseminar requirement is suspended until further notice.**

3.6 Formal Methods Courses

PhD students are required to show such competence in formal logic, metalogic, and other formal methods as may be required for their overall programs, but including in any case competence in classical propositional and predicate logic. All PhD students are, thus, required to complete (a) Philosophy 220 or its equivalent with a mark of 76% or above and (b) an additional course in formal methods with a grade sufficient for PhD credit (68%). This course may be selected from PHIL 320, 321, 322, 323, 324 (or a higher level course or seminar on formal methods given in the Philosophy Department) or a course in another department approved by both the student's research supervisor and the Graduate Director. Typically, part (a) of the above requirement will be fulfilled before a student enters the PhD program.

3.7 Core Courses

The department will offer two graduate courses each year, designated as core courses, in the following areas: mind, language, metaphysics, logic, epistemology, philosophy of science, and value theory. Over a two-year period, there will be at least one core course in value theory.

Core courses are taught at a suitable level for first-year graduate students. They should be broad enough to cover a handful of central topics in the relevant area, but should not be general surveys. They are aimed at preparing students for further graduate work in an area of philosophy.

3.8 Distribution of Courses

Students are required to have completed (over the course of their academic careers) coursework in the following four areas. (The requirements are the same for the three non-history areas.)

History of Philosophy. Four upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level history courses (at UBC or in previous studies), one of which must be 500-level.

Ethics and Value Theory (including aesthetics, philosophy of law, and political philosophy). Either i) one core course plus one 500-level graduate seminar, or ii) three upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level courses (at UBC or in previous studies), one of which must be 500-level.

Metaphysics, Logic, Philosophy of Language, and Philosophy of Mind. Either i) one core course plus one 500-level graduate seminar, or ii) three upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level courses (at UBC or in previous studies), one of which must be 500-level.

Epistemology and Philosophy of Science. Either i) one core course plus one 500-level graduate seminar, or ii) three upper-division undergraduate or graduate-level courses (at UBC or in previous studies), one of which must be 500-level.

3.9 Colloquium Presentation

All PhD students are required to make at least one presentation to the Department's Graduate Colloquium series during their first twenty-four months in the program. This is normally done in the second year of registration as a way of partially satisfying the comprehensive requirement (see below).

3.10 Languages

There is no automatic language requirement. However, the Department, in consultation with the supervisor, may require PhD candidates to show competence in one or more foreign languages needed for their work.

3.11 Programme Approval

Supervisory committees, as soon as they have been formed, meet with their students in order to work out the programme requirements that must be met before the student may begin work on a thesis. The programme of studies must be approved by the Graduate Advisor.

The student must normally have met all requirements listed in 3.1 to 3.10 above and must have completed any courses recommended by the supervisor as preparation for the writing of a thesis in the area of their choosing.

In recognition of the fact that some areas of philosophy require advanced study in other fields, students (after consultation with their supervisor and the graduate committee) may be exempted from some portion of the requirements in 3.4 to 3.10 above, as appropriate.

3.12 Comprehensive Examination

Approval of the programme of studies is required in order to submit comprehensive examination papers.

The comprehensive examination is mandated by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Its purpose is to assess that the candidate has both a breadth of philosophical knowledge and a precision of written and oral expression that the Department feels is sufficient for the student successfully to undertake PhD dissertation research.

The comprehensive requirement consists of three papers on different topics and in different areas of philosophy, together with an oral examination on those papers. The student may choose any three areas from the following list, but no more than two from any one of the numbered sublists: (i) history of philosophy; (ii) ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of law, social and political philosophy; (iii) metaphysics, logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind; (iv) epistemology, philosophy of science. The areas and papers are chosen by the student in consultation with the supervisor. The supervisor and the graduate advisor are jointly responsible for identifying the areas and ensuring that the three papers meet the distribution requirement, i.e., that no more than two fall in any one of the four designated sublists.

Except by permission of the graduate director, comprehensive examination papers must be submitted by the end of the second term of the student's third year in the program (32 months into the program), and a passing result attained by the end of the third year (36

months into the program). Failure to achieve this result will lead to a recommendation of removal from the program.

a) Preparation and submission of the papers

In preparing papers for the comprehensive examination ('comps papers'), students should bear in mind the following guidelines:

- A comps paper may be (and typically is) a polished version of a paper submitted for a graduate seminar. Typical revisions will include greater motivation of the topic and the approach taken to the topic, a greater effort to place the topic within a wider disciplinary context, and other changes that help show the candidate's breadth of knowledge in the field.
- Comps papers should have a maximum length of approximately 6,000 words, plus an abstract of up to 100 words.
- Comps papers may be on specialized topics, but they should make significant contact with the relevant literature.
- A comps paper should locate its topic within the broader field that it represents. The paper should explain the importance of its topic.
- The appropriate standard is that of a *professional paper*. In particular: the importance of the topic should be made evident, the philosophical position and the arguments should be clear, and external sources should be accurately represented. It is not expected that PhD students in our Department can write three publishable essays in three different fields of philosophy in their third year of PhD study. This is not the standard used in adjudication; the standard is that the papers exhibit a level of philosophical knowledge and writing that provides sufficient evidence that the student is ready to undertake dissertation research.
- Students may seek advice about comps papers from their supervisors and from faculty not on the examining committee. It must be clearly understood, however, that the student bears final responsibility for the paper, and that the judgment of the examining committee is independent of all prior faculty opinions (including assigned grades).

