



# **Graduate Studies Handbook for the Department of Philosophy at Rice University**

**2017-18**

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## **I. Purpose of this Document:**

This handbook provides general guidelines for doctoral students in Philosophy. It describes the typical course of study leading to the Ph.D. degree in Philosophy and includes information on degree requirements, funding, departmental expectations, and mechanisms for evaluating, advancing, and dismissing students. It is concerned with standards and procedures specific to the Philosophy program. This document supplements, but does not replace, the University's General Announcements, which contain graduate school regulations governing students, including deadlines and additional requirements. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the contents of this Handbook. In addition to complying with the regulations stated in this Departmental Handbook, students must also comply with the General Announcements and the Code of Conduct. In case there is conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over research-group-wide regulations. When in doubt, students should seek help first at the department level (graduate administrator, director of graduate studies, advisor, and/or department chair) and then at the central administration level (office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies - GPS).

## **II. Funding:**

Typically, all students admitted to the Ph.D. program receive fellowships renewable for five years, including full tuition waivers and stipends. Continuation of enrollment and funding are contingent on Satisfactory Progress. We address the criteria for Satisfactory Progress in Sections V through VII.

## **III. Timetable:**

A brief overview of the normal course of study leading toward the Ph.D. degree is:

**Coursework Phase (First Two Years):** Completion of fourteen courses and the logic requirement

**Preparation for Dissertation Phase (Third Year):** Pass the Qualifying Examination and successfully defend a Dissertation Proposal

**Dissertation Phase (Fourth to Fifth or Sixth Year):** Work on dissertation and successfully defend the dissertation in a public oral examination

Other requirements include departmental service, self-reports and presentations.

In Section IV we elaborate on the processes involved in each of these stages and in Section V we provide a detailed timetable.

#### **IV. Degree Requirements:**

The departmental Ph.D. degree requirements include ten categories. We first provide a simple view of the program, then elaborate on each category. A comprehensive timeline is provided in Section VI. Two other important areas of professionalization-teaching and service are discussed in Section X.

**Courses:** Students must complete 14 courses and satisfy the logic requirement during the first two years. Typically, the courses are graduate seminars in the department.

**Logic:** Students must either complete PHIL 505 with a B- or better or pass a written examination demonstrating a comparable level of competence. PHIL 505 counts as one of the 14 courses to be completed.

**Department Service:** In years two through five, students are required to be Teaching Assistants or Research Assistants.

**Qualifying Examination:** Students are required to have an approved qualifying examination committee and reading list in the general area in which they intend to write their thesis before their fifth semester. They must pass the qualifying examination based on that list during their fifth semester.

**Dissertation Proposal:** Students are required to pass an oral defense of a thesis proposal in their sixth semester.

**Special Area Requirements:** If the department judges it necessary for the thesis project, students will be required to pass a language examination or a special examination in a content area outside of philosophy.

**Candidacy:** After a successful dissertation proposal defense, students must complete and submit a Petition for Doctoral Candidacy form to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. See the Graduate Program Administrator for assistance.

**Dissertation:** Students must complete a dissertation, and arrange and pass a public defense of the dissertation.

**Self-reports:** Students are required to submit a brief self-report on their progress and plans at the end of each semester.

**Presentations:** Students are required to give a presentation each year appropriate to their status in the program.

#### **Coursework**

The department requires 14 approved courses for the Ph.D. The student decides, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the number of courses to enroll in each semester (i.e., whether to take three or four). Various factors come into play (e.g., what is being offered, how confident the student is in a given set of areas, whether there is one course the student wants to explore especially deeply, etc.). The minimum required enrollment to remain a full-time student in the program is nine credit hours per semester (three courses). Students on stipend are required to register for nine credit hours per semester to maintain their stipend payments.

Students are required to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) each semester prior to registering for courses. The Director of Graduate Studies will have in mind two broad departmental policies concerning course selection: (1) Over the course of two years, the department expects the student to become familiar with the main branches of philosophy, including its history (ancient and modern), its

main problem-areas (epistemology, metaphysics, ethics-social-political), and a good number of its central sub-divisions (philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, etc.). (2) Students should be primarily taking graduate seminars (courses listed at the 500 level). There are usually five or more graduate seminars offered per semester.

In addition, some advanced undergraduate courses (listed at the 300 level) may be suitable for graduate credit, usually because they provide important preparation not available in the graduate seminars being offered. Undergraduate courses at the 300 level may be taken for graduate credit with the consent of the instructor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students may substitute one independent reading course per year or one course taken in other Rice departments or at the University of Houston if this is deemed by the DGS to be essential for the student's dissertation work. Before a student can register for an independent reading course, the student and the supervising faculty member must draw up a written agreement that specifies which works the student will read and how much written work is required. The Philosophy Department also accepts for credit toward the 14 at least one course offered in the certificate program of the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. The DGS may agree to grant credit for a course outside the department that is philosophical in subject matter and beneficial to the student. In some cases, such a course may be required (see below, Special Requirements.)

