



JOHNS HOPKINS

KRIEGER SCHOOL  
*of* ARTS & SCIENCES

Department of Political Science  
Graduate Student Handbook

**revised 11 November 2019**

This handbook informs graduate students in the Department of Political Science about the formal policies and informal procedures of the Department and the University. The handbook details the requirements for obtaining the PhD, and outlines common practices in the department. Please note that the history of this handbook pre-dates the internet and over time much of the material contained herein also appeared online. With the 2018 revisions, many redundancies have been eliminated (though some still remain for purposes of emphasis or clarity), and on matters of policy, requirements, and procedure all graduate students should be sure to consult the following websites:

Graduate Admissions Website for Newly Admitted Students

<http://grad.jhu.edu/admitted-students/>

Homewood Student Affairs Student Employment, I9 info

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/studentemployment/student-information/handbook/i-9>

Dept. of Political Science, Graduate Studies

<http://politicalscience.jhu.edu/graduate/>

Johns Hopkins Krieger School Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/academics/policies/>

Hopkins Student Information Services (SIS)

<https://sis.jhu.edu>

Johns Hopkins Homewood Registrar:

<http://www.jhu.edu/registrar/>

Hopkins Homewood Student Affairs Student Employment Services

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/studentemployment/>

Student Affairs Details on Health Benefits

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/registrar/students/student-health-benefits/>

Johns Hopkins Office of International Services

<http://ois.jhu.edu>

Information on Maintaining J1 Visa Status

[http://ois.jhu.edu/Immigration\\_and\\_Visas/J1\\_Scholar/Maintaining\\_J1\\_Scholar\\_Status/index.html](http://ois.jhu.edu/Immigration_and_Visas/J1_Scholar/Maintaining_J1_Scholar_Status/index.html)

Hopkins Employee Self Service

<https://ess.johnshopkins.edu>

Hopkins TA Training and Orientation

<http://cer.jhu.edu/tatraining>

Homewood Information on Graduate Residency and Status

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/academics/graduate-board/new-grad-board-residency-page/>

Homewood Student Disability Services

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/disabilities/>

Sheridan Library Details on Filing Dissertations

<https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/electronic-theses-dissertations/>

Homewood Graduate Board Policies and Forms

<http://homewoodgrad.jhu.edu/academics/graduate-board/policies-and-forms/>

Graduate Representative Organization

<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/gro/>

Electronic Thesis Submission (ETD)

<https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/electronic-theses-dissertations/>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Admissions .....	1
2. Course Requirements .....	1
3. Foreign Language Requirement .....	1
4. Incoming PhD Students .....	2
5. General Registration Information .....	2
6. University Employment .....	3
7. TAing and Teaching .....	3
8. Graduate Life .....	4
9. Progress to Degree .....	5
10. Status in Program .....	7
11. Policy on Academic Standing .....	9

## 1. Admissions

Each year the department receives several hundred applications for the PhD program, from which it eventually admits an incoming class of 8 to 12 new graduate students. The deadline for application for both graduate study and the award of financial assistance is 15 December. Decisions are made exclusively in late February or early March and announced by 15 March. Requirements for admission include: a BA, BS, or equivalent degree; GRE scores; and for students whose native language is not English, TOEFL scores. Please note that the department has no standalone MA program, and students are admitted only into the PhD program.

All students admitted to the program receive full *financial support*, including full tuition remission and a stipend. All students who continue to make good progress toward the degree will retain funding for a minimum of five years. Any students receiving outside funding or support should convey the details of this support to the department chair or DGS. All admitted PhD students *will be expected to serve as teaching assistants*, starting in their second year (further details on TA responsibilities can be found below).

## 2. Course Requirements for the PhD

Students must complete twelve (12) courses at the 600-level with a grade of B or better.