The papers should be submitted to the graduate advisor electronically, together with a note from the student's supervisor explaining in which area each of the three papers is being submitted and which faculty members are not at arm's length for each paper (see below).

Examples of successful comps papers will be kept on file in the department, and made available upon request.

b) Committee formation and time table

When the papers have been submitted, the Graduate Director establishes an examination committee that consists of three faculty member, each of whom serves as the principal examiner for one of the papers. The Graduate Director aims to provide suitable expertise in each area and is guided by general considerations of fairness. The candidate should bear in mind that faculty in the course of their professional lives routinely render professional judgments on papers outside their areas of research specialization and that the onus is on the candidate to write intelligibly for a broad professional audience. After the committee has been struck, the graduate director sends the papers to the committee members, informs the candidate of the members of the committee and schedules the examination. Since each examiner reads all three papers, there will be at least two weeks and, in the normal case, a month between distribution of the papers and the examination.

The research supervisor may not serve on the examinee's Examination committee, and each principal examiner must have an arm's length relationship to the relevant paper. In particular, the principal examiner may not have been the instructor for a course during which an earlier version of the paper was written, and may not have provided substantive input on the paper.

c) The Oral Examination

Upon submission of the comprehensive examination papers, the Graduate Advisor will strike an examination committee of three examiners, each member serving as principal examiner for one of the papers. The examination is typically chaired by a member of the graduate committee. The examination is two hours in length, forty minutes per paper. For each paper, the candidate begins with a five minute oral introduction to the main conclusions of the paper and the importance of those conclusions for the field in which the paper has been submitted. The committee, starting with the principal examiner, then asks questions and the candidate responds to those questions. In order to satisfy the comprehensive requirement, the examination committee must find that every paper and the oral defense of every paper demonstrate such familiarity with the area of the paper as may be appropriate to the examinee's overall program as well as familiarity with central issues in the area. By way of clarification:

- The 'familiarity' requirement is limited to subject areas and philosophical literature clearly related to the subject matter of the paper.
- Examiners may be expected to raise two sorts of questions: substantive questions about the arguments presented and the philosophical conclusions of the paper, and questions relating to philosophical context (relevant literature, history, etc.).

After the examination, the examining committee immediately meets *in camera* to discuss the results. The committee deliberates jointly regarding all three papers; the results are agreed upon by consensus or, failing that, majority vote. The chair of the committee—who is not an examiner—assures that the deliberations proceed fairly and with due attention to the agreed-upon standards of adjudication. The results are communicated to the candidate by the graduate advisor.

d) Outcomes

The oral portion of the examination either passes or fails; the written portion passes, requires revision, or fails. Thus, the possible results of the examination are as follows:

- *Outright Pass*: pass on both the written and oral portions for all papers.
- *Pass on oral; revision on writing*. Revision required for the written version of one or more papers for re-evaluation in writing. (This is the most common outcome.)
- *Fail on oral; revision on writing*. Revision required for the written version of one or more papers for re-examination.
- *Pass on writing; fail on oral*. Re-examination on unrevised papers.
- *Pass on oral; fail on writing*. Student must write one or more new papers for re-evaluation in writing.
- *Fail on both writing and oral*. Student must write one or more new papers for re-examination.

The examining committee may call the candidate back to be examined on the specific revisions to one or more papers even if they have determined that the candidate has passed the oral portion of the examination.

In any case in which one or more papers fail on oral or on writing, the re-examination will take place in the next academic term.

Only one re-examination is possible. A second failure will lead to removal from the program.

3.13 Thesis Prospectus and Defence

Each student is required to submit to the Department for approval a formal thesis prospectus approved by his or her supervisor. The comprehensive requirement must be met before a thesis prospectus may be submitted.

The thesis prospectus indicates that adequate preparation to begin detailed work on a specific thesis topic. It is the kind of document that academics are often required to write. Like a grant application, or a paper or book proposal, it should be clearly written and focused on a well-defined topic or problem. It includes include each of the following elements:

Abstract. Ranging in length anywhere from a single paragraph to a single page, the abstract provides a short summary of your proposed thesis and area of research.

Literature Review. The prospectus should begin with a review of the relevant literature, 10 to 20 pages long, outlining the nature and indicating the importance of the topic, issue, or problem that will be discussed in the dissertation.