In courses, standards for achievement are set by each instructor; the department as a whole does not try to make assignments uniform. We do, however, strive for a common understanding of what letter grades mean in reflecting "satisfactory progress." In general, two things may be said:

(1) Writing and discussing philosophy are both important. Among the virtues we look for in both writing and discussion are exegetical precision (did you understand Quine's argument and reproduce it correctly?), critical competence (can you see where the argument is weak or questionable?), and original insight (can you say something about the problem of translation, and not just about what Quine says about translation?). Variations on these virtues are myriad, and the only way to develop them is to practice. In addition, some areas (such as the history of philosophy) place particular emphasis on scholarly and bibliographical skills.

(2) We expect that your abilities in these areas will improve during your tenure in the program. The level of achievement (a 3.5 GPA) which is acceptable in the first semester of work is not "Satisfactory Progress" in later semesters. Failing any course in any semester (i.e., receiving lower than a B-) is not compatible with Satisfactory Progress, and though it is not grounds for immediate discontinuation in the program (since that decision depends on the stage one is at, one's past performance, etc.), it does place the student on probationary status. In such a case, the department might either recommend or require that you work toward a terminal Master's degree (see the Master's Degree in Section VII).

## The Logic Requirement

Every student is required to demonstrate competence in mathematical logic. This can be done in two ways.

(1) Almost all students enroll in PHIL 505 during their first semester of coursework (it is offered each fall). It is important to acquire this background in logic early, since competence in logic is beneficial in much of the rest of contemporary philosophy. Students attend the three hours of lecture with undergraduates for PHIL 305 and an additional hour per week exclusively for graduate students. In that hour, philosophical issues related to logic are pursued in more depth than is possible in PHIL 305, as well as issues about teaching logic. A grade of B- or better in PHIL 505 counts as having passed the logic requirement; PHIL 505 counts as one of your courses toward the required 14 graduate courses in Philosophy.

(2) Entering students who have a very strong background in logic can satisfy the requirement on the basis of an examination given prior to enrollment. However, even students with a strong background may benefit from taking the course as the approach to the material differs from most other courses. In addition, the discussions of teaching and philosophical topics from other seminars can be beneficial in deepening the students understanding of the strengths and limits of formal approaches.

A previous course in logic is usually sufficient preparation for PHIL 505. Students with insufficient preparation for PHIL 505 are sometimes advised to take PHIL 106 first, though this does not count toward the required 14 courses.

**Department Service:** In years two through five, students are required to be a Teaching Assistant (TA) or a Research Assistant (RA). Teaching assignments typically involve grading papers and examinations and conducting review sessions. In many cases TAs also have an opportunity to present a lecture and are involved in constructing examinations. Research Assistants typically include bibliographic research, summarizing literature, or indexing. The expected service should not require on average more than ten hours per week if completed in one semester, or five hours a week if completed over two semesters. In no case should the workload exceed 20 hours in any week. Because faculty expectations differ, all students should meet with the faculty members to whom they have been assigned at the beginning of each semester.

### Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination is a closed book, no notes, take-home written examination taken by the end of the fifth semester.

The Qualifying Examination will consist of three parts and will be graded as a whole. The student may take all three parts on one day, or spread them across two or three successive days. The questions will be written so that they can be answered in two hours. However, students differ in how fast they can plan answers and write them out. Therefore, all students will be allowed up to three hours to answer each part.

Students are required to obtain department approval of the student's Qualifying Examination Application before the beginning of the fifth semester. The form indicates the area of the examination, the reading list, the chair and other members of the committee and the intended date

of the examination, and must be signed by the committee chair. The examination is taken between the end of classes and the end of the examination period unless arrangements are made to take it earlier. The application must be approved by the Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies. A copy of the form is available in PhilGrad OwlSpace Resources.

Students should normally have decided upon the philosophical subfield of their dissertation (e.g. ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of science, etc.) by the end of their second year. It is necessary, of course, to begin this process earlier. Prior to that time, students should approach a faculty member or members about serving as the Qualifying Examination Committee. With the advisor(s) the student develops the reading list which serves as the focus of study for the fifth semester leading up to the Qualifying Exam. The Examination Committee is composed of at least two members of the department. Often the second member of the committee eventually also becomes the second and/or third official “readers” of the dissertation. The student and the advisor(s) can and should submit suggestions concerning the composition of the committee; the final decision belongs to the department.