- Of these twelve (12) courses, eight (8) must be graduate-level (600-level) courses taken in the Political Science department.
- No more than two (2) of these eight (8) courses (600-level) may be Independent Studies.
- If a graduate student is interested in taking an undergraduate-level course, the student must make arrangements to take a graduate-level Independent Study with the professor teaching that course. (NB: As noted above, a student may take no more than two (2) Independent Studies for credit toward fulfilling the requirements of the PhD.)
- A graduate student may take no more than one (1) graduate-level course at another division of Johns Hopkins University (i.e. SAIS, Public Health, etc.) for credit toward fulfilling the requirements of the PhD in Political Science.
- Students may make a formal request to the DGS<sup>1</sup> to have up to two (2) graduate-level courses taken at another institution count for credit toward fulfilling the requirements of the PhD in Political Science at JHU.

*MA requirements*, for students who leave the PhD program early, are as follows: completion of at least seven (7) 600-level courses in the Department, all with a grade of B or better.

## 3. Foreign Language Requirement

All students must demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. This requirement can be fulfilled as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup> Outside courses are not formally *transferred* to JHU; rather, at the discretion of the DGS up to 2 courses can *count toward* the total of 12. Students who wish to have previous coursework considered should send a formal request to the DGS, which must include both PDF copies of syllabi of up to two *graduate* courses in which the student obtained a *grade of B+ or better*, and a clear specification of the subfield for which the course should count.

- Complete with a passing grade any college-level foreign language class at or beyond the *fourth semester*.
- Pass a translation exam.
- Earn a degree from a University where instruction is not in English.
- Place into a third-year foreign language course through online placement tests (see GRLL website).

All students must present the Department Program Coordinator with evidence of passing the requirement so that this can be formally noted on the student's department records. Students whose first language is not English still need to provide evidence to the Program Coordinator, usually by showing that primary or secondary school was completed in a language other than English.

#### **4. Information for Incoming PhD Students**

All needed information is available at the newly admitted students website (link above). That website provides instructions on how to complete your paperwork for accepting admission, obtain your Hopkins ID (JHED ID), complete your pre-entrance health forms, and register for classes. It also provides links to further information on health insurance, living in Baltimore, and tuition and fees. You can also link from that page to the orientation page, which provides all the details on "welcome week" activities, including *mandatory orientation sessions*. A few important notes: 1) the newly admitted students website links to detailed information on health insurance and the pre-entrance health forms; 2) there are also TA orientation sessions, but incoming students need not attend this session. These are mandatory for students starting their second year, when they will TA for the first time.

*International students* will want to make certain to follow the links on the left-hand side of the "newly admitted students" page in order to get further details for their specific situation, including visa details. Detailed information for international students is always available at the Office of International Services website.

*All students will be required to fill out an I9 prior to starting classes (and as a condition of being paid)*. You will be contacted over the summer by the departmental administrator in Student Employment, and detailed information is available at the Student Affairs Employment site linked to above.

#### **5. General Registration Information for all Students**

All registration is done online, through the SIS. New, incoming students register for Fall in August. After that, online registration usually occurs in November (for Spring term) and April (for Fall term).

- If you see an online "hold" on your ability to register, please contact your advisor.
- SIS allows students to formally register for a course with "audit" status, but please be certain that you also obtain instructor permission to audit and that you learn the instructor's specific requirements for auditors.
- Resident students who have completed all coursework and are not enrolling in courses still need to register each semester. Students who are not yet ABD should register with their advisor in 190.800 ("Independent Study") on a pass/fail basis.

Students who are ABD<sup>2</sup> should register with their advisor in 190.849 (Dissertation Research”) also on a pass/fail basis.

- Nonresident students must register each semester in order to remain active degree candidates (for more details on NR status, see below).
- Students who fail to register on time will be assessed *late registration fees*: \$150 during the first week of classes; \$200 during the second week, and \$300 for each subsequent week.

## **6. University Employment (including Pay and Taxes)**

The Employee Self Service (ESS) website allows you to set up direct deposit for your payment, and to provide your address, emergency contact, and tax information. You are also eligible to join the Hopkins Federal Credit Union, but this is not required. Payment by paper check is also possible (contact the Department’s Senior Administrative Coordinator).

Taxes apply to all student funding, and withholding certificates can be downloaded from the Student Employment Services website. Please note that students receiving fellowship payments (in semesters when they are not TAing) will not have federal and state income tax withheld. US citizens and international students that are residents for tax purposes will need to make quarterly estimated payments of state and federal tax to avoid tax penalties at the end of the year. For international students (nonresidents for tax purposes), the OIS tax office provides a free tax preparation software every year and can advise on tax treaties where they exist. Check their website for details.

## **7. TAing and Teaching**

As noted above, all students are expected to take the TA training prior to their second year. Most students will TA one semester each year, starting in their second year. The TA allocation process is run by the DGS, who attempts to create the most efficient and equitable overall allocation possible while balancing out the following ordered priorities: 1) the learning needs of the undergraduates who are receiving instruction, 2) the pedagogical needs of the faculty instructors who are teaching the classes, and finally 3) the preferences of the graduate student assistants, particularly with respect to area subfield or semester.

During the semester in which you teach you are required to attend all lectures and run all discussion sections; this means *you must be present in Baltimore prior to the start of term through to the end of finals*. You will be responsible for grading, running discussion sections, and supporting the course in other ways deemed appropriate by the professor teaching the course. A limited number of shared offices are available for holding office hours during the semester you TA (a key can be obtained from the Senior Administrative Coordinator), which will allow you to maintain confidentiality as required by FERPA guidelines. Your sections will be assigned to rooms by the Registrar.

---

<sup>2</sup> A student achieves ABD (“All But Dissertation”) status after completing *all* course requirements and language requirements, passing both major and minor doctoral exams, and completing a dissertation prospectus to the satisfaction of the student’s advisor.

### *Intersession/Summer Courses*

Graduate Students are encouraged to submit course proposals to teach their own short courses during Intersession and Summer Semesters. Preference is given to faculty and senior graduate students. More information is available through the Summer and Intersession Programs Website.

### *The Dean's Teaching Fellowship (DTF)*

The (DTF) Program is sponsored each year by the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences in order to give advanced graduate students experience teaching their own undergraduate courses, and to provide funding for graduate research. Details on applying for the DTF will be circulated to all graduate students over email, but applications for the following AY are usually due early in the fall.

Note that to apply for the DTF or to teach your own course, you will need a course number. To request one, please contact the Academic Program Coordinator, providing detailed information on your course (title, day/time, and level).

## **8. Graduate Life in the Department**

### *Political Science Department Seminar*

The department runs a year-long seminar series, including both invited outside speakers and internal Hopkins speakers. The seminar meets Thursdays at 4:15pm. The seminar format centers on a *pre-circulated paper* that all seminar attendees are expected to have read. "Speakers" do not present their work but instead give brief framing and background remarks before, first, formal engagement by a graduate-student discussant, and then open questions from the entire group of seminar attendees. **The department seminar is a central organ of the intellectual life of the department, and all grad students should plan to attend most seminars.** Seminar speakers are chosen by a committee made up of faculty and grad students. Often outside speakers arrive to Homewood early enough to schedule a lunch with graduate students before their afternoon seminar. Spots at lunch are first come, first served.

### *Graduate Colloquium*

Grad students also organize and run their own independent colloquium throughout the year, with speakers scheduled approximately every other week and ranging across all subfields. The PSGO approves two colloquium organizers who solicit speakers, advertise, circulate the papers, and purchase refreshments (reimbursed by the department). Each colloquium usually features two discussants – from inside and outside the speaker's field.

### *Exchanges*

The Department has a variety of graduate exchange programs (Mannheim, Paris, Brighton) as well as a field-research grant (Nicole Suveges Fellowship). For more information, contact the Chair or DGS.

### *Representation*

Johns Hopkins University has a graduate student representative organization (GRO), which both supports and represents graduate student interests. And graduate students in the department have a Political Science Graduate Student Organization (PSGO) that represents students in the

department. The PSGO can send students to participate in the GRO meetings, which will then give Political Science students access to travel and research funds disbursed by the GRO.

### *Travel and Summer Funding*

The department chair makes some funds available for presentations at conferences. For students in years 3 to 5, travel costs are covered for one conference per year – up to \$750 (international) or up to \$500 (domestic). Documented receipts for reimbursement along with the appropriate, completed paperwork must be submitted to Lisa Williams. Students in their first or second years or anyone needing funding over the specified amounts will need to make a special request for funding at the discretion of the Chair. Grad students may also make special requests for support for summer school funding; all requests are at the discretion of the Chair.

