

Department of History Graduate Handbook

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College of Arts and Sciences
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Introduction

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students. Based on best practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department be disseminated.

Purpose of the Handbook

The Department Graduate Handbook does not deviate from the Graduate School Policies outlined in the Graduate Catalog, but rather provides the specific ways in which those policies are carried out. Graduate students are responsible for following all regulations governing their work and study at the university.

When planning your studies, always be sure to check both the relevant sections in this departmental handbook *and* the general Graduate Catalog. The current UTK Graduate Catalog can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Students should also be aware of the policies outlined in the Hilltopics Student Handbook, the Policies for the Administration of Graduate Assistantships, and the Graduate Council's Appeals Procedure; all of these documents can be found on the Graduate School's website.

Administrative Structure

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) manages the day-to-day administration of the graduate program. The duties of the DGS include publicizing the department's programs, working with the Graduate School and higher administration on issues relating to graduate education, and answering questions from applicants and current students. The graduate secretary assists the DGS in these duties.

The Graduate Committee (of which the DGS is a non-voting, ex-officio member) is appointed by the department head and oversees all aspects of graduate education in the department, making recommendations when necessary to the department head and department faculty. In consultation with the entire faculty, the Graduate Committee also evaluates all currently enrolled graduate students on an annual basis and recommends students to the department for assistantships and other graduate awards. The admissions subcommittee of the Graduate Committee, which consists of the DGS and two committee members appointed by the Graduate Committee chair, evaluates and decides on applications to the graduate program. The chair of the Graduate Committee, appointed by the department head, convenes the Graduate Committee, insures that the Committee

addresses those issues that the department head or faculty have charged it to consider, and works with the department head and DGS to identify further graduate matters that the committee or department needs to address.

Forms and Deadlines

In the following handbook, students will find reference to multiple forms that need to be completed to mark completion of different phases of their graduate education.

Some required forms are mandated by the UTK Graduate School and can be found on the Graduate School website. Others are merely for internal departmental records, and they can be found on the History Department website. In all cases, please pay close attention to the listed deadlines for paperwork.

General Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty and Graduate Students

Faculty members must teach seminars that introduce graduate students to the most important current approaches to professional history; they must read and respond to their students' work—especially drafts of theses and dissertations—in a timely manner; and must carefully oversee their advisees' progress through the degree program. While the onus is on students to seek out their advisers and schedule appointments, advisers are obliged to give thoughtful advice. In cases of conflict between advisor and advisee, both are encouraged to consult with the DGS and/or department head. Faculty should refer to the Faculty Handbook.

Graduate students are expected to be familiar with all degree requirements and to satisfy those requirements in a timely fashion. They should also observe all administrative deadlines and turn in forms and other paperwork on time.

Admissions Requirements and Application Procedure:

The History Department considers applications to its MA and PhD programs once a year for admission the following fall. Student may apply to our PhD program either directly from the BA or from other MA programs. While most of our graduate students were undergraduate history majors, we also sometimes accept students with backgrounds in closely related fields.

For students who have no current plans to continue on for the doctorate, we also offer a terminal MA in History.

Application Procedures

Applications to the History Department are submitted online through the UT Graduate School's general admissions portal. All of materials should be submitted through this online system. Please do not have materials mailed to the university.

Both MA and PhD applicants are required to submit the following materials:

- Online Graduate School application
- Nonrefundable application fee (\$60)
- Transcripts for all previously attended colleges and universities
- Graduate Record Examination scores
- Three recommendations from people familiar with your academic abilities and scholarly potential
- A writing sample (**approx. 15-30 pages**)
- A statement of scholarly interest that describes your intended field of study and your professional goals (**750 words**)
- A current CV
- Applicants whose native language is not English must also submit documentation of their English-language proficiency. For more details, please see the Graduate School website (<http://graduateadmissions.utk.edu/index.shtml>)

Application Deadlines

The History Department will review all applications and make decisions about admission in the early spring. Once admissions decisions have been made, students will receive notification of their admission status from the Graduate School, with additional information following soon thereafter from the History Department if applicable.

Financial Support

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of History annually awards approximately twenty-two half-time graduate teaching assistantships (20 hours per week) that carry a tuition waiver, health insurance coverage and a stipend. Students holding these awards are normally working toward the PhD and serve as teaching assistants for upper division courses or large undergraduate survey courses. The Department also has four quarter-time graduate research assistantships (10 hours per week) that come with a tuition waiver, health insurance coverage and a stipend. Students in these positions assist faculty in research-related activities.

Assistantship stipends may be increased depending on the availability of various "top-off" funds or additional College or University fellowships.

The renewal of assistantships from semester to semester is not automatic. It is contingent on student performance and compliance with the terms set forth in funding offer letters. Each year, students are required to fill out a progress-to-degree report documenting their

work over the past year. The faculty uses the progress-to-degree report and faculty evaluations to assess continued funding of the student.

Funded students in half-time positions are expected to devote the rest of their time to their studies, and should not pursue outside employment. If a student in a half-time position has an intellectually meaningful opportunity to take on a small amount of extra work on campus, they should contact the DGS to arrange for special permission to work above 50%.

Students who decide to resign their assistantship should contact their adviser and the DGS to notify them of this decision.

Students who do not receive internal departmental funding should consult the Graduate School website for other assistantship possibilities.

Students who need information on loans should contact UTK's Financial Aid Office.

Support for Research Travel

The Department has a small number of endowed funds that are used to support internal fellowships, graduate student awards, and limited research travel.

The DGS will solicit applications for departmental research travel support once a year early in the Spring Semester. All applications will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee and funds awarded on a competitive basis. Students applying for internal funding are also expected to apply for external grants.

Due to the high costs involved, the department will typically not be able to offer support more than once for a student to travel to do research abroad. For all international trips, students must also register with UTK's International Student & Scholar Services.

Conference Travel

Contingent on the state of the department's available budget, the department will help pay for graduate students to travel to professional conferences to present a paper. Students will only be given funding if the proposed conference is considered an appropriate use of departmental resources, and the maximum any student will receive in a given year is \$500.

A student traveling to the AHA for job interviews may also apply for financial help from the department.

Students applying for departmental conference travel funds must also apply for money from the Graduate Student Senate Travel Fund. When applying for departmental funds,

the student must first send an email to the DGS describing the professional benefit they will gain from presenting at the conference and a detailed budget. The DGS will respond requesting more information or with an approval for a specified dollar amount and will copy this email to the graduate secretary, who will help the student access the allotted money.

Upon receiving approval from the DGS, the student must fill out an Authorization to Travel form, using the appropriate form for international or domestic travel. The student should provide their best guess on budget expenses.

For all international trips, students must also register with UTK's International Student & Scholar Services. The International Travel Authorization Form and trip registration must match.

Reimbursable expenses include airfare, taxi or train transportation, baggage, hotel, and conference registration. Students are referred to the graduate secretary for specifics on requirements for individual reimbursements.

Registration and Advising

Adviser Selection

Until a student selects a major professor, he or she will work with a temporary advisor appointed by the DGS. Incoming students should consult with their temporary advisor when registering for fall classes.

With the guidance of the temporary advisor and the DGS, the student will select a major professor under whose guidance he or she will complete the program. Students must select a permanent advisor by the end of their first semester and then **submit the appropriate form to the graduate secretary (the form is available on the department's website).**

Students should meet regularly with their advisor to discuss their progress in the program. Students may change their permanent advisor by filing new paperwork with the graduate secretary, should their interests or research agenda change.

Registration Procedures

To register for classes, a student must first obtain his or her Net ID. Admitted students can find their Net ID by searching for their name in the University's online directory. With this information, students may go to the Office of Information (OIT) website to create a password and register for their accounts. After a student has set up an account, he or she may log into myUTK by following the instructions provided by the Registrar's office.

Types of Courses and Course Credit

Courses numbered 515 through 585 are primarily readings seminars utilizing secondary sources. The amount of reading and the nature of writing assignments vary, as does the scope of each seminar.

Courses numbered 629 through 651 are research seminars that involve work in primary historical sources culminating in a scholarly paper.

Some courses are offered as joint 500/600-level classes; students should sign up for the course under the course number that is appropriate to their needs. Those who take the course for 500-level credit will focus their written work on the historiography of the course's topic; those who take it for 600-level credit will write a research paper based on primary sources related to the course's topic.

Minimum Number of Hours for Full-time Status

The maximum load for a graduate student is 15 hours, and 9 hours is typically considered full time. However, for students in half-time assistantships (Graduate Teaching Assistantships), the Graduate School counts students taking 6 hours of graduate credit as full time. Courses audited do not count toward minimum graduate hours required for financial assistance. For the summer term, graduate students may register for a maximum of 12 hours in an entire summer term or a maximum of 6 hours in a five-week summer session.

If you are funded by the department and still in the coursework phase of your studies, you should take at least 9 hours per semester (language instruction may count towards this total, as long as the student does not drop below the 6 hours of graduate credit mandated by the Graduate School). Refer to the Policy for the Administration of Graduate Assistantships for additional information.

Registration for more than 15 hours during any semester, or for more than 12 hours in the summer term, is not permissible without prior approval. The academic advisor may allow registration for up to 18 hours during a semester if the student has achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.6 or better in at least 9 hours of graduate work, with no outstanding incompletes.

Proper Use of 502 (Use of Facilities)

Students using university facilities, services, or faculty time, including summer term, must be registered. Normally, students are registered for coursework or thesis/dissertation credit. Students who are not taking coursework and are not yet eligible to register for thesis or dissertation hours must register for course 502 (Use of Facilities) if they wish to have borrowing privileges in the University libraries or to use labs or other University resources.

Thesis and Dissertation Hours

A thesis-track MA student must be registered for History 500 (thesis hours) each semester during work on the thesis, including a minimum of 3 hours in the semester in which the Graduate School accepts the thesis. Thesis-track students must take at least six hours of History 500. After receiving the MA degree, a student is no longer permitted to register for History 500.

History 600 (dissertation hours) is reserved for doctoral research. Initial registration for History 600 generally corresponds to the time at which a student begins to work actively on dissertation research. From this time on, students are required to register continuously for at least 3 hours of History 600 each term, including summer. A minimum of 24 total hours of History 600 is required. Students on an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) are exempted from the continuous enrollment requirement during the semesters approved for an LOA.

Degree Requirements for Master of Arts in History

Students choose between a thesis track and a non-thesis track of study for the MA degree. This decision should be made in consultation with their adviser.