The Qualifying Examination consists of essay questions, written by the committee based on the reading list approved by the department. These reading lists usually specify between 1,500 and 2,500 pages of material comprising the central contributions to the subfield philosophy in which the student hopes to write a dissertation. For example, the reading list for a student who hoped to write a dissertation on animal rights would not be limited to literature on that topic, but would be drawn from the field of ethics and applied ethics more generally. Some of the material is likely to have been read during coursework. In some subfields, the department maintains a standard list (e.g., Ethics, or Social and Political Philosophy). These standard lists can be modified to meet the students' needs, in cooperation with faculty. In other cases, constructing the list will require considerable consultation and negotiation with the relevant faculty.

It is important to note that the choice of an advisor or advisors in the qualifying examination process does not necessarily commit a student to that faculty member(s) as advisor(s) for the rest of their time in the program. Usually the advisor(s) for the Qualifying Exam remains as the dissertation advisor(s), and often the other committee member(s) becomes a member(s) of the dissertation committee, but sometimes changes are made as the student progresses through their research and writing, at the request of students or faculty. Students should check with their advisor(s) about continuing the role into the dissertation phase. Students who have any questions or concerns about the process should consult the Director of Graduate Studies or Chair.

Students who pass the Qualifying Examination are approved to continue to the Dissertation Proposal stage. The Department’s expectation is that students will pass the qualifying exam by the end of their fifth semester, and that they will successfully defend a dissertation proposal (see below) by the end of their sixth semester.

A student who does not pass the qualifying exam will be allowed to retake it once, and must take and pass it by the end of the sixth semester. Failure to pass the qualifying exam by the end of the sixth semester will result in dismissal from the program. A student who does not pass the qualifying exam until the sixth semester, and a student who passes the qualifying exam in the fifth semester but does not successfully defend a thesis proposal in the sixth semester, must successfully defend a thesis proposal by the end of the seventh semester. Failure to defend a thesis proposal by the end of the seventh semester will result in dismissal from the program.

## **Dissertation Proposal Defense**

After successfully completing the Qualifying Examination, the student produces a dissertation proposal, normally in the sixth semester. This should be done in close consultation with the dissertation advisor, and perhaps other members of the committee. The Proposal itself should be no longer than 25 pages (8,000 words), not including a one- or two-page bibliography. Proposals should exhibit a clear and original idea that has some chance of being defended, a relatively clear path to working out the thesis, some discussion of the most relevant secondary literature that contextualizes the thesis, and some awareness of where the main difficulties lie. A sketch of the chapter structure should be provided, but a detailed *precis* of individual chapters is not required. The Proposal Defense should be an occasion for exploring these matters in more detail. It is expected that students will generally find out if their idea "works" during the dissertation writing process, not during the proposal process, and the defense should be an opportunity for the faculty to point them in the right direction. A student who needs a second opportunity to take the Qualifying Examination should simultaneously be working on a proposal.

After the thesis proposal has been circulated to the faculty (at least a week in advance) the student will defend the proposal orally. Since the primary purpose of the defense is to engage with faculty members on the substantive points of the proposal, the defense will not be public. In evaluating whether to approve a student for doctoral candidacy, the department will include consideration of the student's overall record in courses, their departmental service and any professional activities, as well as the oral proposal defense.

Typically, the department approves the proposal with some constructive suggestions for changes. If the proposal is judged not to be promising the student receives a grade of "Fail." If it is consistent with the University time limit of eight semesters to achieve Candidacy, the student may later either defend a revised version of the first proposal or defend a different proposal. Once the thesis proposal has been accepted, the student may be officially "Advanced to Candidacy" with certain exceptions explained in the next paragraph. Note that Advancement to Candidacy is required for continuation in the program. Students who meet all requirements for Candidacy should meet with the Graduate Program Administrator to submit the appropriate paperwork to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

As noted above, the department expects students to defend their proposals successfully by the end of the sixth semester. However, students who have had to retake their qualifying exams, or whose first proposal defense was unsuccessful, may defend in the seventh semester. Failure to defend a proposal successfully by the end of the seventh semester will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Special Requirements:**

There is no general language requirement, but a student whose chosen dissertation work requires competence in one or more foreign languages will be required to demonstrate such competence before being approved for Candidacy. Such competence is usually demonstrated by means of a one-hour exam, translating from the language(s) into English. A student needing substantial work to fulfill this requirement may be granted extra time (up to an extra year) in the normal course of study; that is, "Satisfactory Progress" toward attaining candidacy for such a student may mean a longer gap than usual between coursework and being Advanced to Candidacy. Note that the University requires Candidacy to be achieved by the end of the eighth semester.