### *Political Science Association Student Memberships*

The department will subsidize the cost of membership in APSA or a regional political science association for one year, either for active participation or for access to APSA job listings.

### *Department Nuts and Bolts*

All graduate students are provided mailboxes are the Mergenthaler lounge, 370 (large packages will be delivered to the main office). Students may ask in the main office for a key to the lounge. The lounge also contains two computers and printers for graduate student use. The printers are limited to 30 pages per job; students can print up to 50 pages by sending jobs to the department copier. Any printout or copying over 50 pages incurs a fee of 1 cent per page. Inquire in the main office for a code to the copier. Please note that students can also request space through the library for both lockers and graduate workstations.

### *Transcripts and Online Information – on SIS*

SIS includes a profile section where all students can update their personal and emergency contact information. Unofficial transcripts can be viewed and printed through SIS as well. Official transcripts and enrollment verification forms are both available through the registrar.

## **9. Progress to Degree**

### *Annual Review*

Each year all students will complete a progress report. Department faculty meet annually in the Spring to consider the progress of each and every student in the program. Letters will be sent by email to all students before the end of the spring term notifying them of their status (including funding) in the program. For both resident and non-resident students, **failure to submit the annual progress report will negatively impact a student's annual evaluation and could result in probation or termination.**

### *Comprehensive Examinations*

After completing all coursework (**with no more than 1 outstanding incomplete**) students must pass comprehensive exams in both a major (two 8-hour days) and minor field (one 8-hour day), chosen from among the five fields in the department. Non-native English speakers are allowed an extra hour per day. Students also have the option to take a second minor in one of the 5 fields, to complete two major fields, or to construct a second minor from outside Political Science. In



the last case, the student must, in consultation with their advisor and faculty in other departments, devise a coherent program of study in this minor; take three graduate level courses in this area; and then pass a comprehensive exam prepared and evaluated by those faculty.

**Please note that in order to take comprehensive exams students must first request that faculty examine them and have those faculty agree to do so.**

If a student fails an exam they will, under all normal circumstances, be allowed to retake the exam once. If a student fails an exam twice they will be terminated from the program.

### *Prospectus*

The purpose of a prospectus is to hone a dissertation topic and develop a roadmap for the project before embarking on the bulk of research and writing. The specific requirements for completing the prospectus will vary according to subfield and according to the specific expectations of your dissertation supervisor. Please communicate with your supervisor early and often about what you will need to do to complete the prospectus.

### *Dissertation*

Preparation of a doctoral dissertation will be supervised and must be approved by two members of the faculty; the primary advisor must be a member of the Department of Political Science.

**Consult with your advisor early and often about the specific parameters and expectations of the dissertation.**

### *Steps to Defense*

Before planning a defense students must make absolutely certain that all program requirements (courses, language, exams) have been met. *No student should take any steps toward defending without first consulting with and getting approval from their advisor and second reader.* Once that approval has been given, the process is as follows:

1. **The faculty advisor must notify the administrative coordinator of the intent to form a committee and schedule a defense; this notification must occur no less than one month prior to the planned defense date.**
2. A student *must be registered* (resident or nonresident) in the term<sup>3</sup> they wish to defend.
3. A student's readers will help to form a dissertation committee of 5 faculty members: 2 or 3 must come from Political Science (internal); the remainder will be drawn from other departments at Hopkins (external).<sup>4</sup> There will also be 2 alternates (1 internal, 1 external).
4. The administrative coordinator will contact possible committee members in order to schedule a defense date, and will then proceed to completing the Graduate Board Examination Form and submit it to the graduate board, along with a signed "Readers' Letter." The Graduate board will then approve the committee and appoint the chair for the defense.

---

<sup>3</sup> Students who defend and submit their dissertation within the first eight (8) weeks of the Fall semester or the first four (4) weeks of the Spring Semester, may apply for a tuition waiver for that semester.