Specializations

Students concentrate in one of four MA fields: Pre-Modern Europe, Modern Europe, Asia, or United States. There is no foreign language requirement for the MA.

Thesis Track Requirements

Coursework: Thesis-track students will complete 24 hours of course work plus 6 hours of thesis credit (History 500) for a total of 30 hours. As part of the 30 hours, they should also complete History 510 and a 600-level research seminar; these two courses will usually be taken during the fall and spring of the first year in the MA program. A student's course work must be at the 500-level or above if it is to count for the 30 hours of graduate credit required.

Coursework outside the Department: Up to 9 hours of graduate-level courses taken outside of the department may count towards a student's 30 hours of required graduate credit. Students may count up to 9 hours of graduate credits earned outside UTK (with the grade of B or higher) if those hours were not used to earn a degree at another institution and if the student does not take any additional hours outside the History Department. Students should consult the DGS for advice on this matter.

Thesis: The MA thesis should be at least 50 pages in length, plus notes and bibliography. The student will select the thesis topic under the direction of their adviser.

Exam: Thesis students will sit for a two-hour oral examination that will cover the thesis and the major field. For details about this examination, please see the relevant section

under “Examinations.” To prepare for their exam, student may chose to take History 521, a directed readings course designed to fill in gaps left after completing other coursework. This course is normally taken no earlier than the semester preceding the MA examination. History 521 is graded Satisfactory/No Credit. To register for the course, students should fill out the [Registration for Independent Study form \(available on the department website\)](#) and return it to the graduate secretary.

Non-Thesis Track

**NOTE: PhD students applying for concurrent MA will typically complete the non-thesis track requirements.*

Coursework: Students who choose the non-thesis track must complete 30 hours of coursework. As part of the 30 hours, they should also complete History 510 and a 600-level research seminar; ideally, these two courses should be taken during the fall and spring of the first year in the MA program. At least twelve hours of coursework must be completed in the student’s major field. A student’s course work must be at the 500-level or above if it is to count for the 30 hours of graduate credit required.

Coursework outside the Department: Up to 9 hours of graduate-level courses taken outside of the department may count towards a student’s 30 hours of required graduate credit. Students may count up to 9 hours of graduate credits earned outside UTK (with the grade of B or higher) if those hours were not used to earn a degree at another institution and if the student does not take any additional hours outside the History Department. Students should consult the DGS for advice on this matter.

Exam: Non-thesis students will sit for a written examination in their major field. For the format and scheduling of this exam, see the relevant section under “Examinations.” To prepare for their examinations, student may chose to take History 521, a directed readings course designed to fill gaps left after completing other coursework. It is normally taken no earlier than the semester preceding the MA examination. History 521 is graded Satisfactory/No Credit. To register for the course, students should fill out the [Registration for Independent Study form \(available on the department website\)](#) and return it to the graduate secretary.

Independent Readings Courses

History 593 is an independent readings course. It is graded A through F. It involves work equal to a 500-level seminar. In rare cases, the instructor and the DGS may permit a graduate student to enroll in an upper-division undergraduate course under the 593 course number. To register for the course, students should fill out the [Registration for Independent Study form \(available on the department website\)](#) and return it to the graduate secretary.

Formation of Committee and Admission to Candidacy

Under the direction of their adviser, students should establish their MA committee no later than the end of the second semester in the program. The committee consists of the adviser and two, or occasionally three, additional professors in the department. If the student is writing a thesis, the members of the committee will advise the student on his or her research, read and evaluate the thesis, and administer the two-hour oral exam. For non-thesis students, the committee will administer the written exam. Once the committee is selected, the student must see the graduate secretary to complete the appropriate form.

After completing 9 hours of coursework in History with at least a 3.0 GPA, the student must apply for admission to MA candidacy. The appropriate form can be found on the Graduate School website. The form must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than the end of the semester prior to the semester the student intends to graduate, and a copy of the Admission to Candidacy form must be filed with the graduate secretary.

Timetable for Degree Completion

The MA program can typically be completed in two years. The Graduate School allows six calendar years to complete the degree, starting at the beginning of the semester of the first course counted toward the degree.

The student must apply for graduation no later than the end of the semester before the semester in which he or she intends to graduate. [The Graduate School website lists all dates, paperwork requirements and deadlines for graduation.](#)

Transitioning to the PhD Program

A student who wishes to continue to the PhD program should solicit letters of recommendation from the members of the MA examination committee, write a new statement of intent, and complete a [Change of Program form](#) through the Graduate School. The Graduate School will then send the student's file to the History Department for evaluation by the Graduate Committee.

Degree Requirements for Doctor of Philosophy in History

Concurrent MAs for PhD Candidates: PhD students who entered the program straight from the BA are encouraged to get a concurrent MA while completing their course of study. The form to apply for a concurrent MA is available on the Graduate School website. Once the student has completed this initial form, they will then follow the normal paperwork requirements and deadlines outlined on the Graduate School's website, just as if they were completing a terminal MA.

In order to receive this degree, students must complete all the requirements for a non-thesis track MA (please see the relevant section above).

Specializations

PhD students select one major field from the following:

- * **United States** -- from colonial era to the present.
- * **Pre-Modern Europe** -- from ancient Greece through the mid-18th century.
- * **Modern Europe** -- from the mid-18th century to the present.

Students also do a teaching field in World History (satisfied through History 511 and two reading seminars in non-US or non-European history courses). If they do not want to do their teaching field in World History, they may pick an alternate field in consultation with their adviser and the DGS (for more details about this option, please look under “Coursework Requirements” below).

Research Requirement

Students are required to write a dissertation. The student will select a dissertation topic under the direction of their adviser and doctoral committee.

The first step in the dissertation project is the preparation of a prospectus. While the student and the adviser should together set specific goals for the prospectus, this document typically will be 15 to 25 pages in length. It should provide an overview of the proposed dissertation’s scope and anticipated significance, explain its relationship to the relevant historiography, and outline the primary source base for the study. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources should also be included.

Within one semester after completing their comprehensive exams, students should seek approval of the prospectus from their adviser. During the same semester, students should also submit the prospectus to their other dissertation committee members in order to solicit their feedback. Formal approval by the other committee members is not required, although committees often choose to meet collectively with the student to discuss the prospectus. Once their advisers have approved the prospectus, students should submit a copy of the prospectus, along with the accompanying **Dissertation Prospectus Form** (available on the department website), to the graduate secretary for their files.

After completing the prospectus, students will present their dissertation proposals in a department-wide Dissertation Proposal Colloquium. All faculty and graduate students are encouraged to attend this event and offer the students feedback on their projects.

A student must register for at least 24 hours of dissertation credit (History 600) before finishing the dissertation. History 600 will be open only to students who have passed their Comprehensive Examinations. A student must be engaged in some phase of **active research** to receive credit for History 600.

Once having registered for History 600, a student must continuously register for at least 3 hours each term (**including summers**) until they finish. Students who do not register and have not been granted a leave of absence from continual registration by the Graduate School will have to pay tuition and fees, plus late registration penalties, for every semester they did not register, before they will be allowed to defend the dissertation.

Foreign Language Requirement

Students must demonstrate reading competency in a foreign language or languages through coursework or examination. In other words, they should demonstrate the ability to understand a scholarly text in the language in which they are being tested. Students in Pre-Modern Europe must pass three language exams, including Latin. The other two languages are determined in consultation with the major professor. Students in Modern Europe are required to qualify in two languages, as determined in consultation with their adviser. Students in US history will be required to qualify in one language. The foreign language exam requirement must be fulfilled before taking the Comprehensive Examination.

The language exam requirement is satisfied by passing a written exam administered in the History Department. The exams are held twice yearly, once in the fall and once in the spring, on a date determined by the department and announced via email at the beginning of each semester. The selections for translation are chosen by the appropriate departmental language coordinator.

Each student will receive an exam packet with a passage to translate. For Latin and ancient Greek, the translations will be 150 words in length; for the modern languages, the passages will be 200 words.

Students will have 90 minutes to finish their translation of the assigned passage.

Students may use PAPER dictionaries, verb charts and grammar textbooks, but **MAY NOT** use any electronic resources.

Student should bring pen and paper with them to the exam.

If the student's language is French or German, he or she may also fulfill the requirement by completing French 302 or German 332 with a grade of B or higher. For other languages, coursework will not satisfy the certification requirement, though the student may take courses to develop expertise before sitting for the language exam. Students may also fulfill the Latin requirement by receiving a B+ or higher in two 400-level Latin classes.

To reiterate, the language requirement **must** be met before the student takes the Comprehensive Examinations, and thus must be complete during or before the semester that he or she finishes coursework.

Students who have demonstrated a reading knowledge of an acceptable foreign language in a graduate program before coming to UTK, will not be required to re-examine, **provided that they pass the Comprehensive Examinations within five years of the coursework or examination that demonstrated foreign language competence.**

Students must provide to the DGS in their first semester at UTK documentation of their reading knowledge of an appropriate foreign language.

If a student needs additional training in a language before sitting for the language exam, the department strongly encourages them to sign up for formal coursework if possible; we find that students who take language classes have a much higher pass rate than

students who try to learn a language on their own. Students should always talk through these issues with their advisers, however, to decide on the best course of action for them.

Coursework Requirements

The student entering with only a BA must take sixteen courses (48 hours), 39 of which must be graded. Students entering with an MA are required to take at least four semesters (36 hours) of pre-dissertation coursework at UT, 27 of which must be graded. If the student and their adviser agree that it is necessary, some of this coursework can be undergraduate-level language courses; however, even students who fulfill part of their coursework requirement with language study must be sure to take at least 24 hours of graduate coursework at the 500 or 600 level (18 of which must be graded).

Up to nine hours may be taken outside the department.

All PhD students must complete at a minimum the following courses:

History 510 and History 512; 9 hours in the major field of study; 9 hours in the teaching field (typically, History 511 and two 500-level courses with subject matter outside of Europe and the United States); and two research (600-level) seminars. History 512 is not offered every year, and is typically taken after completion of the comprehensive exams. Students who have written an MA thesis need only one research seminar and History 621. When planning your coursework, please note that the Graduate School requires students to take at least two 600-level courses at the University of Tennessee in order to fulfill the requirements for the doctorate. History 600, the course number for dissertation hours, does not count for this requirement, and transfer credits cannot be used to meet this requirement.

In addition, all US History students must take a two-course sequence in American historiography prior to taking MA or PhD exams. We are currently in the process of acquiring permanent course numbers for these classes; in the interim, the department will announce to students when a course is required.

