

HISTORY

Degree Requirements

Master of Arts (M.A.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

The Director of Graduate Studies, who supervises the overall graduate program in history and maintains student records, will assign newly admitted graduate students to advisers on the basis of each student's expressed area of interest. Advisers provide assistance in planning courses of study, guidance in choosing scholarly papers and dissertation topics, direction in conducting research, and career counseling.

Students who serve as graduate assistants will be given a variety of experiences as they assist different professors, ranging from paper-grading and administering exams, to preparing and delivering occasional lectures, to conducting review or discussion sections for large lecture courses.

Candidates for the M.A. degree must earn a minimum of 36 credits of course work that can be counted towards a graduate degree, of which 12 credits will be in the student's primary area and 6 credits in one secondary area. At least 30 credits must be at the 500 level, with no more than 6 credits of HIST 596. The only required course is HIST 500. Course work offered by outside departments may be scheduled as part of the student's program with approval of the student's academic committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. In some cases, students may be required to take additional credits in order to make up deficiencies in foreign language skills and/or undergraduate coursework.

Reading proficiency in at least one foreign language must be demonstrated no later than the beginning of the second year of residence.

Students are required to convene two separate, formal meetings with their advisers and master's committees: Committee Formation Meeting and the Master's oral examination. The convening of the student's master's committee must take place no later than the end of the first year in the master's program. Every student should, in consultation with the permanent adviser, select at least two other members of the Graduate Faculty to serve on their master's committee (for a minimum total of three faculty members). There must be faculty representation of each of the students' two fields (selected from the department's list of officially recognized fields). At this first meeting there should be a discussion and approval of the general program plan (seminars, courses and other requirements).

Students must hold a Master's oral examination. The examination consists of an oral defense of two research papers written while in the M.A. program in two department-defined fields of study (e.g., 19th century US and Modern Europe). The research papers must be of a length, substance, and quality that the committee deems to be of journal article-caliber. Students must submit the papers to the committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the oral examinations; the papers then must be orally presented and successfully defended before the committee in the M.A. examination. Submission and defense of these two research papers constitutes the culminating experience for the Master of Arts degree.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Policies. (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>)

The Director of Graduate Studies, who supervises the overall graduate program in history and maintains student records, will assign newly admitted graduate students to advisers on the basis of each student's expressed area of interest. Advisers provide assistance in planning courses of study, guidance in choosing scholarly papers and dissertation topics, direction in conducting research, and career counseling.

Students who serve as graduate assistants will be given a variety of experiences as they assist different professors, ranging from paper-grading and administering exams, to preparing and delivering occasional lectures, to conducting review or discussion sections for large lecture courses. Advanced doctoral students may hold lectureships while working on their dissertations; lecturers have complete instructional responsibility for one or two sections of an undergraduate course in their area of specialization.

Credits & Course Requirements

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree in History must complete at least 27 credits of graduate-level work at the 500-600 level (with no more than one HIST 596 per academic year), of which 12 credits will be in the student's primary area and 6 credits each in two secondary areas. The only required course is HIST 500. The remainder of a student's doctoral program, including foreign language requirements, should be determined in consultation with the Ph.D. committee. Course work offered by outside departments may be scheduled as part of the student's program with approval of the student's Ph.D. committee and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Foreign Language Requirements

Reading proficiency in at least one foreign language must be demonstrated no later than the third semester of residency (not including summer semester).

English Competence

A student in the Doctor of Philosophy in History degree program is required to demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, and speaking. At the end of the first year of enrollment all students who are non-native speakers of English must submit a portfolio which includes at least two pieces of written work from every seminar. In addition, the Director of Graduate Studies will solicit evaluations from their adviser(s) and seminar instructors in order to identify any deficiencies. Students with any identified deficiencies will be directed into appropriate remedial activities. The deficiencies must be met before the qualifying examination. Competence must be formally attested by the program before the doctoral comprehensive examination is scheduled. (International students should note that passage of the minimal TOEFL or IELTS requirement does not demonstrate the level of competence expected of a Ph.D. from Penn State.)

Ph.D. committee Composition

By the end of the first year in the doctoral program, every student should, in consultation with the permanent adviser, select at least two other members of the Graduate Faculty to serve on their Ph.D. committee. Ph.D. committees for History Ph.D. candidates must meet all Graduate Council requirements (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>).

Only those faculty who have been approved and designated by the Graduate School as members of the Graduate Faculty in History can serve as representatives of the three primary and secondary fields on any Ph.D. committee. The list of History Graduate Faculty is available online (<http://www.gradschool.psu.edu/gs/faculty/facultylist.cfm?program=90>).

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination may be taken after the completion of at least 18 credits of acceptable graduate work at Penn State and must be taken within three semesters (excluding summer sessions) of entry into the doctoral program. Following successful passage of the qualifying exam, a program plan will be submitted to the Departments of History and the participating program after consultation with members of the student's Ph.D. committee.

Formal Meetings

Students are required to convene two separate, formal meetings with their advisers and Ph.D. committees for:

1. a discussion and approval of the general program plan (seminars, courses and other requirements) and
2. their Ph.D. comprehensive examinations.

Doctoral Dissertation Defense

Upon the researching, writing, and completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense). The dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.