<sup>4</sup> Requests to have someone who is not a faculty member at Johns Hopkins serve on the committee requires approval by the Graduate Board and a signed letter from the department chair. This is a lengthy process (minimum of 6 weeks) and will therefore require a great deal of advanced planning.

5. Students will then need to distribute copies of the dissertation to all committee members (electronic or hard copy, depending on individual faculty preferences). *According to the rules of the Graduate Board the dissertation must be distributed to committee members a minimum of two weeks before the defense. **According to reasonable collegial norms and expectations, the dissertation should be distributed much earlier than that – at least a month in advance.***
6. If the student passes the defense, the GBO exam form must be signed by all committee members and delivered to the Graduate Board by the Administrative Coordinator.
7. At this stage the student is responsible for submitting the final version of the dissertation to the library. This is done electronically through the electronic thesis (ETD) submission process, and the student should receive a receipt showing final submission.
8. Once the Graduate Board receives the receipt, all the paperwork is submitted to the Doctor of Philosophy Board for approval and for the signature of the President of the university.

### *Graduation*

All students finishing the PhD *must complete* the Application for Graduation through SIS. The University Commencement Ceremony and the KSAS PhD Hooding Ceremony is held in May. Students who complete the degree requirements prior to the ceremony in May can request an official statement of completion from the Office of the Registrar or the Homewood Graduate Board Office.

### **10. Status in Program**

*In order to receive normal graduate funding, all students must maintain their status as “Resident” students.* Under ordinary circumstances Resident students will be expected to be on campus during term time and to attend regular department talks/seminars/conferences/colloquia, to meet with their advisors, etc. Short trips for conferences are of course a normal part of academic life, but **for any extended time away from campus, students will need to receive permission from the DGS/chair.**

Any change in graduate status requires the completion and submission of the proper form. This includes: Leave of Absence, Return from LOA, Nonresident Application, Nonresident Report, Graduate Study Abroad, Graduate Board Oral exams, Termination or Withdrawal, and the Incomplete Grade Extension Request. *All forms can be found on the Homewood Graduate Board Policies and Forms Site.*

### *Nonresident Status*

Nonresident status is normally reserved for doctoral candidates who have completed all requirements for the degree except the dissertation, have already exhausted their departmental funding, and have the permission of the Chair of the department/program or appropriate designated faculty and the Graduate Board to continue work away from the University. Arts & Sciences and Engineering students must petition the Graduate Board for change in registration status; this requires completing the form, obtaining all needed signatures and documentation, and submitting all paperwork prior to the noted deadlines.

- Students will be considered *eligible* for nonresident status if they have: 1) completed all coursework and requirements for the graduate degree other than the presentation and defense of the doctoral dissertation, and 2) reached the end of their departmental support period or have exhausted support from grants and cannot be fully supported by the department.
- Research or teaching assistants expected to work more than 19.9 hours per week do not qualify for nonresident status.
- Students on nonresident status are charged 10% of full-time tuition per semester.
- *Key Restrictions* – Nonresident students are permitted access to campus, faculty advising and JHU services, however they are not permitted to enroll in any courses, with one exception. Under certain circumstances, international students who file for Curricular Practical Training F1 (CPT1) through the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISS) may register for a course entitled “Research and Teaching Practicum” (KSAS) or “Engineering Research Practicum” (WSE).
- The maximum amount of time that a student may retain nonresident status is four semesters for master’s students and ten semesters for doctoral students. Upon reaching this limit, the student will be required to register for either part-time status (WSE only) or full-time resident status until degree completion.
- An Annual Report for nonresident students must be returned to the department Chair by the deadline date located at top of the form.

