Department of Political Science

Guide to Graduate Study

This guide describes the requirements of the doctoral program and answers common questions students may have in planning their program of study. It is intended as a guide. It is not a rulebook. Students and faculty should consult the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and The Graduate School’s (TGS) website, www.tgs.northwestern.edu for the latest policies and procedures.

In addition to the requirements of the Department, students are responsible for meeting the standards and requirements of TGS with respect to such matters as credits, academic standing, deadlines, residence, etc. Reference should be made to the TGS website for additional information about these issues.

These pages present an outline of the numerous steps involved in a student’s career from matriculation in the first year to graduation as a full-fledged Doctor of Philosophy. While this handbook is meant to provide a guide to these procedures and requirements, most students recognize that one often “learns the ropes” from more advanced graduate students, from faculty advisors, from the DGS, and from the GPA (about whom more information appears on the next page). The student bears ultimate responsibility for meeting standards and requirements, but the overall process involves participation in a community of scholars. The Department takes great pride in this community spirit, and students are urged to avail themselves of its benefits.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM

1.1 The Graduate School (TGS)

TGS is responsible for the administration of graduate programs. Admissions, financial aid, awarding of degrees, etc. are administered by TGS, which usually, but not always, respects the recommendations of the academic departments. TGS has numerous rules and deadlines with which you should become familiar. TGS also coordinates professional development and facilitates many associations for graduate students. For more information on TGS policies and programs, please consult their website: www.tgs.northwestern.edu

1.2 The Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (WCAS)

WCAS coordinates the academic activities of 25 departments in the Arts and Sciences, including Political Science. WCAS, acting on recommendations of each department, is ultimately responsible for the allocation of teaching assistantships and fellowships. WCAS has information about internal and external fellowships available on its website: www.wcas.northwestern.edu

1.3 Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

The DGS is a tenured member of the faculty who directs the graduate program. The DGS chairs the Graduate Committee and acts as an intermediary between graduate students and TGS.

1.4 The Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is appointed prior to each academic year by the Department Chair. It is comprised of the DGS, acting as the Committee’s Chair, and representatives from each of the four major sub-fields. The Committee’s main role is to conduct admissions to the graduate program, select nominees for internal fellowships and prizes, and where necessary, decide upon specific policies related to TGS.
1.5 Graduate Program Assistant (GPA)

The GPA is a staff-member employed by the University to aid students and faculty with the administration of the program. In particular, s/he handles applications for fellowships, admissions, degrees, qualifying exams (sometimes referred to as “prelims”) and dissertation committees, and is responsible for placement materials. The GPA is a good first point of contact on matters of Departmental and University policy.

1.6 Faculty Advisors

The Department encourages extensive student-faculty interaction. Every incoming graduate student will be assigned a first-year faculty advisor in his or her major field of interest. The faculty advisor serves as the liaison between his or her advisee and the faculty and is the primary source of advice and interpretation of rules. The advisor will be available to meet with the student to offer advice and develop a proposed plan of study. Students should meet with their advisor at least once every quarter to discuss course selection and should meet as needed for other issues as they arise.

Students will be assigned an advisor in their first year. After that, students will be required to submit confirmation of their advisor to the GPA at the end of each year, starting in their second year. Students are not required to remain with their assigned first year advisor if they find that their research better aligns with another faculty member. One should select an advisor who is an expert in the area of research that one wants to pursue. Consider the potential advisor’s reputation in the area of mutual research interest, accessibility, and responsiveness to students, and the placement record of the potential advisor’s students. It is worthwhile to talk with other graduate students about their experiences with various faculty members.

By the end of the second year, students must have an advisor who will serve as first reader on their second year paper, as well as be the first member of their dissertation committee. Students must inform the GPA of their current advisor at the end of each year, even if that advisor remains the same.

1.7 Commune

The Graduate Student Commune is the organization of Political Science graduate students. It provides advice to the Department on teaching, recruitment and organizes resources and activities for graduate students. It is composed of all students currently enrolled in the graduate program. The Commune elects representatives to represent the graduate students in matters affecting the graduate community.

II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

There are several steps and requirements that must be fulfilled in the course of studies toward a Ph.D. in Political Science. Some of these are established by TGS, and students should consult TGS’ website to familiarize themselves with those requirements. The Department also specifies additional requirements for a Ph.D. in Political Science. The most important TGS and Department requirements are explained in detail in the pages that follow. They can be summarized as follows:

TGS Requirements

- Eight quarters of fulltime residency to be completed consecutively over two years, including summers. More information about this requirement can be found at: [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/timeline/index.html](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/timeline/index.html)
- Maintenance of a B (3.0) average is required to remain in good standing. More information on TGS policies concerning coursework and grades can be found at: [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/coursework-registration/index.html](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/coursework-registration/index.html)
- Failure to adhere to the TGS timeline and requirements will result in a student being placed on academic probation.
  - When a decision to place a student on probation is made by the program, the student and The Graduate School must be notified in writing. In Political Science, this notification happens at the end of the academic year.
  - When a decision to place a student on probation is made by The Graduate School, the student will be notified in writing, along with the program’s Director of Graduate Study, and will be given at most two quarters (excluding summers) to resume satisfactory academic standing.
  - During the probationary period, students will remain eligible to receive federal and institutional assistance
(except when they have exceeded their degree deadline). At the end of the probationary period, progress will be reviewed. If a student cannot re-establish satisfactory academic standing during the two probationary quarters, the student will become ineligible to receive financial aid and will be excluded from TGS.