Similarly, students working in certain fields, such as the philosophy of science may, depending on the specific nature of their dissertation project, be required to show competence in a field outside of philosophy (e.g., some field of mathematics or biology). This competence may be acquired by extra coursework or in some other way; and if appropriate, the timetable will be adjusted accordingly. Note again that the University requires students to achieve Candidacy by the end of the eighth semester.

## **Candidacy**

The designation "Advanced to Candidacy" (colloquially called "ABD" for All But Dissertation) is important for four reasons. First, the University time limit for achieving it is eight semesters. Second, such a designation automatically qualifies a student for a Masters of Arts degree (see the Graduate Program Administrator for submitting the appropriate paperwork). Thirdly, various organizations and foundations, on and off campus, offer additional monies for a variety of purposes for students who are Advanced to Candidacy. Fourth, some local colleges offer part-time teaching positions only to students with an M.A.

For all these reasons, an official definition is important: Students are Advanced to Candidacy if and only if they have:

- fulfilled the logic requirement,
- passed 14 approved courses,
- passed the Qualifying Exam,
- fulfilled any relevant special requirements,
- successfully presented an oral defense of a dissertation proposal, and
- filled out the appropriate form immediately after defending their dissertation proposal.

The University requires that the Dissertation Committee include at least two tenured or tenure track members of the department and must also include at least one qualified Rice faculty member who is not a member of the department. The form for candidacy requires the name of the outside faculty member so it is helpful to give thought to an appropriate person before the defense. The committee and other faculty are good sources for suggestions. Faculty at other institutions may be included but are additional to the three required Rice faculty. More information on the makeup of committee members can be found in the General Announcements: [ga.rice.edu](http://ga.rice.edu).

## **Dissertation Completion:**

Two or three years is the most desirable timetable for finishing the dissertation. Students are very strongly advised to have a solid draft of the whole thesis by the fall of the year in which they intend go on the job market. It improves chances significantly when applying for jobs if the advisor can assure potential employers that the thesis will be finished within the year; also, in the job-interview situation, with a draft in hand it is much easier to say precisely what the thesis accomplishes.



Students who have achieved Candidacy are evaluated each semester as to whether they are making satisfactory progress toward completing the dissertation. Students who are not making satisfactory progress receive a grade of Unsatisfactory in the thesis course. A grade of Unsatisfactory in a Thesis Research course places the student on probation; two grades of Unsatisfactory - whether or not they are successive - can be grounds for dismissal from the program. Section VI below contains *one set* of expectations for the semesters after Ph.D. candidacy in the Philosophy Department, though not every successful student will meet this set of expectations. The student should be sure to arrive at a clear set of expectations with from their advisor(s). It is the responsibility of the student to have adequate information and/or materials in the hands of his or her advisor(s) by the official end of the semester for the evaluation of progress in Thesis Research courses. No grades of Incomplete will be given in Thesis Research courses except for medical reasons. The question of “Unsatisfactory Progress” is addressed further in Sections VI through VIII.

It may happen that a student and/or the student’s advisor doesn’t feel that the two have a productive working relationship. In a situation of this sort, a change in the student’s advisor is possible at the initiative of either the advisor or the student after consultation with the department chair.

The normal department deadline for completing the dissertation is three years after having been Advanced to Candidacy. The Graduate School deadline is four years after having achieved Candidacy or ten years after initial enrollment, whichever occurs first.

After completing the dissertation, the student gives copies of it to the Dissertation Committee well in advance of the hoped-for defense date. If each reader deems a defense appropriate, the student schedules a public oral defense. Note that the Graduate Office requires that dissertation defenses be publicized through them *at least two weeks prior to the defense*. It is important for students to contact the Graduate Program Administrator to go over details and requirements for their oral defense and thesis submission.

That readers regard the written dissertation as appropriate for an oral defense does not necessarily (but does normally) mean that the readers judge it as worthy of a Ph.D. The final decision is made by the department faculty after the oral defense.

## **Self-Reports**

Students are required to submit a one- or two-page report to the Director of Graduate Studies on their academic and professional accomplishments and plans each semester by the Friday after the end of examination period. At the end of the fall semester first year students should report primarily on their course work and their plans for the second semester. Others should report what they have accomplished academically and professionally during the summer and fall, how it compares with the expectations set the previous May, and what they expect to accomplish during the spring semester. At the end of the spring semester, they should report what has been accomplished that term, how it matches up with the expectations set in December, and what they hope and expect to accomplish during the coming summer and the fall semester. In each case, the report should include both progress through the different phases of the graduate program (courses, qualifying exam, proposal, dissertation, TA and RA assignments) and professional activities (talks and presentations, publications and submitted papers), as well as any other relevant information such as courses taught at Rice or elsewhere.