In place of the standard World History teaching field, students may choose an alternative teaching field. This entails three courses in a major field (US, Modern Europe, Pre-Modern Europe) other than the student's own field and requires approval from the Director of Graduate Studies, the student's adviser, and a faculty member in charge of supervising that alternative field, and culminates in a two-hour oral exam conducted by the adviser and two course instructors. No more than one of these courses can be an independent study.

History 593 is an independent readings course. It is graded A through F. It may meet as frequently as, and assign work equal to, the reading seminars. In rare cases, the instructor and the DGS may permit a graduate student to enroll in an upper-division undergraduate course under the 593 number. To register for the course, students should fill out the [Registration for Independent Study form](#) (available on the department website) and return it to the graduate secretary.

History 621 is a directed readings course designed to fill gaps left after completing other coursework. History 621 is graded Satisfactory/No Credit. Enrollment in 621 requires the consent of the major professor. To register for the course, students should fill out the [Registration for Independent Study form](#) (available on the department website) and return it to the graduate secretary.

Residency Requirements

University regulations define residence as full-time registration for a given semester on the campus where the program is located. The summer term is included in this period. During residence, it is expected that the student will be engaged in full-time on-campus study toward a graduate degree. All PhD students are required to register as full-time students for at least two consecutive semesters. This requirement must be met before coursework is completed.

Coursework Taken Outside the History Department

A student may take up to 9 hours of courses in other UTK departments.

Formation of the Dissertation Committee

Students should establish their dissertation committee, under the direction of their adviser, by the time they are ready to submit their Admission to Candidacy form. The doctoral committee consists of the major professor/adviser, two additional professors from the History Department, and one professor from outside the department. All must be tenured or tenure-track faculty.

At least three members of the committee, including the major professor, must be approved by the Graduate School to direct doctoral dissertations. Members of the committee are selected on the basis of the expertise they bring to the direction of the dissertation, and should be consulted throughout the student's program of study, research, and writing. After selecting a doctoral committee, the student must complete a [Doctoral Committee form and submit it to the Graduate School, with a copy to the graduate secretary](#). Subsequent changes to the doctoral committee should be filed using the appropriate form with both the Graduate School and the graduate secretary. After completing all coursework and language requirements and passing the Comprehensive Examinations, the student must apply for admission to candidacy. The "Admission to Candidacy" form must be completed the same semester that the Comprehensive Examinations are passed. The form and instructions for its completion can be found on the Graduate School website. The completed form should be submitted to the Graduate School, and a copy submitted to the graduate secretary.

Timetable for Degree Completion

Students have a total of eight years from the time of enrollment in the doctoral program to complete the PhD. If a student takes a leave of absence during this time, the time still counts towards the eight years.

The Graduate School website lists all dates and deadlines for graduation. Please check the deadlines well in advance of your planned graduation.

Examinations: MA Program, Non-Thesis Option

The Examination

Students who do not write a thesis will complete a written exam in their primary field. Students should consult with their adviser and their committee to construct a reading list to prepare for the exam. In the exam, students will explain how their current research interests fit into broader historiographical trends within their major field; they will also synthesize what they see as the most important current debates in their field. The exam should include specific references to relevant secondary literature. The graduate secretary will distribute the exam to the student, and they will have one week [7 days] to complete their responses. The MA committee will grade the exam. There are only two possible grades on the examination, Pass and Fail. **Upon completion of the exam, the student and their committee should file the relevant MA examination form with the Graduate School, also providing a copy to the graduate secretary for departmental records.**

Scheduling the Exam

The MA examination may occur at a mutually agreed upon time during the fall or spring semesters. MA examinations are not given during the summer. The Graduate School website lists examination deadline dates. **It is very important to observe these deadlines when scheduling the exam. If the exam is taken after the published deadline, the student will have to register for the next semester.**

Students may take the examination during the same semester they are completing the final courses for the degree. If a student passes the examination but fails to complete a required course satisfactorily, he or she must complete the course in the next semester (excluding summer). If the course is not completed by the next semester, the student will be required to repeat the MA examination.

Students must take the examination no later than the semester following the semester in which they have completed 30 graduate hours, provided that they have fulfilled the distribution requirements for the MA and have at least a 3.0 GPA. (Summer sessions are not considered semesters when making these calculations.) Any variation from this schedule requires a letter in the file, with consent from the major professor and the DGS.

Examination Failure and Appeal Policy

If a student fails the MA examination, the committee will explain where the student's exam was unsatisfactory and help him or her prepare to take the exam again the following semester (excluding summer). A student who fails the MA exam twice will be dropped from the program.

A student may appeal a grade of Fail. (Please consult the Graduate Council's website for the appeals procedure). Normally, grievances should be handled first at the department level through the faculty member, the student's academic adviser, the DGS, or the department head. Further appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Council through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Examinations: MA Program, Thesis Option

The Examination

The examination consists of a two-hour oral examination that includes questions on the student's major field and the thesis. Students should consult with their adviser and their committee to construct a reading list to prepare for the exam. The student must submit a copy of the thesis to the committee members **four weeks** in advance of the scheduled oral examination. **Upon completion of the exam, the student and their committee should file the relevant MA examination form with the Graduate School, also providing a copy to the graduate secretary for departmental records.**

Administration Procedure, Scheduling, and Grading

The student must schedule the examination at least four weeks in advance. The student is responsible for working with the committee to schedule the examination.