Proposal. Typically ranging in length from five to ten pages, the proposal describes how the topic, issue, or problem that is the subject of the dissertation will be dealt with. While recognizing that research sometimes leads one to conclusions or into areas that one did not have in mind at the outset of the research, the prospectus should nevertheless indicate what hypothesis will be defended or what goal will be reached.

Chapter Outline. Typically short and to the point, the chapter outline should still contain enough information to give the reader an indication of how the dissertation will be structured.

Bibliography. A list of writings especially relevant to the dissertation, including all works discussed in the Literature Review, in the form of a standard bibliography.

The prospectus should be no longer than 10,000 words, everything included.

The thesis prospectus is defended in a presentation typically attended by the student's supervisor and supervisory committee, the Graduate Advisor, and any other graduate students and members of the Department who may wish to attend.

Following the oral defence, the thesis prospectus is considered for approval by the Department on the recommendation of the supervisory committee.

3.14 Admission to Candidacy

Upon completion of the above requirements, students are admitted to candidacy. All students must be admitted to candidacy by the end of the third year of residence.

3.15 PhD Thesis

Upon being admitted to candidacy, each student is required to complete a thesis embodying the results of original research.

Format. Each thesis must conform to the format required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This format is described in the *Instructions for the Preparation of Graduate Theses* available on the Faculty of Graduate Studies web site.

Lodging of Theses. Theses, once completed, are lodged in the UBC Library Special Collection and in the Department Reading Room, and are publicly available. One signed copy is required for each depository. The Library's copy is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. It is also customary for the student to present a copy to his or her supervisor.

3.16 Thesis Examination and Defence

Three months prior to the completion of the thesis a list of suggested examiners is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies by the Head of the Department. Upon completion of the thesis (and at least six weeks prior to the oral exam), a copy of the thesis is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. An Examining Committee is appointed and an oral defense is then held. In most cases the Examining Committee consists of a Chair (representing the Dean of Graduate Studies); the Research Supervisor; one to three additional members of the student's supervisory committee; two University Examiners (one of which is usually from the Department of Philosophy); together with the External Examiner. Following the oral examination, the Chair of the Examining Committee recommends to the Dean of Graduate Studies one of the following five categories of evaluation:

- Category 1 Pass
- Category 2 Pass subject to minor revisions requiring the approval of the Research Supervisor
- Category 3 Pass subject to revisions requiring the approval of all members of the Examining Committee
- Category 4 The examination is adjourned with the requirement that there be a re-examination
- Category 5 Fail

Applied Ethics Stream

4.1 Applied Ethics Seminar

All students who have elected to complete their degree in the Applied Ethics stream are required to complete a seminar relating ethical theory to practice (e.g. Philosophy 532). In consultation with their supervisors, the Department may also require PhD students in applied ethics to complete additional work essential for their areas of specialization.

General Regulations

5.1 Academic Progress Reports

Academic progress reports for each student are made by each student's supervisor to the Department in the spring of each year. Should a student show inadequate progress for two consecutive years, that student may be required to withdraw.

PhD students not yet admitted to candidacy: In years one and two of the PhD program, adequate progress consists of completing at least 12 credits at the 500 level or above, and at least 12 credits with an average of at least 80%; or, completing the PhD coursework requirement. In years three and beyond in the program, up until admission to candidacy, adequate progress consists of completing the requirements for admission to candidacy.

PhD students who have been admitted to candidacy: Every PhD student who has been admitted to candidacy must meet with his or her supervisor (and, at the discretion of the supervisor, the supervisory committee) by September 30 of each year in order to come up with a mutually agreed-upon set of expectations that the student must meet in the following 12 months in order to make adequate progress toward the PhD degree that year. This set of expectations, recorded as a memo co-signed by the student and the supervisor and placed in the student's file, will form the basis of the supervisor's report on the student at the May graduate student review meeting and of the Department's determination regarding sufficient progress at that meeting.

5.2 Auditing Courses

Students wishing to audit a course must receive permission of the instructor. They should register for the course so that the audit is part of their academic record.

5.3 Leaves of Absence

Students who find it necessary to interrupt their studies may apply for a leave of absence. A student may be on leave for no more than one year in a master's program and no more than two years in a doctoral program. Time spent on leave will not be counted as part of the time allowed for completion of the degree program. In order for leave to be granted, the recommendation of the research supervisor, the recommendation of the Graduate Advisor, and the approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies are all required. Students on leave will be assessed the continuing registration fee.

5.4 Exchange Agreements

Graduate students in the philosophy at UBC may take courses at Simon Fraser University without paying additional fees (and with a minimum of additional administrative requirements) and may include members of the SFU philosophy department on their supervisory committees.

UBC graduate students may enroll as Visiting Graduate Students without the payment of additional tuition fees at: the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the University of Lethbridge, McGill University, the University of Manitoba, the Université de Montréal, the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Toronto, and the University of Victoria.