## **Presentations**

Giving presentations of philosophical material is an essential ingredient in being a philosopher. Consequently, we expect all students to give at least one presentation appropriate to their level in the program each year. Specifically, students in years one and two should either give a seminar presentation, a Works in Progress talk or present at a professional conference. Third year students should defend a dissertation proposal. Students in the fourth and subsequent years should give a Works in Progress talk or a professional conference presentation.

## **V. Evaluation and "Satisfactory Progress"**

The department is responsible for keeping you informed about how you are doing in the program and what your employment prospects are. Accordingly, we require each graduate student submit by the end of examination period (each semester) a one- or two-page report on their professional progress during that semester and their expectations for the following semester. (For details see the previous section.) It is understood that students earlier in their careers will have fewer accomplishments to report, but it is valuable to think of your progress in terms of the entire process. The department communicates to students written responses to the self-reports in the official department letters each semester. It is wise to communicate with the department in other, more frequent manners. The virtue of a small department is that every case is a "special case" -- or at any rate, things are not so structured that individual decisions cannot be made. Nevertheless, it is in the interests of both students and faculty to be aware of basic expectations.

At the first level, there is grading and comments on coursework. If you want to know where you stand, what are your strengths, what are your weaknesses, what you should be doing, etc., it is best to speak with your individual instructors. They are the ones who have hands-on knowledge of your performance relative to others over the years. Ask them direct, detailed pointed questions; ask them exactly what you want to know.

For students who are beyond coursework, you should be in regular contact with your advisor. If you want to know where you stand, what you should be doing, etc., it is best to speak with your dissertation advisor (and other committee members). Faculty members differ widely in how frequently and to what extent they expect to be involved in the dissertation writing process. Students should clarify expectations with all of their committee members early in the process. They are the ones who have hands-on knowledge of your performance relative to others over the years. Ask them direct, pointed questions; ask them exactly what you want to know. You should also consult with the Placement Director for job related questions.

At the second level, the department faculty meets in early January and late May to review graduate student progress in the previous semester. At that time, we review your coursework and any other relevant material -- such as the Qualifying Exam, language exam, departmental duties, the progress self-reports, etc. - and decide upon an overall evaluation of your progress; that evaluation is communicated to you by the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. It is in these meetings that the department takes official action, such as placing students on probationary status (e.g., if they have failed a course, if their GPA is unsatisfactory, or if their cumulative performance is not satisfactory). If a student is already on probation or has been in the past, and the department judges that there has been insufficient improvement, it may recommend or require that the student pursue a terminal Master's degree or leave the program.

## **VI. Sufficient Conditions for "Satisfactory Progress"**

The desirable flexibility of a small program can sometimes leave students unclear on expectations. Therefore, we provide a list of sufficient conditions for "Satisfactory Progress."

We recognize that for many reasons many students will not exactly meet these conditions and in those instances the department makes individual judgments about Satisfactory Progress. Those judgments are conveyed to the student in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies, but students should consult with the DGS, their advisor, or other faculty if there is any uncertainty about their status or the department's expectations. The following are sufficient conditions for "Satisfactory Progress"; students who do not meet these criteria are evaluated on an individual basis.

- Semester 1. Pass all courses, complete 3 or 4 courses with an overall 3.5 GPA, satisfy the logic requirement, complete self-report.
- Semester 2. Pass all courses, have completed 7 courses with 3.6 GPA, complete self-report.
- Semester 3. Pass all courses, have completed 10 or 11 courses with an overall 3.65 GPA, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 4. Pass all courses, have completed 14 courses with 3.7 GPA, satisfactory performance of department duties, complete self-report.

Semester 3 or 4. Give a seminar presentation, a Work in Progress talk, or a conference presentation. (Being a commentator counts; chairing a session does not.)

Before Semester 5. Choose a Qualifying Examination committee, develop a Qualifying Examination reading list and have the Qualifying Examination Application approved.

- Semester 5. Pass Qualifying examination, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 6. Defend thesis proposal, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 7. Complete 25 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 8. Complete 50 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 7 or 8. Give a Work in Progress talk, or a conference presentation. (Being a commentator counts; chairing a session does not.)
- Semester 9. Complete 80 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.
- Semester 10. Complete 110 pages of good quality thesis draft, satisfactory performance of departmental duties, complete self-report.

- Semester 9 or 10. Have a final thesis defense, give a Work in Progress talk, or a conference presentation. (Being a commentator counts; chairing a session does not.)
- Semester 11. Complete 140 pages of good quality thesis draft, complete self-report.
- Semester 12. Complete 170 pages of good quality thesis draft, complete self-report.
- Complete a dissertation defense.