- More information can be found here: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/satisfactory/index.html

Department Requirements

- A minimum of two years of full-time coursework (18 courses).
- Two courses in Methods (PS403 and PS405 – offered in Fall and Winter quarters respectively each year). Theory majors are exempt from this requirement.
- Successful completion of a Research Paper Requirement (due during the 2nd year Spring quarter).
- Successful completion of two Departmental qualifying examinations.
- Acceptance of a dissertation proposal.
- Successful defense of dissertation.

A summary of TGS’s Ph.D. requirements and a time line can be found at: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/doctoral/.

III. THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PH.D. PROGRAM

The first year program generally incorporates core subfield courses and required courses.

A. COURSE WORK

Over the course of the Ph.D. program, eighteen courses must be completed to fulfill the Department’s requirements for coursework. Typically this means taking 3 courses per quarter for each of the first two years (summers are excluded). Under University regulations, all students are required to be enrolled full-time each quarter. Full-time is defined as being enrolled in 3 or 4 units of study. Typically, students will select the bulk of their courses from among the graduate 400-level offerings of the Department. Generally, students take core courses in the fields in which they intend to major and minor. Students may benefit from taking a fourth course, particularly in languages or methods. Such a fourth course may often be taken P/N, with the exception of language courses; all other courses must be taken for a grade.

In consultation with their advisor, students may take courses in other departments and schools. Interdisciplinary study receives broad support in the Department and in the wider University. In addition, the CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation - a consortium of Midwestern research universities) Traveling Scholar Program offers students the opportunity to take classes at other Big Ten universities, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois, Chicago. Information about this program can be found at: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/traveling/index.html.

The number of courses taken outside the department of Political Science during the first two years of study that can satisfy the coursework requirement for the doctorate is limited to 3. This limit can be raised if necessary to complete a TGS approved special credential.

Undergraduate (300-level) courses in other departments may be taken to satisfy Departmental requirements if no graduate course covering the same material is available. Students must consult with their advisor before enrolling in a 300-level course. Students should also consult with the course instructor to arrange extra work since graduate students taking 300-level courses will be required to meet higher performance standards than undergraduates. Students need to have written permission from his or her faculty advisor and the DGS to take more than two 300-level courses in any year. The Department discourages graduate students from enrolling in Political Science 499 (Independent Study). Prior DGS approval is required for all 499 registrations.
B. REQUIRED METHODS COURSES

All students, except Political Theory majors, must take POLISCI 403 (Probability and Statistics) and POLISCI 405 (Linear Models). These required courses are usually completed in the first year. Students may elect to take one or both during their second year. Students should consult with their advisor about the best options for completion of this requirement given their overall program of studies. Students who wish to be exempted from these classes on the basis of equivalent training prior to coming to Northwestern must make contact with the methods course instructor and have written permission from their advisor and the DGS.

C. CONTINUING STUDENT EVALUATION

The faculty meets late in the Spring Quarter to evaluate continuing graduate students. It is on the basis of this evaluation that assessments are made regarding their satisfaction of the criteria for continuing in good standing. There is no automatic formula for assessment. The individual situation of each student is taken into consideration. In cases in which a student is not making acceptable progress toward the completion of the degree, the Department uses this meeting to examine the difficulty and to suggest a course of action. This may include counseling the student to reassess his or her commitment to the program. The Department reserves the right to remove a student from the program if the difficulties seem to be insurmountable.

D. FIRST YEAR REVIEW

Toward late Spring Quarter, first year students will meet with their advisor and a second faculty member to discuss the student's academic progress during his or her first year, as well as the student's plans for study and research in the coming years. This meeting also provides students with an opportunity to recruit faculty members as possible second readers for their second year papers. This meeting must be held before classes end in the third quarter.

IV. THE SECOND YEAR AND BEYOND: PAPERS AND PRELIMS

During the second year, students:

A. Prepare their Research Papers;
B. Complete course requirements;
C. Prepare to take qualifying examinations in the third year.

A. RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENT, GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY

The Research Paper is expected to be an original scholarly paper demonstrating the student's ability to analyze a significant problem in the format of a journal article. It is normally 20-40 pages in length. The research paper is a core requirement of the program that is tied to coursework.

The process of completing the research paper requirement proceeds as follows:

1. Students select a paper produced in a political science graduate seminar at Northwestern taken during the first 5 quarters of their graduate careers to submit in fulfillment of their "research paper requirement." The student, in consultation with faculty (normally the instructor for the seminar for which it was written), chooses a paper to submit for the research paper requirement. This may or may not require additional work on the paper, to be determined by the instructor in consultation with the subfield chair or other faculty as needed. The subfield chair and a second reader chosen by the subfield chair (normally the instructor of the course in which the research paper was written) determine whether the paper fulfills the research paper requirement.