The Graduate School website lists examination deadline dates. **It is very important to observe these deadlines when scheduling the exam. If the exam is taken after the published deadline, the student will have to register for the next semester. Note: MA examinations are not given during the summer semester.**

There are only two possible grades on the examination, Pass and Fail. The grade is awarded at the conclusion of the examination. The student is immediately informed of the committee's decision. **As noted above, the result of the examination must be filed with the Graduate Secretary; a copy should also go to the graduate secretary.**

Examination Failure and Appeal Policy

If a student fails the MA examination, the committee will explain where the student's exam was unsatisfactory and help him or her prepare to take the exam again the following semester (excluding summer). A student who fails the MA exam twice will be dropped from the program.

A student may appeal a grade of Fail. (Please see the Graduate Council's website for the appeals procedure.) Normally, grievances should be handled first at the department level through the faculty member, the student's academic adviser, the DGS, or the department head. Further appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Council through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Examinations: PhD Program

The Comprehensive Examination

The Examination Committee

In consultation with their adviser, students should select an examination committee to administer the comprehensive examination. This committee should consist of three faculty members from the History Department. Students should begin working on assembling their examination committee about a year before they plan to sit for the exam so that they will have adequate time to plan and prepare for the test. Students should consult with their adviser and their committee to construct reading lists to prepare for the exam.

Since a goal of the examination is to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge in a major field, the examination committee should be designed with that purpose in mind, according to particular policies established by each caucus. The examination committee does not have to be the same as the student's future doctoral committee. After the committee has been appointed, students should meet with each member of the committee to discuss the nature of the examination. Copies of previous written exams are available from the graduate secretary. Once the committee has been finalized, **please submit a Comprehensive Examination Committee Form to the graduate secretary for your file.** The form is available on the department's website.

Content and Structure of the Exam

The student is examined in several research fields both orally and in writing. Together these two exams are termed the Comprehensive Examination. Field requirements vary by area of study; the specific guidelines for US History, European History, and Pre-Modern European History are outlined below.

The first stage of the examination, the written exam, is eight hours long (8:30am – 4:30pm) and may be taken at any location on campus. The student must pick up the examination and return it to the departmental office. Each year, the department will announce specific weeks during which the written portion of the comprehensive exam will be administered; students and their committees should schedule the written exam sometime during these designated weeks.

The two-hour oral examination is taken after the student has completed the written examination. At the discretion of the committee, part of the oral examination time may be devoted to problematic issues raised in the written examination or to problems deemed insufficiently discussed. The oral examination should take place within one or two weeks after the written examination. The student should schedule the oral examination in consultation with the examination committee members.

Field and Exam Requirements for US History:

The comprehensive exam will consist of three fields:

- Students will prepare two fields in American history, one pre-1877 and one post-1877. In exceptional cases, a student can petition to replace one of these field exams with a similarly comprehensive geographic field, which must be approved by the mentor and the DGS.
- Students will also do a third, thematically defined exam field.

The exam committee will be composed of the faculty members with whom the students have prepared for each field, and at least six months in advance of their exams, students should consult with the members of their examination committee to prepare a reading list for each field. One faculty member will be in charge of drafting the questions for each field, and evaluating the written and oral performance in that field. The written exam will be closed book.

Field and Exam Requirements for the Modern Europe Program:

Students in Modern Europe will sit for exams in three fields. The first field will be chronological (Modern Europe/ Modern Germany) and the second thematic. The third field should non-European or global in orientation. Students should prepare each field in consultation with an appropriate professor, which whom they will compose a reading list. Each professor will examine the student in the field they have prepared together, but the three members of the committee will consult on creating the final version of the written exam.

The written exam will be open book.

Field and Exam Requirements for the Pre-Modern Europe Program:

In consultation with their exam committee, students in Pre-Modern History will prepare one general field in Pre-Modern history and one or two specialized fields; the exam committee will prepare the written exam and administer the oral exam.

Timing of the Examination

The department will schedule three exam weeks each academic year, one in early fall, one in late fall, and one in late spring. Students will be required to take the written exam in those periods, and the oral exam within two weeks after the written exam.

The comprehensive examination must be taken no later than the semester following the semester in which the student completes the residency, coursework, and language requirements (summer excluded). **Any variation from this schedule requires a letter in the student's file, with consent from the major professor and DGS.**

No student will be permitted to take the Comprehensive Examinations unless he or she has an overall grade point average of at least 3.0.

The Graduate School specifies that students must take their comprehensive examinations within five years of entering the doctoral program.

Students may take the comprehensive examination during the same semester they are taking a course to fulfill the foreign language requirement. Students who fulfill the language requirement through examination, however, must pass the examination **before** taking the comprehensive examination.

Students should contact their adviser and their committee members to set dates for the written and oral segments of the exam. In some cases, the faculty may set a single date for all students in a field who are taking the written component of the exam in a given semester; in situations where faculty have decided on a single exam date, students will be given adequate advance notice of this date.

On the day of the written exam, the adviser should arrange for a copy of the exam to be distributed to the student at the appointed start time. The adviser should also be sure to schedule a room for the oral component of the exam.