## **VII. Satisfactory Progress, Academic Probation and Dismissal**

The department reviews all graduate students at the end of each semester. Students who meet the criteria for Satisfactory Progress will be informed in writing that they are in good standing. In the cases of a student who does not meet the criteria, the department will consider whether the student will be regarded as making Satisfactory Progress nonetheless because of mitigating circumstances. The department decision will be communicated in writing and will include any special expectations or requirements.

Students who are not making Satisfactory Progress will be informed in writing that they are on academic probation and the department will specify what must be accomplished in the following semester for the student to be regarded as making Satisfactory Progress and returned to good standing. Students who do not meet the specified expectations may be terminated from the program after that following semester.

In extreme cases--excessive absences, failure to complete assignments or failure to complete departmental service requirements--students may be terminated immediately by a vote of the department.

See the General Announcements for further details <http://ga.rice.edu/>.

## **VIII. The Master's Degree**

Our program only admits students intending to complete a doctoral degree, but there are three ways to qualify for a Master of Arts in Philosophy degree while in the Ph.D. program at Rice: (1) a non-thesis Master's, (2) being officially Advanced to Candidacy, and (3) a thesis Master's.

For students who do not enter the program with an M.A., there are significant advantages to being granted the M.A. well before the Ph.D., principally related to much greater teaching opportunities. Even for students who have an M.A. from elsewhere, a Rice M.A. may be helpful in the local job market around Houston. Sometimes students choose to leave the program before completion, and they consider it a benefit to have completed an M.A. In cases where a student has not, in the judgment of the department, made satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D., the department may either recommend or require that a student work toward a Master's Degree, either by means of the thesis Master's or by the non-thesis Master's -- sometimes as a probationary requirement, other times as a definitive end-stage of enrollment in the program. Such a suggestion is made only after the student has already been placed on probation one or more times for failure to maintain satisfactory progress.

### **(1) A Non-Thesis Master's:**

For a non-thesis M.A., the candidate must satisfy the following requirements:

- Complete at least two semesters in residence at Rice University.
- Complete 42 hours of courses approved for graduate credit in philosophy at Rice University with B- or better.
- Accumulate an overall GPA of at least 3.0.
- Complete at least 30 hours in philosophy at the 500 level.
- Satisfy the departmental logic requirement (PHIL 505 or examination).
- Complete at least 5 courses in an area of concentration.
- Satisfactorily complete departmental duties.
- File a petition for M.A. Candidacy Approval by the appropriate deadline. (See the Graduate Program Administrator for assistance.)

### **(2) Being officially "Advanced to Candidacy":**

See "Definition of Advanced to Candidacy" in Section IV.

Upon meeting those requirements, a student automatically qualifies for conferral of the M.A. See the Graduate Program Administrator for assistance in submitting the appropriate paperwork.

### **(3) A Thesis Master's:**

A thesis Master's requires satisfactory completion of ten courses (nine regular department courses and one thesis hours course) and the writing and oral defense of a Master's Thesis. The student is not required to present a formal oral defense of the *proposal* for such a thesis; it is enough to have an advisor and topic approved by the department. Second and third (departmental) readers are then selected by the department, usually upon recommendation by the student and the advisor. The student is required to give a public oral defense of the Master's thesis before it is officially accepted by the department. The final judgment as to acceptance or rejection belongs to the department as a whole. After the oral defense, the department members in attendance, together with the outside reader(s), meet and decide whether to accept it or not.

The Graduate Office requires that defenses be publicized through them *at least two weeks prior to the defense*. Completion of the thesis is expected to take between one semester and one year. See the Graduate Program Administrator for assistance.

## **IX Other Funding:**

In addition to the five years of funding normally provided by the department, other sources are available both during and after the five years. For example, the department nominates an advanced student each year for a competitive Lodieska Stockbridge\_Vaughn Fellowship administered by the University. Some advanced students are successful in winning funding from national organizations such as the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Many are successful in competing for the various funds provided by the Humanities Research Center.

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### Special Graduate Fellowships for Continuing Students

Each spring, department chairs are invited to nominate continuing graduate students for the following special endowed fellowships; the final recipients are chosen by the Graduate Council. The amount of the fellowship and the number of recipients vary from year to year.

- **Lodieska Stockbridge Vaughn:** To provide a fellowship for a graduate student whose record at Rice shows evidence of outstanding achievement and promise. Four or five awards are usually given.
- **Mellon Graduate Research Seminar:** The Mellon Graduate Research Seminar provides an opportunity to apply for a research stipend of approximately \$6,900 as well as conference funding upon completion. One must have passed Comprehensive Exams and have research interest fitting with seminar topic to qualify. Applications are through the Humanities Research Center in the spring semester for the following academic year and require a one-page statement of research interest and a one-page CV. See <http://hrc.rice.edu/seminars> for further information.
- **James T. Wagoner Fellow- Foreign Study Scholarships:** Applicant is expected to enroll in a foreign university or conduct research in a foreign country. Funding ranges from \$3,500-15,000 and is related to the scholar's projected expenses for a year, semester, or summer.

An exhaustive list of fellowships and grants administered by Rice, as well as outside organizations, can be found in the Current Students section of the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) office website (<https://graduate.rice.edu/current-students>).

The department provides information about further opportunities as it is available. Students should read their email regularly and are encouraged to seek opportunities on their own. If you have any questions, ask the DGS, Chair or any other faculty member.

## X. Beyond the Degree

Graduate study is very different from earlier stages of schooling. At issue is not merely completing a set of requirements so that one can move on to the next academic hurdle. There are two general differences to emphasize: professional acculturation and market readiness.

Students who intend to pursue an academic career should understand that there are many considerations involved in finding a job beyond completion of the dissertation. Competition is very stiff. Prospective employers are concerned about teaching ability and often expect existing publications as an indication of future scholarly productivity. The department provides many opportunities for students to improve their job prospects; these are not required for the degree but are very highly recommended if you intend to pursue an academic career. The departmental Works in Progress program is intended to help students make the step to those activities. Also there are workshops given annually on publishing and the job process and it is advisable to attend these well before you intend to go on the job market. The department also provides mock interview opportunities and other advice and support during the job application process.

Also, while it is not required for the degree, students are very strongly encouraged to attend departmental colloquia, dissertation defenses and Works in Progress events. Philosophical activities are not limited to the classroom and the journals; prospective employers will expect the kind of professionalization that can only be accomplished by long-term participation in a variety of philosophical activities.

### Teaching

With regard to teaching, the [Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#) at Rice offers resources to help students to develop as teachers and prepare for the job market, including:

an annual teaching symposium in January  
a variety of one-hour workshops for graduate students throughout the year a pedagogy reading group  
classroom observations and evaluations graduate courses on teaching Certificate in Teaching and Learning  
feedback on job application materials, especially for applying to teaching-focused jobs

To earn the Certificate in Teaching and Learning, graduate students must complete all four courses offered by the CTE, but the courses can also be taken as stand-alone courses. It is highly encouraged that students consider taking at least UNIV 500, a 3- credit course focused on topics such as course and syllabus design, student engagement and classroom management.

There are occasional opportunities for students to teach courses at Rice either in the Freshman Writing Seminars or in the department. Department funding is highly contingent upon faculty leaves, departmental needs, and other events and varies from year to year. Strong preference is normally given to students who have successfully completed courses or a Certificate from the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Outside of Rice, many of our students have been successful in securing teaching positions at various branches of the University of Houston, community colleges and other institutions. In addition, some faculty occasionally have funding outside the stipend fund to hire students for specific tasks.

Teaching opportunities at Rice include:

- First-Year Writing Intensive Seminar (FWIS) Graduate Instructor (one semester teaching opportunity available to students beginning in the fourth year at Rice who have prior teaching experience.
- First-Year Writing Intensive Seminar (FWIS) Teaching Assistant (one semester opportunity assisting a faculty member teaching a FWIS course that is available to all Rice graduate students in good standing)
- HRC Public Humanities Course (funding available for developing and teaching a course at Rice that engages the general public with the humanities; available to students in their fifth, sixth, and seventh years who have completed departmental pedagogy requirements)

### **Graduate Student Roles**

Prospective employers may consider whether applicants contributed to the academic community in other ways. There are five official roles for graduate students to participate in the department and University:

**Graduate Representatives to the Faculty:** Each year, the philosophy graduate students elect two departmental representatives—one in their first three years of the program and one in their fourth year or beyond. These "Grad Reps" coordinate various graduate student activities within the department and serve as a line of communication between graduate students and the faculty. Duties include collecting both informal and quantitative feedback on graduate student opinion about departmental

matters (such as feedback on job candidates), working with the department chair and other faculty members on departmental initiatives, addressing graduate student proposals and concerns by initiating discussion and collective action, and leading official graduate student meetings.

**Member of Departmental Speakers Committee:** Participates in decisions by the faculty-student committee in choosing speakers, timing of events, and organization of events. Has special responsibility for recruiting participants for the Works in Progress talks.

**Ethics Bowl Organizers:** The department, in conjunction with the University and the School of Humanities-organizes, hosts, and staffs the annual Houston High School Ethics Bowl, a regional qualifier for the national Ethics Bowl competition. Teams of students from area high schools compete in an argument-based analysis of ethical case studies that emphasizes dialogue and civility among participants. More information about the competition can be found on the National High School Ethics Bowl's webpage at <http://nhseb.unc.edu>. One or more graduate student organizers from the department help coordinate the Bowl at Rice. This includes working closely with a faculty sponsor and our outside organizer who recruits and works with participating schools, leading training meetings for volunteer judges and moderators (who consist primarily of graduate students from the department), working with the department chair and the Dean's office on issues relating to funding and equipment, publicizing the event by working with representatives of official Rice publications as well as with a design professional to produce fliers and posters for the competition, and coordinating and overseeing the event on competition day.

**Graduate Representative to the Graduate Student Association:** The GSA Rep is a voting member of the Graduate Student Senate and an external advocate and liaison for the department. They vote on legislative matters including decisions about how to budget and spend GSA taxes levied on all Rice graduate students, and may sit on university-sanctioned committees if s/he chooses. Meetings are held once per month. They also keep the department informed of, and represent the department's opinion on, activities and initiatives conducted by the GSA. There is ample opportunity for professional development.

It's a stepping-stone for being a GSA officer, and a pulpit from which to launch meaningful, and funded, policies, initiatives, and activities.

**Graduate Representative to the Humanities Graduate Student Association:** Represents the interests of departmental students to the HGSA and communicates to philosophy students' issues and information of relevance to them.

In addition to these regular positions, faculty often need a student administrator to assist with a conference.

Students who have any these roles contribute to the well-being and good functioning of the department and University. Serving in these, and similar roles also provides potentially valuable learning experiences in a broader academic context.



## **XI. Petitions, Appeals and Grievances**

In all cases involving petitions, appeals, and grievances, the University's policies, as set forth in the General Announcements, are the governing authority.

The Department and University prefer to resolve special requests, disagreements, complaints and similar problems at the lowest level possible. If a student feels that there is a problem with their treatment by an instructor, we suggest that the student first consult that instructor. If that attempt does not resolve the issue or if that course of action is not feasible or the student is uncomfortable dealing with the matter in this way, the student may appeal to the Department Chair or, in the event the Department Chair is the faculty member in question, to the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who are not satisfied with the resolution in such cases, or who have grievances against the faculty more generally, have the right to appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies or the Dean of Humanities as appropriate.

### **Petitions**

Graduate students may petition for exceptions to academic requirements, regulations, and judgments. A course requirement is an example of an academic requirement. Allowed time to degree is an example of an academic regulation. Course grades and dismissals from programs are examples of academic judgments. If a petition is denied, one level of appeal is allowed. For details of the processes, see <http://ga.rice.edu>.

In general, petitions will be handled at the lowest appropriate level. Whenever possible, disagreements should be resolved informally. If that is not possible, a petition regarding requirements, regulations, or judgments of the philosophy graduate program will be handled by the Department. A petition regarding University requirements, regulations, or judgment must be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; the petition must be accompanied by a recommendation from the department. For further details see <http://ga.rice.edu>.

### **Appeals**

If a petition is denied, a student (or other parties affected by the decision) is allowed one level of appeal. For details see the General Announcements: <http://ga.rice.edu>.

### **Grievances**

Grievances are different from petitions and appeals. Petitions and appeals involve exceptions to academic requirements, regulations, and judgments. A grievance is a complaint regarding inappropriate conduct by other students, faculty members, or staff. Inappropriate conduct encompasses both inappropriate personal conduct, such as sexual harassment, as well as inappropriate official conduct, such as violation of University policies. Specific policies exist to address grievances based on discrimination or sexual harassment and these policies must be followed in situations involving these issues. For details see: [ga.rice.edu](http://ga.rice.edu).

## **Problem Resolution**

During the course of graduate studies, problems that do not fall under the category of grievances, described above, may arise in the relationship between a graduate student and his/her program or his/her advisor.

Students should attempt to resolve such problems by informing the appropriate faculty members and working together to resolve the problem. When attempts to resolve the problem informally are unsuccessful, the problem resolution method described in the General Announcements should be followed. The Standing Committee of the department to hear appeals consists of all tenured and tenure track faculty not party to the problem.

## **XII. Title IX Information**

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of sexual, relationship, or other interpersonal violence, harassment or gender discrimination to seek support. There are many options available both on and off campus for all graduate students, regardless of whether the perpetrator was a fellow student, a staff or faculty member, or someone not affiliated with the university.

Students should be aware when seeking support on campus that most employees are required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. The therapists at the Rice Counseling Center and the doctors at Student Health Services are confidential, meaning that Rice will not be informed about the incident if a student discloses to one of these Rice staff members. Rice prioritizes student privacy and safety, and only shares disclosed information on a need-to-know basis.

If you are in need of assistance or simply would like to talk to someone, please call Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center, which includes Title IX Support: (713) 348-331.

Policies, including Sexual Misconduct Policy and Student Code of Conduct, and more information regarding Title IX can be found at [safe.rice.edu](http://safe.rice.edu).