2. Research papers are to be submitted no later than the first day of spring quarter. Earlier submissions are strongly encouraged. The paper must be turned in to both the first and second readers on this day; students do not need to give a copy to the Department. Within six weeks of receiving the paper, the faculty readers must evaluate and assign one of two grades: (a) Approved, (b) Not Approved.
3. For all revise and resubmits, the readers will set a deadline by which the revision must be submitted and discuss with the student the requirements for satisfactory completion. The latest deadline for revision is July 1 of the student’s second year. Students failing to meet this deadline will be considered to have failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress in the program and will be removed from the Ph.D. program. They will not be permitted to enroll in the following fall and will leave before qualifying exams and before receiving the M.A. For those who resubmit research papers, faculty advisors will assign one of two grades: (a) Approved (b) Not Approved. In cases where the two readers’ evaluations diverge, the DGS will appoint a third reader from the relevant disciplinary field to break the tie. Papers will be graded no later than August 1 (one month after the submission deadline for the revised version). Students whose papers are not approved after the revise and resubmit will be considered to have failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress in the program and will be removed from the program.

B. PREPARATION FOR QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

Students bear responsibility for choosing their courses in such a way that they be prepared to meet the substantive requirements of their major and minor fields. Students are advised to focus on core courses in particular fields. Questions on qualifying exams are often tailored to courses taught over the past two years. One often finds that readings from these course syllabi are especially relevant to the questions that appear on these exams.

The Department encourages students to take relevant courses in other departments to advance their specialized knowledge and skills. Northwestern students may also enroll in graduate courses at the University of Chicago and other Big Ten campuses through the C.I.C. Traveling Scholars program. Note that this option requires that one complete some administrative procedures. Thus it is unwise to pursue this option at the last minute.

C. QUALIFYING EXAMS (Sometimes known as “Prelims” or “Comprehensive Exams”)

The qualifying examinations are offered during the Fall term. All major field exams will be administered in the first two weeks of October. The minor field exams will be administered one month following the major exam. If necessary, an exam session will be scheduled for late February or early March for those who fail either their major or minor exams. The GPA will inform students of the exact dates, and other dates will not be scheduled. Students may petition the DGS and relevant field chair to take the exam earlier than their third year. Students who wish to take their exam early may do so immediately following the end of classes in June, and must secure permission from the relevant field chair. We will not schedule numerous exam dates throughout the year.

Students must have completed their coursework (18 courses), cleared all incompletes, and fulfilled the second year paper requirement before taking their qualifying examinations. This requirement can only be altered with the consent of the student's advisor and the DGS.

Students take written examinations in their major field and in one minor field. They may qualify in a second minor field by taking a minimum of two courses in that field. The individual subfields, under the direction of the Field Chairs, will be responsible for writing the exams and for establishing the rules governing their administration. If students have not passed their exams for the major and minor by the end of the third year they will be considered as having failed to maintain satisfactory academic progress by the Department and risk expulsion from the program.

The major exam is offered in the following fields:

American Politics
Comparative Politics
Methodology
International Relations
Political Theory

Field Chairs are responsible for soliciting other faculty members for questions and then composing the prelim exam. Students are advised to consult with faculty in the particular field in which the exam is to be taken. This helps to ensure that those faculty members respond to the Field Chair’s request for questions. Consultation also alerts the faculty member that students from a particular seminar are interested in taking a prelim exam. Students are encouraged to consult previous exams. These exams can be obtained from the GPA. Students may want to form study groups to prepare for exams. It is advisable to consult syllabi and notes from relevant courses offered over the previous two years and to consult with faculty members who will be expected to write questions for the exam.

The minor is selected from among the fields listed above. The student may construct custom-designed minors with written
approval from the DGS following the student's consultation with his or her academic advisor.

Students may elect to take two majors instead of a major and a minor.

Committees composed of two or three faculty members drawn from the field of the particular exam are responsible for evaluating the written exams. These committees assign one of four grades: Pass with Distinction, Pass, Oral Exam or Fail. Committees reserve the right to require that students who write marginal exams be required to sit for the oral exam. The oral examination may include questions on any aspect of the discipline, on the area of the student's concentration, or on other appropriate subjects beyond the scope of the written exam questions. Failure to perform adequately on the written exams and/or oral exams constitutes grounds for expulsion from the program.

D. Taking Courses in the Third Year and Beyond

Students who need to acquire additional skills relevant to their field of research may take up to four credits in a single academic year beyond the 18 credits Departmental and TGS course requirement. Such students normally register for “500” status (Sect IX (H))

Students wishing to take undergraduate language classes, see Sect IX (B), for procedures. These classes must be taken for a grade. Those wishing to register for additional graduate courses must (1) obtain a permission number from the course instructor, and (2) write to their Student Services Coordinator in TGS (http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/index.html) to request that TGS provide financial aid to cover the tuition for such courses. Additional graduate courses must be taken for a P/N mark.

V. THE MASTER'S DEGREE

Our Department does not have a separate MA program and does not admit students solely for the purpose of obtaining an MA. This degree is awarded to students who are in the process of obtaining their Ph.D.

A. REQUIREMENTS

The Master's degree is awarded upon satisfactory completion of the following requirements:

1. Nine credits of graduate work, subject to the requirements outlined above. According to TGS: “The minimum residency requirement for the master of arts and master of science degrees is the equivalent of three quarters of full-time registration in courses authorized by the Graduate Faculty for graduate credit. Credit earned at an undergraduate institution or at another graduate school or a professional school may, with Department approval, be applied toward the Department's coursework requirements, but not toward the residency requirements, for a master's degree at Northwestern University.” That is, students must have completed one full year in order to be eligible; however, the Department requires a paper, outlined in section IV, completed only in the 2nd year. Therefore, students must have completed 3 quarters (at least 9 courses, taken at Northwestern or transferred in), passed the 2nd year paper, and have cleared all incomplete grades before they are eligible to apply for the MA.

Continuing Doctoral students may choose to submit the Second Year Paper as their MA paper. Its acceptance as a Second Year Paper will qualify the student for the MA degree, assuming all other requirements are also satisfied.

B. APPLICATION FOR THE MA

Responsibility for filing for the MA degree with TGS at the appropriate time lies with the student. At present, the MA is granted quarterly and the deadline for the application is no later than the 2nd week of the quarter. No "Y" (incomplete) grades will be accepted on applications for the MA. Applications are submitted through CAESAR and email notification of an application must be sent to the GPA. The DGS, through the GPA, provides Departmental endorsement of successful applications. Students are responsible for meeting deadlines set by TGS for the award of Master's degrees. More information is found here: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/masters/degree/index.html
VI. ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

A. CANDIDACY FOR THE PH.D.

Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. means that a student has passed the required qualifying exams, has completed eight quarters of residency, and is contingent upon the recommendation of the student’s advisor and the Department. While most students complete qualifying exams before the end of the third year, they cannot be admitted to candidacy until the summer of their third year at the earliest. Students must complete prelims by the end of the third year and must defend a dissertation proposal by the end of the fall quarter of the fourth year.

Candidacy certifies that the student is proficient in her or his major and minor fields, and is prepared to move on to the dissertation stage of the graduate career. More information can be found in TGS’s statement on candidacy: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/candidacy/index.html

B. DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Students must submit a dissertation proposal (the “prospectus”) to a faculty committee by the end of the fall quarter of their fourth year, following successful completion of qualifying examinations. TGS stipulates that the proposal must be approved by a three person faculty committee that includes the student’s principal advisor. The dissertation proposal must be defended no later than the end of the student’s fourth year of study if the student is to remain in good standing. Details concerning this TGS policy (including acceptable conditions and procedures for petitions for extensions) can be found at http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/phd/prospectus/index.html. Upon the approval of the dissertation proposal, the student becomes an “ABD” (all-but-dissertation) and the student’s principal advisor generally becomes Chair of the student’s dissertation committee.

If the student does not complete, submit, and defend the prospectus by the stated deadline, the student will be placed on academic probation by TGS.

The format of the proposal varies across fields and is adaptable to specific research projects and contexts. As a general rule, a proposal includes a concise statement of the question or problem that the student intends to research. It justifies the project on theoretical grounds (that is to say, it demonstrates why political scientists should be interested in the project), which often incorporates a review of relevant scholarly literature. It shows how the scholar intends to go about collecting and analyzing evidence that is relevant to the question or problem. In sum, the proposal should be a map of the work required to complete the dissertation.

A minimum of three faculty members serve on the prospectus committee. At least three members of this committee, including the Chair, must be Northwestern University Graduate Faculty. Almost all faculty members who hold tenured or tenure-line appointments will be considered Graduate Faculty. A list of Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences faculty (which includes the Department of Political Science) is at: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/faculty-and-staff/membership/index.html

VII. THE DISSERTATION

Students normally require one to three years to complete the dissertation. The time necessary varies with the amount of research or fieldwork required, the conditions of financial aid and other contingencies. Important information can be found here: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/doctoral/degreecompletion/

A. COMPOSITION OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

At the point of a successful defense of the prospectus, the prospectus committee often becomes the dissertation committee, although students are free to change the composition of this committee. This committee will include at least three faculty members, 2 of whom must be formally appointed by TGS, to hear the defense, i.e., “Graduate Faculty.” The members of the committee will be nominated by the student’s dissertation Committee Chair (usually the student’s advisor) in consultation with the student. These committee members should be selected on the basis of their expertise in the field of the dissertation and their willingness to serve. The Chair of the committee and at least one other faculty member must be members of the Department of Political Science. If a former member of the faculty, i.e. one who has retired or moved to a different university, is to be a member of the committee, his or her written consent must be obtained beforehand. Approval also must be obtained from TGS. (The DGS and GPA can facilitate these requests.)
B. DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION

Arrangements for the dissertation defense must be made with the GPA at least four weeks prior to the defense. The finished dissertation must in all cases be in the hands of the committee at least four weeks before the scheduled date of the examination. TGS requires a minimum of ten working days between the receipt of a petition for the defense and the actual date of the defense. The committee may require whatever revisions it sees fit or refuse to certify the dissertation. With the agreement of the dissertation advisor and the candidate, the defense may be opened to other graduate students and faculty members. Defenses are assumed to be public events, with an open oral defense followed by a closed discussion with only the committee and the student.

The final format and conditions of acceptance of the dissertation are specified in detail by TGS. Students should consult TGS’ web site for a comprehensive list of rules and procedures. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the final document meets these specifications. The Department has no authority to waive or alter these requirements and the final product must pass the muster of TGS.

Prior to the defense, students must review the following checklist:
http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/academic-services/checklist_for_doctoral_degree_completion.pdf. The GPA can advise students for successful completion of the necessary steps.

C. TIME LIMITS

A student must be admitted to candidacy by the end of the 12th quarter (fourth year) after initial registration in TGS. A student who follows a part-time program or who receives an official leave of absence must meet the same deadlines as a full-time student.

Each doctoral student must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. by an established deadline. Graduate Faculty legislation states that all requirements for the doctoral degree must be met within nine years of initial registration in a doctoral program. Specific information concerning those who advance to a ninth year and beyond can be found near the end of this document.

Students who fail to complete their degree within the stated time limit will be placed on academic probation and risk expulsion from the program.

Extensions of the completion time period are possible only by petitioning TGS. Such extension requests are reviewed on an individual basis. As a condition of the extension, the student, whether in residence or not, must register for TGS 513, Advanced Continuous Registration, for each quarter, with the exception of the Summer Session, until all requirements for the degree are completed. Any lapse in registration must be paid in full, including appropriate retroactive registrations fees, or no degree will be awarded nor will a transcript be released. Students in this advanced continuous registration status are not eligible to receive federal loans or to qualify for the University health insurance subsidy, nor will they be eligible for fellowships, traineeships, teaching or research assistantships, and scholarships. Tuition for TGS 513 is currently $1000 per quarter. No second extension will be granted.

This status is considered less than half-time and therefore does not provide students with the ability to defer loans or extend visas. In cases of extreme hardship, special dispensation might be granted. Students, not the programs, should email a petition to Kate Veraldi at k-veraldi@northwestern.edu with their rationale for the request.

VIII. UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Failure to make satisfactory progress, as determined by the Department, may result from (but is not limited to) unsatisfactory performance in classes, unsatisfactory performance on comprehensive exams ("prelims" or "qualifying exams"), unsatisfactory research progress, or failure to meet other Departmental requirements. A student’s failure to make satisfactory progress must be reported by the Department to the student and to TGS in the Department’s annual academic progress report.

Unsatisfactory progress may lead to exclusion. Exclusion is defined by the University in the Student Handbook (http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/satisfactory/index.html). Prior to exclusion a student
should have reasonable opportunity to remediate deficiencies. TGS will move to exclude a student is the student is shown not to be in good academic standing in two consecutive annual academic progress reports. Exclusion always requires approval from both the Department Chair and the DGS.

A decision of exclusion must be provided in writing to the student and TGS. The notification must include the effective date of the exclusion, a clear statement of reasons for exclusion and any relevant documentation.

Students who wish to appeal the Department’s decision to exclude must first appeal directly to the Department through the DGS. The Department must inform the student and TGS of the outcome of the appeal in writing. A student may then appeal the Department’s decision to TGS. TGS will only consider appeals on the basis of procedural errors or failure to comply with established Department or TGS policies. TGS will not consider appeals on the basis of substantive academic decisions.

Appeals to TGS must be made in writing within ten days of the Department’s final written notification of exclusion and include supporting material at that time. The Dean of TGS will determine if an appeal will be administered within TGS or the University Hearing and Appeals System or other sanctioning body within the University. The Dean’s decision will be made in a timely manner, and will be communicated in writing to the student and Department. This decision is final and cannot be further appealed.

IX. OTHER MATTERS

A. TRANSFER CREDITS

The Department may consider the transfer of credits. Doctoral students are allowed to transfer up to two quarters (six credits) of coursework. Such coursework must be from graduate level courses at approved, accredited institutions. A minimum of nine graded courses must be taken at Northwestern University to fulfill doctoral degree requirements and a B (3.0) average must be maintained. A student who receives a master’s degree from TGS automatically waives all residency credit for graduate work completed at another institution or another School or College of Northwestern University.

Students who petition for transfer credits need to submit syllabi and other evidence of course content and requirements to their advisor. The advisor will evaluate the quality of this previous coursework and other information related to the merits of the request to the DGS. In instances where the transfer of credits for methodology courses is requested, the instructors for the corresponding courses at Northwestern University will be called upon to provide their professional judgment concerning the merits of the request. These processes are designed to ensure that the student consults with his or her advisor regarding the wisdom and the implications of the transfer of credits.

Transferring credits can reduce the length of residency and allow a student to advance more quickly toward the completion of a degree. Indeed, the Department requires that students who are awarded transfer credits will advance the pace of their course of study. For example, the award of six credits (two terms of coursework) will bring with it the expectation that the student will take qualifying exams (“prelims”) at least half a year earlier than otherwise. The award of substantial numbers of credits can mean that the student will be expected to complete a second year paper in the first year of study.

Transferred credits cannot be used to effectively become a part-time student. All students must continue full-time study in order to remain in good standing. Remaining in good standing is a condition for continued access to funding. This is why students who complete their 18 credits of coursework (either at Northwestern exclusively or with the transfer of credits) need to progress directly to the next stage of their studies. Students who register for fewer than three seminars during a term may register for 590 Research to maintain full-time registration. Students may audit courses with faculty consent, but should not officially enroll if they do not plan to receive a letter grade.

Students with a Master's degree in a field other than political science can elect to take a second Master's in political science from Northwestern, but by doing so they will lose any transfer residency credit that was obtained upon admission to the Ph.D. program. The student should therefore carefully examine his or her situation before petitioning for the MA degree.

B. PART-TIME STUDY

Students are permitted to enroll as part-time students in the program only under unusual circumstances. Part-time students must fulfill the same requirements as full-time students in order to qualify for the MA degree. Part-time students are strongly encouraged to enroll in two courses per quarter. All programs of part-time study must be approved by the Department Chair and DGS. Part-time students are urged to consult TGS Policy Guide about their special requirements.
Additional information can be found at http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/generaldegreq/residency/parttimestudy/

Except in unusual circumstances and with the prior written approval of the student’s advisor, students enrolled in the Ph.D. program must pursue their studies full time. Part time study is extremely unusual.

C. ADMISSION IN WINTER OR SPRING QUARTERS

Students are expected to begin course work in the Fall quarter. Exceptions to this rule will be made only if there are circumstances beyond the control of the student requiring admission in the winter or spring.

D. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

When special circumstances interrupt a student's studies, the student may make a request for a leave of absence in writing to the DGS. The leave of absence is a pause in pursuit of the Ph.D., usually for one academic year. Common reasons for requesting leaves of absences include family emergencies, illness and the desire to reflect on one’s commitment to pursuing the Ph.D. Upon receiving a response, the student should then submit an online form, found on the TGS website, to TGS to explain why a leave is necessary. No leave is given for more than twelve consecutive months. A request for renewal beyond a year must also be addressed to the DGS and TGS Dean.

A student granted a leave of absence by TGS is not required to register for each quarter of the leave. All TGS and Department milestone deadlines are extended by the length of the leave, however students should do their best to catch up upon their return. Students on leave of absence are NOT eligible for financial aid, Department or TGS grants, or TGS loans. It is important for students considering a leave to contact their TGS Student Services Representative to discuss health insurance continuation, library privileges, netID expiration, etc.

More information can be found here: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/studentsvcs/generaldegreq/leavesofabsence/

E. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Grades given in courses are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D and F. Students do not receive credit for a grade of D or below. A grade of Y indicates incomplete coursework and is given, with prior agreement of the instructor, when a student does not submit all assigned work in a course, and a grade of X is given when a student fails to take the final examination in a course. A grade of W indicates withdrawal. All X and Y grades must be made up within one calendar year of the date the grade is incurred. A grade of D, F, N, X or Y entered for a course reduces the effective credit toward residency of that quarter by one-third for each such entry regardless of the number of courses in the registration for that quarter. Residency is restored if the X or Y is removed within one calendar year. To restore residency the work in the course must be completed and a Change of Grade form forwarded to the Office of the Registrar before the deadline.

Grades can only be changed when the instructor makes an error. A request to raise or lower a letter grade after course completion and grade submission must be forwarded to the Dean of TGS by the course instructor with a full explanation of the reason(s) for such a request. The Dean submits the request to a subcommittee of the Administrative Board for its recommendation. The Registrar will not accept a grade change request for the permanent record without the Dean's approval.

TGS requires at least a 3.0 (B) average (on a 4.0 scale), with no accumulation of X and Y grades, for good standing. Carrying a Y grade for more than one academic year endangers one’s good standing status. Students not in good academic standing are notified in writing and are subject to academic probation. The Department Chair is notified when a student is warned of a marginal academic record, warned of an excessive number of X and Y grades, and/or placed on academic probation. A student who fails to maintain good standing is in jeopardy of being excluded from TGS. TGS requires that students receiving financial aid from the University maintain a 3.0 average and keep an academic record free of incomplete grades.

F. DEPARTMENTAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

It is very important to note that TGS’s grade requirements do not fully reflect the criteria the Department uses to assess the progress of its students. It is rare that students have GPAs below 3.5, much less the 3.0 GPA minimum that TGS requires. Students should be concerned about GPAs below 3.5, as this may indicate sub-standard performance. In addition to grades, the faculty members look for a variety of signs of scholarly excellence in the student's exams, research, and seminar
presentations. The situation can arise in which the faculty will recommend that a student consider leaving the Ph.D. program, in spite of a GPA that exceeds TGS requirements, because he/she has not given strong evidence of the capacity or the willingness to write a first-rate, publishable dissertation, which is all but obligatory if the student hopes to succeed as an academic. It is recommended that students ask their professors to explain and interpret their grades so that they have as complete an idea as possible of how the faculty judge their progress.

G. LANGUAGE AND RESEARCH SKILLS PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

The Department has no formal language requirement, but students should learn those languages that are necessary for their dissertation research and scholarly career. Students must identify their language needs in their dissertation proposals, and an evaluation of the student's competence will be made at the time of the dissertation proposal defense by the student's committee. Dissertation committees may also require demonstration of competence in computer techniques, statistics, research methodology or mathematics if those skills are necessary for the proposed dissertation research.

Several language acquisition opportunities are available to students. These include:

Summer Language Grant Program: (http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/financial-aid/fello-schola-grants/university-fello/summer/index.html). This program provides some financial support for successful applicants who need support to travel to a foreign country or to attend a domestic language immersion program to acquire or improve their command of a foreign language. This language must be relevant to the student's research. Successful applicants must have some exposure to the target language prior to application for this grant.

School of Continuing Studies (SCS) summer language classes: (http://www.scs.northwestern.edu/summernu/). An arrangement between SCS and TGS enables Ph.D. students to register for summer intensive language courses on campus without additional tuition charges. Students can register for these courses in CAESAR instead of or in addition to (depending on how many language courses are taken) registering for TGS 500, the typical summer quarter registration. These classes do not count towards the graduate residency requirement.

Courses via CIC (detailed above in III (A)): Students may take classes, including language classes, at any Big Ten school, the University of Chicago, or the University of Illinois, Chicago.

Language Courses during the Academic Year: Students may take 100, 200, and 300 level language classes through WCAS during the academic year. Students must take these classes for credit and a grade. Students who are registered for full-time coursework must take these classes as their fourth class in a given term. Students beyond coursework would take these courses in addition to 590, 500, or 512 registrations. Visit the Non-TGS registration page for information on how to register for these language courses: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/registration/graduate-courses/index.html.

H. ADVANCED YEAR REGISTRATION

PhD students who have reached their ninth quarter of study are considered to have reached “advanced year registration status”. In practical terms, this means that Third Year students (those who have completed their 18 credits of coursework) are considered to have reached advanced year registration status. More information about advanced year registration can be found at: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/registration/full-time-study/index.html.

Funded students who have completed all course requirements must register for TGS 500. Students may register for non-required coursework in addition to TGS 500. These courses should be related to the student’s area of study, and should not be taken to fulfill Departmental degree requirements. Additional information about policies for continuous registration can be found at http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academics/academic-services/registration/continuous-registration-policy/index.html.

I. TEACHING REQUIREMENT

Every graduate student is expected to have some practical experience in teaching within the Department. In most cases this requirement is met by participating as a teaching assistant in an undergraduate course.

Students who are supported by external funds that do not require teaching must consult with the Associate Chair prior to
their third year to make arrangements to obtain teaching experience. Some students will have the option of teaching their own seminars in the School of Continuing Studies. Those who have exhausted their guaranteed funding often utilize this opportunity. It is up to the student to pursue these teaching opportunities. Teaching experience is vital to a professional academic record, and students are encouraged to take initiatives to improve their skills.

TGS requires that non-native English speakers take an English language test before serving as TAs. Students may be exempt from this test if they have a four year degree from an institution where the primary language of instruction is English, and have passed the speaking portion of the TOEFL.

J. POLITICAL SCIENCE GRADUATE STUDENT TEACHING AWARD

Graduate students interested in receiving department recognition of their teaching must achieve the following requirements. Participation in the Searle Graduate Teaching Certificate Program, which might optionally be completed for additional recognition, would also fulfill some of the requirements for department recognition.

To pursue the award:

- Student must have served as a Teaching Assistant (TA) for at least three Quarters

To complete the award, the student must complete the following steps:

- Write a statement of teaching philosophy
- Produce a portfolio documenting their teaching
- Be observed and evaluated by a member of the department teaching committee or department faculty or a Searle Center staff member
- Be trained in how to conduct observations and observe at least one TA section or graduate student workshop and complete a feedback report
- Obtain a nomination from a faculty member for whom they have served as a TA
- Attend quarterly department teaching committee meetings and lead at least one professional development experience or service project, described below in (2)

1. In order to be eligible for recognition, students must commit to serve on a departmental teaching committee, which will operate as follows:
   a. Members of the committee will be all graduate students currently pursuing the department teaching recognition, any previous awardees who would like to continue their involvement, any current Searle Center Graduate Teaching Fellow(s), and the Commune Co-Chairs (ex officio) and the Directors of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies (ex officio).
   b. Graduate student members of the committee will be responsible for coordinating at least one professional development experience or service project for fellow graduate students. (A full program of proposed teaching professional development events and projects is attached in the Appendix.)

2. Students who complete all of the above will receive formal recognition from the department in the form of a “Graduate Student Teaching Award,” which will be presented at the department’s end-of-the-year gathering. There will be no limit on the number of graduate students recognized each year. Each recipient will be awarded a $500 honorarium.

J. FINANCIAL AID

All students who are admitted to the Department of Political Science Ph.D program are provided with a guarantee of four years and nine months of funding, provided they remain in good standing. This guarantee includes fellowship funding over the course of two years (i.e., a stipend without a requirement to serve as a TA or equivalent position) and TA funding over the course of three years. Students are required to take fellowship funding during their first year. The Department leaves it to the student’s discretion as to when he or she will take the second year of fellowship funding. It is typical for students to take this during their fifth year to aid in dissertation research and writing.

Students are never guaranteed funding beyond the end of their fifth academic year. Students who require additional funding
in their sixth year occasionally are able to compete for University funding, take positions as a Research Assistant with faculty members who have the interest and resources to hire them, or find employment in another unit of the University. It behooves such students to make themselves aware of these opportunities. Advisors, other students and the DGS are valuable sources of information regarding these possible opportunities.

K. EXTERNAL FUNDING

Advanced graduate students should note that the Department expects them to apply for outside funding. Updated Information about external funding appears on TGS website: http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/financialaid/fellowshipsandscholarships/externalfunding/Students also may wish to consult with the Office of Fellowships, http://www.northwestern.edu/fellowships/fellowships/for-graduate-study/index.html. This office is one of the most successful offices of its kind, and plays a large role in the outstanding performance of Northwestern students in major fellowship competitions.

Some opportunities available to first and second year students:

- National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, http://www.nsfgrfp.org/, provides up to three years of funding. As of 2008, the Graduate Research Fellowship stipend is $30,000 for a 12-month tenure period, prorated monthly at $2,500 for shorter periods as approved by NSF. To be eligible, applicants must be US citizens. Applicants must not have completed more than one year of graduate school or its equivalent by the August 31 prior to the application submission deadline.
- Social Science and Humanities Council of Canada, http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx. Applicants must be Canadian citizens. Awards to the sum of C$20,000 per annum are made in durations ranging from one to four years.