There are only two possible grades for the comprehensive examination, Pass and Fail. A Pass grade certifies that a student has a comprehensive knowledge of his or her chosen historical field and possesses the skills necessary to complete a doctoral dissertation. After the oral exam, the committee members will give the student a pass or fail grade for each field, and students must pass all three fields before moving on to Admission to Candidacy.

[Results of the examination must be recorded by the committee on the Comprehensive Examination Grade form and then returned to the Graduate Secretary. You can find the form on the department's website.](#)

Examination Failure and Appeals Policy

If a student fails one of the exam fields, they can retake this field exam (written and oral) two months after the failed field exam. A student who fails all parts of the comprehensive examination must repeat the examination the following semester (summer excluded).

Should the student fail a second time, he or she will be dismissed from the program. A student who fails to repeat the exam within the required time will likewise be dismissed from the program.

A student may petition for an extension under special extenuating circumstances that warrant a longer time than one semester to retake the exam. Written approval from the major professor, the DGS, and the department head is required for an extension.

A student may appeal a failing grade (for the proper procedure, see the appeals process outlined on the Graduate Council's website). Normally, grievances should be handled first at the departmental level through the faculty member, the student's academic advisor, the DGS, or the department head. Further appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Council through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately the Dean of the Graduate School.

Dissertation Defense

Once the dissertation is completed and has been reviewed by the full doctoral committee, the student will have a final oral examination to defend the dissertation. The student must provide all members of the committee with a copy of the dissertation **at least four weeks before the defense** so it can be carefully reviewed. The committee may require further revisions before accepting the dissertation or even, in extreme cases, reject the dissertation.

Note: Dissertation defenses are not held during the summer except in extraordinary circumstances.

Standards, Problems, and Appeals

Required GPA

To remain in good standing, a student must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA. Students who hold an assistantship must maintain at least a 3.25 GPA. Any student who receives two grades below B in graduate seminars (not including language courses) during their tenure as a graduate student will be dropped from the graduate program in History.

The Department of History defines grades as follows:

A = excellent; **B+** = good; **B** = satisfactory; **C+** or **C** = below the expected level for graduate work; **D** = poor (does not satisfy degree requirements); **F** = very poor (does not satisfy degree requirements).

S/NC = Satisfactory/No Credit (used in History 502, 521, and 621); has no impact on GPA.

P/NP = Progress/No Progress (used for History 500 and 600); denotes progress or no progress toward completion of thesis or dissertation; does not affect the GPA.

I = Incomplete. An incomplete is issued only when a student suffers an unusual circumstance late in the semester. Failure to complete assignments on time is not a valid reason to receive an incomplete. The student must have at least a B average in the class to receive an incomplete. Before the professor can assign a grade of **I**, he or she must compose a "contract" with the student in question. This document will clearly explain the reason for the incomplete and clearly explain the work to be done to remove the grade. The document will also include a timetable for the completion of the work. It must be signed by the professor and the student, and a copy must be forwarded to the department head. If the work is not completed within one semester (with summer counting as a semester), the incomplete automatically converts to a grade of **F**.

Fourth Semester Review and Terminal MA

In their fourth semester, all PhD students will go through a review prior to taking their exams. By December 15th of the fall semester, the student will create a portfolio that includes the following items:

1) Three substantial pieces of written work completed since arriving in the program. These three samples can be research papers or historiographical papers five pages in length or longer. Students should submit copies of their papers that include grades and professorial comments whenever possible.

2) An annual progress report.

This written statement should describe their progress in the program and explain their plans for the coming years. This statement should not just list the courses students have taken, but describe how their activities both inside and outside of the classroom have advanced their research agenda and professional development. The fourth-semester annual report serves in place of the standard annual report required of all students; students undergoing fourth-semester review are exempt from the standard annual report due in January.

Duties of the Fourth-Semester Review Examination Committee

The student's adviser will convene a three-person fourth-semester review committee to look over the portfolio and annual report. The members of this committee will typically be the departmental members of the student's comprehensive examination committee; if the comprehensive examination committee has not yet been formed, the student and the adviser will consult to form an appropriate ad-hoc review committee consisting of three relevant faculty members from the department.

In addition to reviewing the portfolio, the student's adviser should also solicit feedback from all faculty who have taught the student since they arrived in the program, in order to insure that they have a full picture of the student's academic progress. Once the review is complete, the committee should draft a summary of their findings and recommendations and present it at the annual January caucus meetings. This stage of the process is intended to allow other faculty members to voice any concerns they might have before the committee makes a final decision on the student's status.

Results of the Review

Students will hear about the final decisions of their fourth-year review on January 31st.

If the committee agrees that the student is ready to proceed in the program, the student will continue on to finish PhD coursework and take the comprehensive exam. If the student is not approved to continue in the doctoral program, but will have successfully completed 30 hours of graduate coursework by the end of the fourth semester, he or she will take a written MA exam with the aim of receiving a terminal non-thesis MA from the department.

MA Benchmarks for Progress to Degree

MA thesis option:

- 1) MA students doing the thesis option should have selected a permanent advisor by the end of their first semester.
- 2) They should have a thesis topic and an MA committee approved by the end of their second semester.
- 3) They should defend their thesis by the end of the fourth semester, though in unusual cases the thesis may be defended just before the beginning of the subsequent fall semester (theses may not be defended during the summer months).

MA non-thesis option:

- 1) Students doing the non-thesis option should have selected a permanent advisor by the end of their first semester.
- 2) Students should have an MA committee by the end of their second semester.
- 2) They should take their MA exam by the end of the fourth semester.

PhD Benchmarks for Progress to Degree

- 1) All graduate students, but especially those funded through the department, are expected to communicate regularly with their advisers about their progress, participate in the intellectual life of the department, attend departmental events, and perform assigned duties. They should also submit an annual progress report every year as requested.
- 2) PhD students must select a permanent advisor by the end of their first semester.
- 3) Second-year students should successfully complete the Fourth Semester Review.
- 4) In their first two or three years in the program, students should complete the language requirement(s) and pass the comprehensive examination. At the very latest, the comprehensive examination must be taken within five years.
- 5) After passing the language exams and comprehensive exam, students should apply for admission to candidacy with the Graduate School.
- 6) Students should complete the dissertation proposal by the end of the semester following their completion of the comprehensive exam. The proposal needs to be officially approved by the adviser, and students should also participate in the department's annual Dissertation Proposal Colloquium.
- 7) After completing the proposal, students are expected to make steady progress in researching and writing the dissertation.
- 8) All requirements must be completed within eight years from the time of a student's first enrollment in the program.

The graduate committee and individual caucuses evaluate the progress of all students early in the spring semester of each academic year. These evaluations play a central role in determining funding decisions and continuations.

Legal Requirements for Research

For Institutional review Board (IRB) policies on conducting oral history research, see University research policies.

Terms of Probation

University regulations state that on completion of 9 hours of graduate coursework, a student will be placed on academic probation if his or her cumulative GPA falls below 3.0. A student will be allowed to continue graduate study in subsequent semesters as long as each semester's GPA does not drop below 3.0, and the student receives no more grades below B. On achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.0, the student will be removed from probationary status.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all members of the academic community. An honor statement is included on the application for admission and readmission. The applicant's signature acknowledges that they will adhere to the statement, which reads: "An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity."

Termination from the Program

If a student is on academic probation, the degree or non-degree status will be terminated by the Dean of the Graduate School if the student's semester GPA falls below 3.0 in a subsequent semester. Upon recommendation of the appropriate academic unit and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School, a student on probation whose semester GPA is below 3.0 may be allowed to continue on a semester-by-semester basis if circumstances are deemed to justify this course of action.

Any student who receives two grades below B in graduate seminars (not including language courses) during their tenure as a graduate student will be dropped from the graduate program in History. Dismissal of a student is accomplished by sending written notice to the student, with a copy to the Graduate School. In cases where the department's requirements for continuation are more stringent than University requirements for graduate programs, the Dean of the Graduate School will evaluate the student's record to determine whether the student is eligible to apply for a change of status that would allow them to register in another area of study. Registration for courses in a department from which a student has been dismissed will not be permitted, except by written authorization from that department.

Department and University Appeal Procedure

The Graduate Council appeal procedure is explained on their website. Normally, grievances should be handled first at the department level through the faculty member, the student's advisor, the DGS, or the department head. Further appeal may be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate Council through the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, and ultimately to the Dean of the Graduate School.

Appeals may involve the interpretation of and adherence to University, College, and department policies and procedures as they apply to graduate education and the issuance of grades based on specific allowable reasons stipulated in the Graduate Council Appeal Procedure.

Appeal procedures in regard to allegations of misconduct or academic dishonesty are presented in *Hilltopics* under "Disciplinary Regulations and Procedures." Students with grievances related to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status should file a formal complaint with the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Appendices:

Pertinent Graduate Student Web Pages:

- Best Practices in Teaching

<http://gradschool.utk.edu/orientation/teaching.shtml>

- Center for International Education

<http://web.utk.edu/~globe/index.php>

- Counseling Center

www.utk.edu/counselingcenter

- Department and College Funding, Fellowships, Assistantships for Graduate Students

<http://gradschool.utk.edu/gradfund.shtml>

- Graduate School

<http://gradschool.utk.edu>

- Graduate Catalog

<http://catalog.utk.edu/index.php?catoid=7>

- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure

<http://gradschool.utk.edu/GraduateCouncil/AcadPoli/appealprocedure.pdf>

- Graduate Student Senate

<http://web.utk.edu/~gss>

- Graduate and International Admissions

<http://graduateadmissions.utk.edu/>

- International House

<http://web.utk.edu/~ihouse>

- Judicial Affairs

<http://web.utk.edu/~osja/>

- Office of Equity and Diversity

<http://oed.utk.edu>

- Multicultural Student Life/Black Cultural Center

<http://omsa.utk.edu/>

- Research Compliance/Research with Human Subjects

<http://research.utk.edu/compliance/>

- SPEAK Testing Program

<http://gradschool.utk.edu/speaktest.shtml>

- Thesis/Dissertation Website

<http://web.utk.edu/~thesis/>

- VolAware

<http://volaware.utk.edu>

- Library Website for Graduate Students

<http://www.lib.utk.edu/refs/gradservices.html>

- OIT

<http://oit.utk.edu/>

Graduate School Forms and Additional Resources (available on the Graduate School website):

- Graduate Student Deadline Dates
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Master’s Degree
- Doctoral Committee Appointment Form
- Admission to Candidacy Application – Doctoral Degree
- Scheduling Defense of Dissertation Form
- Graduate Student Travel Award Forms (specific to department, college, and university (<http://web.utk.edu/~gss>))