#### *Leave of Absence (LOA)*

Graduate students may apply for up to four semesters of leave of absence (not including the summer term) when medical conditions, compulsory military service, or personal or family hardship prevents them from continuing their graduate studies. Financial difficulty alone does not warrant a leave. To be approved for a leave of absence, graduate students must complete the LOA application and **provide the proper documentation for their given situation.**

A leave of absence will be granted for a specific period of time, not to exceed a total of two years. When approved for a leave of absence, the Chair of the Graduate Board will notify the student. During the leave period, a student may not be enrolled at another university. Before applying for LOA, students should consult their department for information regarding funding when they return from their LOA. Prior to requesting the LOA, it is also highly recommended that the student contact the Health Insurance Coordinator in the Registrar’s office for information on how the LOA will affect their health insurance coverage. When on an approved LOA there is no tuition charge; the period of leave is simply regarded as an interruption of the degree program. A student on a leave of absence is not to make use of any University services or facilities (e.g. counseling center, health center, library, athletic facilities, etc.). A student on a leave of absence who wishes to continue working at the University is not eligible to be paid through the Student Payroll Office. The student must be hired through the Human Resources division of the department employing them. No exceptions can be made.

When returning from leave of absence, a graduate student must complete and submit the Application to Return from Leave of Absence before registering for classes. **The form must be**

**accompanied by proper documentation.**

### *Program Withdrawal*

For those students who decide to withdraw from the program, Johns Hopkins University requires a written notice from their department. The department graduate student coordinator must also generate a Termination/Withdrawal Report. Graduate students are encouraged to consult the Chair of the department prior to submitting their written notice. Students who have been withdrawn and are then re-admitted to the University must re-satisfy the residency requirement even if that requirement had been fulfilled previously. Once students withdraw from the University, their transcripts are closed and changes cannot be made.

## **11. Policy on Academic Standing – Probation, Funding Withdrawal, and Dismissal**

A student who fails to attain a program's minimum level of performance may be placed on academic probation or dismissed using the procedures outlined in the Homewood Schools Policy for Graduate Student Probation, Dismissal, and Funding Withdrawal.

The following are some, but not all, of the cases that may lead to probation:

- 1) Having 2 or more outstanding incompletes.
- 2) Receiving a grade lower than B in any class.
- 3) Not completing all coursework for the PhD within 5 semesters.
- 4) Not passing both comprehensive examinations within 6 semesters.

Any student placed on probation will be informed of the specific terms and timeline (minimum of 8 weeks) by the DGS. Failure to meet those terms within that timeline will lead to termination from the program and dismissal from the University. (Student who are terminated after they have completed the requirements for the MA degree will be able to receive a terminal MA.)

### *Policies and standards with regard to being a teaching assistant*

In order to qualify for a stipend while a student in the PhD program in Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, a student must serve as a teaching assistant. The obligations of a teaching assistant vary depending on the course with which the student is assisting but will usually include:

- 1) Attending lecture as required by the professor
- 2) Attending, preparing, and leading discussion sections
- 3) Holding office hours
- 4) Grading undergraduate student work fairly and in a timely fashion as determined by the professor
- 5) Cooperating and coordinating with the professor and any other teaching assistants on matters related to the course (such as policies pertaining to exam review, grading, etc.)

If a student fails to fulfill these obligations, they may be put on probation for the rest of the semester and required to attend a workshop on college-level teaching. If problems persist while the student is on probation (per the “Homewood Schools Policy for Graduate Student Probation, Funding Withdrawal, and Dismissal” this period can be no less than 4 in-semester work weeks), the student will not be permitted to continue serving as a teaching assistant, at which time the student will lose their stipend for the rest of that semester. Students unable to fulfill their obligations as teaching assistants may be terminated from the program

*Policies and standards with regard to being a head teaching assistant*

Some large lecture courses employ a head TA. The decision to use, and the selection of, a head TA is at the discretion of the faculty member teaching the course. The position of head TA includes additional responsibilities and accordingly receives an additional stipend of \$1,000 during the semester for which the position is held. The additional responsibilities of a teaching assistant vary depending on the course but will usually include:

- 1) Handling student requests to add or change sections
- 2) Working with student services to provide extra time on exams to qualified students
- 3) Proctoring makeup midterm or final exams
- 4) Coordinating exam grading, in conjunction with the faculty instructor
- 5) Communicating with other teaching assistants about course matters

Except under *extraordinary circumstances*, head teaching assistants should *not* be responsible for:

- 1) Submitting final grades to the Registrar
- 2) Writing exams (although providing input on exam questions is permitted)