A selection of opportunities available to students working on their dissertations:

- United States Institute of Peace, Peace Scholar Dissertation Program, http://www.usip.org/fellows/scholars.html. (Department members won two awards between 2006 / 07). Students of International Relations and Comparative Politics students tend to be most suited to this award.
- Social Science Research Council, http://fellowships.ssrc.org/overview/, provides a range of funding for dissertation research. Students of International Relations and Comparative Politics students have been most successful among applicants in our Department.
- National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants, www.nsf.org, focuses on studies of perception, social psychology, risk and decision-making, statistics and methodology. Award amounts vary. Applicants must be US citizens. Our Americanist students have the best track record with this program.
- Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowships, http://www.newcombefoundation.org/scholarship_ddf.html, provide funding for dissertation research and writing. Theory students have been most represented in awards to our Department.
- Many, many more: Discuss options with your advisor, senior graduate students and contact the Office of Fellowships, www.northwestern.edu/fellowships.

It is within the discretion of the Department to allow students who win external funding for their fifth year (and who have not yet taken their second fellowship funding year) to defer their fellowship funding to the sixth year. This provides an incentive for students to apply for external funding. The number of quarters of funding eligible to be deferred to the sixth year is equal to the number of quarters of external funding received.

Students who enter the University with substantial external funding or who win such funding while enrolled in the Department may be entitled to defer a year of funding, typically the second fellowship year. This entitlement most often applies for students who arrive with or acquire the Social Science and Research Council of Canada three year fellowship (for Canadian citizens) or the National Science Foundation three year fellowship. Students who wish to consider these options are urged to contact their advisor.

Students who receive external funding awards that fall short of the University's base stipend level are urged to accept the award. It has been the practice of TGS to top up fellowships to match the University's prior commitment of financial support. Those who have further questions about this policy are urged to consult with the DGS and TGS.

Students who receive nationally or internationally competitive awards with a minimum duration of nine months and that provide funding in excess of the University’s base stipend level may be eligible for an External Research Award Allowance
Grant. Students are eligible to receive an External Award Research Allowance Grant for each year that they are supported on the eligible external award. Students must provide the GPA with a copy of the external grant award. The GPA will then forward a grant request to TGS. Research allowances will be transferred on the student’s behalf to Departmental accounts for distribution to the student.

L. CONFERENCE AND TRAVEL POLICIES

Graduate students are strongly encouraged to try to present the results of their research at scholarly conferences while they are still doing graduate work. Chicago is frequently the site of professional meetings, particularly the Midwest Political Science Association Meetings, and this provides an opportunity to present papers without incurring travel expenses. Students are encouraged to consult with their adviser and dissertation committees on possibilities for publication and conference presentations.

TGS provides some funds for students traveling to conferences and/or seminars to make presentations on behalf of the University. The award is not intended to support attending courses at other schools, research or general educational travel. Students should apply at least two months before travel, if possible. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through the year or until funds are depleted. TGS will not accept applications to support travel that has already begun or has been completed. The link to this application can be found here:


The Department also provides up to $500 in matching funds to support travel to conferences and seminars. This application is available at the Department’s web site or from the Department’s Accounting Assistant. Applications for these funds must be in conjunction with an application to TGS for travel support.

Students are permitted to receive a total of two conference travel grants from TGS during their graduate career. This means two applications, not two total award amounts that can be split over multiple conferences. If a student applies for a travel grant less than the maximum amount available per award, that student has used up one of his or her possible graduate career CTG awards.

M. ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Department actively defends customary standards of academic honesty and cases of proven academic dishonesty almost always result in expulsion from the program without the awarding of the degree. Students should acquaint themselves with University requirements in this area, particularly with regard to plagiarism. The Office of the Provost has a publication entitled “Plagiarism and How to Avoid it” which deals with the topic in detail, and can be found here:

http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/plagiarism.html

N. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If a student encounters a challenge with a fellow student, faculty member, advisor, or Department administrator, there are several ways to seek resolution. Within the Department, the first stop should be with the Graduate Program Assistant. If the problem cannot be resolved there, the student should visit the DGS, and then, if necessary, the Department Chair. If the problem lies with one of these three individuals, students are encouraged to contact both of the other two immediately. Appropriate steps will be taken to review the grievance and find a solution that works for both parties.

Northwestern takes student concerns very seriously, and students with issues outside the reach of the Department should contact the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, which can be found here:

http://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/conflict/index.html. TGS recommends that students contact William Karpus, TGS Assoc. Dean of Student Affairs, in the event of a conflict with and advisor/faculty member:

http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/graduate-life/dealing-with-conflict/. Students do not need to first contact the Department to pursue assistance for a problem if they find resources elsewhere.

N. PLACEMENT

Students who have defended or are close to defending their dissertation may be interested in pursuing permanent job opportunities. Northwestern has a number of resources available to students, starting with University Career Services:

http://www.northwestern.edu/careers/students/graduate-students/index.html. The Commune holds programs throughout the academic year designed to inform and assist students with understanding the job seeking process. The GPA is available
to help students compile application materials and send confidential letters of recommendation. The Department website is a place where many students post biographies. Faculty advisors should be consulted on cover letters, portfolio assembly, and networking. It behooves students to begin the job seeking process early; make appointments to see UCS, the GPA, and their faculty advisor well before they are ready to graduate.