

VISUAL STUDIES

Degree Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-titles/>).

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the requirements of their primary graduate program. In addition, they must satisfy the requirements described below, as established by the Visual Studies dual-title degree program.

The minimum course requirements for this dual-title Ph.D. degree are as follows:

- 15 credits of course work related to Visual Studies, all at the 500- or 800-level. In certain circumstances, a 400-level course may be substituted with the approval of the Director of the Visual Studies graduate program and the student's adviser. Such approval must be granted in writing before the course is taken and will require work supplementing the syllabus, such as a culminating research paper. Of the 15 credits required for the Visual Studies dual-title, 6 must come from the two required core courses in the Visual Studies program: VSTUD 501 and VSTUD 502.
- Students must also take 9 elective credits from courses approved by the Visual Studies Academic Advisory Committee. In order to promote interdisciplinarity, at least 3 of these credits must be from a college, department, or program outside the student's home department or program. Students may complete the courses contributing to the Visual Studies degree in any sequence.

A list of courses approved to count towards the Visual Studies dual-title degree requirements will be maintained by the program office.

Qualifying Examination

The dual-title field will be fully integrated into the qualifying exam for the doctoral program. The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Visual Studies program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. In addition, students in the dual-title Ph.D. degree program in Visual Studies will be required to present to their qualifying examination committee a portfolio of work in Visual Studies, including:

- a statement of the student's interdisciplinary research interests,
- a program plan, and
- samples of writing that indicate the student's interest in questions related to the Visual Studies.

Because students must first be admitted to a graduate major program of study before they may apply to and be considered for admission into a dual-title graduate degree program, dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

Ph.D. committee Composition

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for Ph.D. committees (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation/>), the Ph.D. committee of a Visual Studies dual-title doctoral degree student must

include at least one member of the Visual Studies Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the committee chair does not represent Visual Studies, the committee member representing Visual Studies must be appointed as co-chair.

Comprehensive Exam

After completion of required course work, doctoral students in the dual-title doctoral degree program must pass a comprehensive examination. The Visual Studies Graduate Faculty member on the candidate's committee is responsible for developing and administering the Visual Studies portion of the student's comprehensive exam. The exam must incorporate written and oral components addressing Visual Studies based on the student's areas of interest and specialization in Visual Studies.

Dissertation and Final Oral Examination

The candidate must complete a dissertation on a topic that reflects his or her original research and education in both the primary graduate program and Visual Studies. In order to earn the dual-title Ph.D. degree, the dissertation must be accepted by the Ph.D. committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School, and the student must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense).