

**IOWA™**  
HISTORY

# GUIDE TO GRADUATE STUDY

For Students Enrolled in a History Department  
Graduate Program



[clas.uiowa.edu/history](https://clas.uiowa.edu/history)



History at University of Iowa

**IOWA™**

Revised May 2022

### *University of Iowa Nondiscrimination Statement*

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, service in the U.S. military, sexual orientation, gender identity, associational preferences, or any other classification that deprives the person of consideration as an individual. The University also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to University facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity](#) in The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Iowa, 202 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, IA 52242-1316, 319-335-0705 (voice), 319-335-0697 (TDD), [diversity@uiowa.edu](mailto:diversity@uiowa.edu).

### *Department of History Diversity Statement*

The History Department recognizes the benefits of a diverse environment and a workplace and classroom experience free of discrimination, harassment, and inadvertent exclusionary practices. The Department is committed to the maintenance of an atmosphere that is welcoming and accepting of faculty, staff, and graduate as well as undergraduate students of all backgrounds, including but not limited to race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. By recognizing that confronting harassment, discrimination, and inadvertent exclusionary practices cannot be left to the members of underrepresented groups alone, it commits itself to taking proactive measures to discover and alleviate these practices. It provides a positive environment for members to report their experiences and to seek positive actions.

### *Handbook Disclaimer*

The DGS tries to be as accurate as possible when composing and revising the Graduate Student Handbook. Major changes to procedures, policies, and even the "normal" guidelines must be approved by the faculty at a Department meeting. (Changes to Graduate College regulations are a great deal more formal and get publicized extensively.) As circumstances change, so do the departmental procedures, policies and guidelines. What is written here as descriptive comments on how the Department goes about its daily business **may change at any time**. Please understand this flexibility ensures the Department can act quickly and responsibly to changes in the profession, in the discipline, and in administrative re-interpretations of University procedures and policies. We inform students as soon, and as appropriately as we can about such changes, most of which are quite minor (a new form here, a different office there), but may not catch everyone at just the right moment. If any student, faculty member or staff person knows of errors or changes that need to be incorporated in future printings of this handbook, the DGS would very much appreciate a note about them.

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## Introduction

Welcome to graduate study in the Department of History at the University of Iowa. This handbook describes all of the departmental requirements for our graduate degrees. It also covers, in more or less detail, how the Department works. For *any* questions about procedures, decisions, due dates or protocol, please ask the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) for information and clarification. Be sure also to familiarize yourself with the [departmental website](#).

It is important for you to keep the GPC and the DGS informed about your choice of advisors, plans of study, changes in address, and any situations that may affect your progress in the program. It is also critical that you read the memos and announcements from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), the Department, the Graduate College, and the University. With nearly 45 graduate students registered at any one time, it can be difficult to keep everyone's unique project and program in mind, especially as the position of DGS rotates through the faculty every three years or so. So **be proactive**: take some time to understand the degree requirements, your timeline, and your due dates. Set up a clear schedule at the outset of your program and work with your advisor to stick to it or adjust it along the way.

Mariola Espinosa  
Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies

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### Common Terms and Abbreviations

CLAS	The University of Iowa College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the largest of the eleven colleges at The University of Iowa. History is a department of CLAS.
COGS	The union to which all graduate teaching assistants and research assistants are eligible to belong if employed more than one-quarter time by the university (e.g. an average of 10 hours per week for the position).
DEO	Departmental Executive Officer [a.k.a. the Chair] Currently, Professor Elizabeth Heineman is the DEO.
DGS	Director of Graduate Studies [the DGS is also the associate DEO of the Department and fills in for them when necessary] Currently, Professor Mariola Espinosa is the DGS.
Doctoral Student	A student in the PhD track that has not yet passed the comprehensive exams. This student may or may not already have a master's degree.
Doctoral Candidate	Students who have successfully passed the comprehensive exams and defended a prospectus, also known as ABD (All But Dissertation).
GPC	Graduate Program Coordinator. Currently Kathleen O'Neill is the GPC.
GHS	Graduate History Society to which all graduate students are eligible to belong.
IDP	The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a personal and flexible planning tool designed to help graduate students plan and achieve their professional goals.
MA Terminal	A student admitted to the graduate program to complete a master's degree only.
Regular Faculty	Tenured or tenure-track professors. All regular faculty in History are members of the Graduate faculty.
Second Reader	The Second Reader serves as the secondary expert (the advisor being the first) who reads the thesis for appropriate content, theory, and methodology throughout the writing process. The second reader should read the dissertation in draft form and confer with you prior to distribution of the dissertation to the entire committee.
Semester Hours	A unit of academic credit; interchangeable with the term credit hours or abbreviation sh.
3000-4999 level	Upper division undergraduate courses that count towards credit for graduate degrees. Must get instructor approval before class begins.
6000-7999 level	Courses designed for graduate students only (with occasional undergraduate students). Graduate courses concentrate on intense reading in a more or less broadly defined area of history. Such courses frequently have a research option.

## Starting Graduate Studies at The University of Iowa

After being admitted to the graduate program, the next formal step is registering for fall semester courses. This should be done in consultation with the advisor either late in the Spring semester or summer. If either the student and/or the advisor is unavailable, registration can be completed the week before classes start.

**PLEASE NOTE: There is a late fee imposed on those who register after the start of classes. Students also should bear in mind that introductory or intermediate level foreign language classes can fill up quickly during undergraduate registration. There are advantages to registering early.**

### *Getting an Academic Advisor*

Students are assigned an academic advisor at the point of admission. Sometimes the ideal faculty person is away from Iowa City on a research grant or fellowship when the student arrives or at some point during the student's studies. In such cases, the student will be able to communicate with the advisor over email and consult with the DGS directly. The DGS is always available for consultation.

### *How to Register*

To register for courses, a student needs to be electronically authorized to register by the DGS or an authorized History Department staff member.

Before registering, students should read this handbook and consult with their advisors to learn what is required of entering students, which courses count as graduate credit, etc. Students then use the online *Schedule of Courses* (MyUI) to see what classes are offered that might fit their interests or needs. Keep in mind that course offerings can and do change after the *Schedule of Courses* is drafted.

The registration system is located at <https://myui.uiowa.edu>. At the login page, enter HAWKID and password. If a student requires a HAWKID/password, they can get or update one here: <http://hawkid.uiowa.edu/>. Each student is assigned a University ID that can be used during the registration process. For a listing of graduate classes in History, enter **HIST for the Course Subject**, and the course numbers will come up in numerical order. Scroll to find the upper-level undergraduate (3000-4999 level) and graduate (6000-7999) courses in History.

### *Transfer Credits*

This section applies specifically to students who have taken graduate courses in History at another university as part of a degree program that was not completed or who have been admitted to the UI doctoral program with an MA degree from another institution.

All new students automatically have their transcripts submitted as part of the application process analyzed by the Office of Graduate Admissions which specializes in interpreting University records from around the world. The staff in that office makes an official determination of the amount of graduate credit, in terms of credit hours, that are transferable to the University of Iowa from each institution a student has attended. It is this number that appears on the student's first UI transcript, which is posted online after the first semester of classes.

Students (and faculty) often assume the number of transferable credits that appears on this transcript is the number that actually counts towards a degree in History from the University of Iowa. **This assumption is not necessarily correct!** As the [Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College](#) states explicitly, "credit for these courses toward an advanced degree at Iowa must have the approval of the major department and the dean of the Graduate College". **Without special permission, for example, credits more than ten years old do not count.** Except for certain arrangements for "extramural credit", students entering the MA program **must** complete 24 of the 30 required credit hours at the University of Iowa. The History Department has determined that students entering with an MA from another University may **transfer a maximum of 30 credit hours** from that MA work, no matter how many other graduate credits have been considered acceptable graduate credits by the UI transcript service.

The Department does not allow transfer courses to count for the 6000-7999 level requirements: we wish to ensure students take an adequate number of courses with Iowa faculty. Finally, the Department does **not** allow a student to count a graduate course in historiography (or historical methods, philosophy of history) at a previous university towards the requirements for the PhD degree.

After consultation with the student, and others as needed, the DGS writes a statement about the transfer credit hours and distribution requirements for the student's file, with copies to the transfer credit analysis staff and the Graduate College. **This assessment of credits, not the number of hours appearing on the student's transcript, is what matters when documenting the student's plan of study.**

## Degree Requirements

Students are admitted to graduate work in the Department of History in one of two programs: the MA Terminal or the PhD program. The complete list of Graduate College regulations is given in the General Catalog and in the *Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College*.

### **Applicable to All Students**

*HIST:6002, Intro to Graduate Studies in History*

All new students (both MA Terminal and Doctoral Students) must take *HIST:6002:0001* their first semester. Although the specific format for the colloquium may change from year to year, this course will introduce students to the program, some of the faculty, and some of the contours of the profession.

### *Minimum Grade Point Averages*

Students must maintain a minimum grade point average (GPA) in their graduate work. The Graduate College requires MA students to maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75 or above and PhD students to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 or above. For MA and PhD students in the History Department, the minimum GPA requirement is 3.33 for all programs of study.

If a student falls below the 3.33 GPA after taking 9 graded credit hours, then they are put on probation. If the student does not raise their GPA to at or above the minimum level after a further 9 graded credit hours, then they are dismissed from the program. Students on probation who have not taken 9 more credit hours (but who *have* completed the required number of hours for the degree) are not allowed to graduate.

### *Academic Registration Requirement Policy*

The purpose of the registration requirement is to promote a high level of intellectual and scholarly activity at The University of Iowa. These requirements foster intensive, concentrated engagement with the faculty members and graduate students in a student's program.

- *Master's degree.* Of the minimum 30 credit hours required for the degree, at least 24 semester hours must be completed while enrolled at The University of Iowa after admission to a graduate department/program.
- *Doctoral programs.* Students complete a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate work. Of those 72 semester hours, the Graduate College requires at least 39 must be earned while registered at The University of Iowa. The History Department requires all PhD students take a minimum of 42 of the 72 hours needed at the University of Iowa.



### *Leaves of Absence*

The Department of History and the Graduate College requires continuous registration of students who have passed their comprehensive exams. This means from that point on, a student must register for at least 1 credit hour each fall and spring semester until they have received the PhD. If a student is not registered for three or more consecutive semesters (this includes summer session) at any time in their academic career, their profile becomes deactivated in the University's registration system, and they must seek permission from the department to continue in the program. Post-comp students will also have to retroactively pay tuition and fees plus a late fee for any semesters missed.

If a temporary lapse in a student's academic program is required due to military service, medical leave, maternity leave, or personal/family leave, a student may petition the Graduate College through the department and be allowed to register for PhD Post-Comprehensive Registration (PCR), which allows for the assessment of a special minimum fee. If a petition is granted, it is to be understood that a student will not make significant use of university resources or engage in significant consultation with the faculty. The benefit to a pre-approved leave of absence, is the special minimum fee which counts towards continuous registration and saves the student from catching up on late registrations and fees.

If a leave of absence is needed before comprehensive exams are taken, the student and their advisor will petition the department through the DGS and the Department Administrator for approved time off.

It is vital for a student who is having a problem that is interfering with their work, academic or employment, during the year to talk with their advisor and the DGS as soon as possible.

### ***Master of Arts (MA Terminal)***

This program is for students who only want an MA. Students pursue the degree for a variety of reasons, from professional enhancement to personal enrichment. The MA Terminal is a **course work** and **examination** degree that takes approximately 2 years to complete. It does not require a major research essay/thesis. However, a student may, in consultation with the advisor, opt to write and defend a master's essay. In that case, the MA is still considered a terminal degree (i.e. it does not lead to entry into the PhD program).

MA Terminal students who become interested in pursuing a PhD at the University of Iowa must reapply to the Graduate College and to the Department's admissions committee. During this process, the student's application will be considered together with all the other applications to the PhD program.

Due to the constraints on University resources, the Department is not able to offer MA Terminal students any major funding.

### *Courses and Credits*

New students should plan their course of study with their advisor(s) as early as possible. The choice of courses must fulfill these requirements:

1. MA Terminal students are expected to take HIST:6002, Intro to Graduate Studies in History, during their first semester.
2. Each student must complete 30 credit hours of graduate level work. Courses in the 6000-7999 range are graduate level courses. Courses in the 3000-4999 range are upper level undergraduate courses some of which may be taken for graduate credit, if the instructor agrees.
  - The Graduate College requires 24 of the 30 credits be taken in residence at the University of Iowa.
  - The History Department requires 24 of the 30 credits be in HIST courses.
3. The course work in history must include **at least 12 credit hours** in one field of history, identified by the student together with the advisor. This will constitute the candidate's *major field of study* and must include at least one 6000-7999 level course



4. The student's program must include at least 6 credit hours *each* in two other fields of history identified in consultation with the advisor (or 6 hours in one other field in history and 6 hours in a related department). Each of these fields must include at least one 6000-7999 level course.
5. The student must take a written and oral examination based on the course work in the **major** field after completing these requirements (or in the semester in which completion is expected).
  - The exam is to be administered by **the advisor and two other** regular faculty members, including **at least two members of the Department**.
  - In the event of an unsatisfactory performance, the examiners may allow one re-examination. After two failures, the candidate will be excluded from further graduate work/completion of the degree in the Department of History.

### Completing *the MA Degree*

To receive the MA degree, the student must complete the "Application for Degree" form on [MyUI](#) in the first month of the semester in which the student wants to graduate.

The student must also complete a "Non-doctoral Plan of Study" form together with the GPC. This form is required by the Graduate College and shows that the credit hour requirements have been satisfied. The student's faculty advisor and the DGS must sign this form.

The GPC will forward the "Non-doctoral Plan of Study" form with the "Request for Final Examination" to the Graduate College once the examination is scheduled. The "Plan of Study" and the "Request for Final Examination" must be sent to the Graduate College at least **2 weeks** before the written examination is to be held. **The student is responsible for ensuring this deadline is met.**

At the oral examination, which is based upon a review of the written exam, the faculty advisor and committee members must complete the "Report of Final Examination: Advanced Degree" form. This is another Graduate College form, and it is prepared by the GPC prior to the examination. This form must be completed at the oral examination while all the committee members are in attendance. Once this form is forwarded to the Graduate College—assuming the student has passed—the MA degree can be awarded.

### ***Doctor of Philosophy***

The PhD is the highest academic degree. In addition to completing required coursework, students are expected to produce original research, culminating in a dissertation. The degree is completed only after the dissertation is defended in front of an examination committee. The University of Iowa's Doctoral Program in History allows students to craft a course of study together with an advisor that will focus on their interests while providing them with a broad base of historical knowledge and the necessary skills to fashion a first-rate dissertation.

There are four distinct elements to students' preparation before they begin work on a dissertation: coursework, research paper(s), comprehensive exams, and the dissertation prospectus.

Students who arrive without an MA from another institution usually take 6 semesters to complete this preparation. The exact timing, however, will be determined together with the advisor.

Students who arrive with an MA from another institution usually take 4 semesters to complete this preparation. However, because coursework and other requirements can vary between fields, an advisor may insist a student who arrives with an MA from another institution follow a slower plan, similar to the one pursued by students who arrive without an MA, in order to gain sufficient language skills or other preparation before taking the comprehensive exams.

To assist students in completing the program successfully we have several tools available to help guide you through the program. You can find all these tools online at: [History Dept Academic Resources for Grad Students](#)

1. Guide to Graduate Study
2. Plan of Study Document / Sample Plans
  - The Plan of Study is a 2-page document that condenses the requirements throughout the Guide to Graduate Study into a check list for you to use
  - There is an electronic version of the Plan of Study called a “Sample Plan” through MyUI. This is visible to you, your advisor, and the GPC.
3. The Individual Development Plan (IDP)
  - The purpose of the IDP is to ensure advisors can help their students develop their own trajectories through the PhD program; it should help bridge the knowledge gap between doctoral education and career possibilities.
  - Is mandated for students on Graduate College fellowships, but it is recommended for all graduate students in our program. It is most beneficial if done by the end of the first semester and reviewed at least annually.

*Plan of Study:*

For these reasons, it is essential all PhD students complete a plan of study with their advisor(s) during the first semester. This plan will determine the pace of their preparations.

1. Required course sequences:
  - a. PhD students take the introductory sequence HIST:6002 & HIST:6003 during the first two semesters. NOTE: HIST:6003 may be offered every other academic year due to the number of entering students.
  - b. PhD students must take the comprehensive exam sequence (HIST:6004 and HIST:6005).  
Students who arrive without an MA will take these classes during the 5th and 6th semesters.  
Students who arrive with an MA will usually take these classes during the 3rd and 4th semesters.
2. Additional coursework: Graduate students are required to take a minimum of seven 6000-7999 level History Courses in addition to the required sequences by the end of the semester of comprehensive examinations.
3. Languages: Students are required to demonstrate reading proficiency in a second language by the beginning of the 5th semester. PhD students can fulfill this requirement by demonstrating completion of an Intermediate II course at the University of Iowa or another accredited language program.
4. Qualifying Research Paper (QRP):
  - a. The QRP must be produced for the student’s advisor by the end of the 3rd semester
    - All students who enter the program are required to complete the Qualifying Research Paper with the advisor
    - It must also be evaluated by a second reader, decided on by the advisor and the student early in the process
    - In the event the advisor is on leave and the student has not completed the QRP it may be done during an Individual Study with the second reader with the advisor’s consent and control of the paper

- b. This paper should be the length of a standard journal article (7,000-9,000 words) and of sufficient quality to submit for publication. It should be formatted fully including abstract, references, appendices, etc. Students will be required to explain where they plan to submit the paper and why.
  - c. For the student to continue in the program, both readers must agree the paper demonstrates the student has the ability to research and write a dissertation.
    - If that is not the case, then the student will be excluded from further graduate work in the program after completing the course requirements for a Terminal MA.
  - d. The advisor and second reader will record the results of the QRP on the *Report of Qualifying Research Paper* form and submit to the GPC to file in the student's record/advising notes.
5. Research Paper:
- a. Only students who enter the program without an MA must write a **second** research paper, also the length of a standard journal article (7,000-9,000 words) before taking the comprehensive exams.
  - b. The research paper may be produced either in a scheduled class with a research paper option or through an independent study with a faculty member in the History Department. The paper can be completed anytime between the 1st and 5th semesters, but it is strongly recommended it is complete before comps prep courses begin.
  - c. The supervising faculty member will fill out the *Report of Research Paper* form and submit to the GPC.
6. Comprehensive written and oral examinations: Students craft their studies within geographic and thematic fields. The three fields of examination are meant to demonstrate breadth of knowledge, and all three fields will be examined by a committee during an oral defense.
- a. The Primary Field is defined thematically and geographically in consultation with the advisor. Normally it is based on a core set of readings of approximately 75-100 works, with roughly 75% being monographs. This field requires a written examination consisting of two questions answered over an 8-hour exam period. The final list of works must be turned in with the examination.
  - b. The Secondary Field is defined with a field supervisor. It must have a different thematic and/or geographic focus than the research field. Normally it is based on a core set of readings of approximately 50-75 works, with roughly 75% being monographs. It too requires a written examination consisting of two questions answered over a second 8-hour exam period. The final list of works must be turned in with the examination.
  - c. There are two options for the Third Field:
    - 1) The Teaching Option: Defined in consultation with the advisor but evaluated by the entire examination committee, this field revolves around the survey course the student is most likely to teach after graduation. It requires a syllabus with an accompanying essay (ca. 2,500-4,000 words) that explains the themes around which the course is structured, presents core questions and concepts with which students will engage, and justifies reading and writing assignments. The essay should be accompanied by a bibliography of monographs and articles that the student would draw upon when constructing classes. They are due one week before the written comprehensive exams.
    - 2) Non-Teaching Option: Students may propose a project (e.g., public history, digital history) for the third field in consultation with the advisor. The products of this field are also due one week before the written comprehensive exams, and they too will be evaluated by the entire examination committee.

All three fields are evaluated during an oral defense following the written exams. In order to continue with the program, students must receive passing grades on the written and oral portions of the examination.

To prepare for the examinations, students who enter the program with an MA must have agreed on the three fields with reading lists with their advisor and second field supervisor by the end of the 2nd semester. Students who enter the program without an MA must complete this requirement by the end of the 4th semester.

7. The Prospectus must be defended for a student to gain ABD status. The prospectus defense follows the comprehensive exams, but in most cases its preparation will be completed before the exams. There are four discrete steps in this process:
  - a. For students who enter the program without an MA, students must prepare an outline of a prospectus in consultation with the advisor by the beginning of the 5th semester. For students who enter with an MA, this is usually completed by the beginning of the 3rd semester, unless **the advisor** has requested a slower track for the student, which would match that of students entering without an MA. **That request must take place during the student's first year.**
  - b. For students who enter the program without an MA, a completed draft of the prospectus ca. 5,000 - 7,500 words must be given to the advisor by the outset of the 6th semester. For students who enter with an MA this draft is usually completed by the beginning of the 4th semester.
  - c. For students who enter the program without an MA, a revised prospectus must be submitted to the advisor before the student can take the comprehensive exams during the 6th semester. For students who enter with an MA that usually takes place during the 4th semester.
  - d. The prospectus defense must take place within two weeks of a successful oral comprehensive exam.
  - e. In some cases, **the advisor** of a student who enters the program without an MA may wish to extend the prospectus defense to the 7th semester so the student may draw on additional summer research before submitting and defending the prospectus. In those cases, the advisor is responsible for giving the GPC the approval to move the scheduling out.
  - f. Students who have not achieved ABD status by the end of the 8th semester will be placed on academic probation and will no longer be eligible for funding.
8. Satisfactory progress in the PhD program: Graduate students are expected to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.33 while in the program and to complete the program in a timely manner. They are expected to keep to the schedule outlined above and avoid incompletes. **Students with more than one incomplete or a grade of F on their transcript will not be eligible for Departmental awards and the DGS will not forward their applications for grants and fellowships to CLAS or the Graduate College.** Students who fall below a 3.33 GPA after taking a minimum of 9 hours will be placed on academic probation. Students who fail to raise their GPA after a further 9 graded hours will be dismissed from the program.

#### *Courses and Credit hours*

1. **Total number of credit hours.** According to the Graduate College rules, a doctoral student must complete at least 72 hours of graduate level credits. This number includes credits from graduate work done in a master's program. With a UI MA (30 credits), the PhD student needs to finish 42 more credit hours in graduate level courses in order to graduate. Students who enter with an MA or non-degree graduate course work from another university need to consult the section on "Transfer Credits" above.
2. **Substitutions.** Students may receive credit for **up to two** upper level undergraduate courses (3000-4999). In order to receive graduate credit (and have such courses count as a readings course), the student must make special arrangements with the course instructor to do additional readings and writing assignments to bring the course up to the level of a graduate course.

3. **Individual Study (HIST:7190).** Generally, work for an individual study is completed independently and should be comparable to a graduate-level classroom course. Students may substitute an Individual Study for a Readings course when a specific area of study is not available, provided they get approval from the advisor and submit a substitution form to the GPC.

Ultimately, it is up to the student and instructor to determine the specific format of the work to be evaluated by the instructor. The work should be agreed upon early in the semester and below are examples of appropriate work for individual studies of various semester hours:

- 4 sh: 10-13 books / 25-30 pages of written work\*
- 3 sh: 7-10 books / 20-25 pages of written work\*
- 2 sh: 5-7 books / 15-20 pages of written work\*

\*Written work can be response papers to readings, a research essay/paper, and/or journal submission

4. **Advisor requirements.** An advisor may, and in many cases will, require a doctoral student to demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary for dissertation level work. Such expectations may require the student to take extra courses, attend workshops, or study independently. The student and the advisor should agree on these supplementary requirements as early as possible in the student's relationship with the advisor. Some of these expectations have included:
- a. A reading knowledge of one or more foreign languages
  - b. Proficiency in statistics, or certain computer methods, or paleography
  - c. Courses in political science, literature, economics, anthropology, sociology, or other fields with important bearing on the candidate's field of research.

### *Comprehensive Examinations*

Students should begin to plan for comprehensive examinations the moment they enter the program and make preliminary choices of fields by the end of their first semester.

In rare cases, the schedule for comprehensive examinations may be delayed. If there is a significant reason for delay, students should discuss this with their advisors, field examiners and the DGS as soon as possible. Delays can affect the Department's assessment of a student's progress when it comes time to decide about major aid for the coming year, and it should be requested only in cases of unusual personal hardship.

*The oral examination:* The oral examination committee includes the two field examiners as well as two additional committee members. The student should consult with the advisor about which faculty members to ask to serve in this role. During the semester preceding the oral exam, the student should confirm all committee members' availability.

When the four faculty members have been contacted and have agreed to serve on the oral examination, and **at least two weeks before the student expects to take the comprehensive exams, two forms must be filled out** with the GPC and submitted to the Graduate College. One is the "Doctoral Plan of Study Summary Sheet." This form summarizes the number of graduate credit hours the student already has, the number on the current registration, and the title of courses the student plans to take to complete the graduate credit requirements (72 hours) if not already complete. This form is signed by the student's advisor and the DGS. The other form is the "Request for Doctoral Comprehensive Examination," and it is electronically routed to the DGS. The GPC will submit both to the Graduate College once the comprehensive oral exam is scheduled, **no less than two weeks before the Comps written exam**. It is the student's responsibility to work with the GPC at an appropriate time before comps begin.

Because it is often difficult to get four faculty members and a student to agree on a meeting time, students must consult the GPC about scheduling the oral exam at least six weeks before it is to take place. Once faculty responses are received, a time and location are set for the exam, and a calendar invite is sent to all the participants.

Once the oral examinations are scheduled, the student will work with the GPC and advisor to pick a date for the written examinations, at least 2 weeks prior to the oral exams. The GPC will send copies of the written exams to each member of the committee. All members of the committee read both exams as well as the assignment for the third field.

*Substitutions for examiners:* Because history faculty regularly get research grants, as well as invitations to join other institutions and research centers for a semester or a year, it may be impossible for a field examiner to be present for the written and oral comps exams when scheduled. Faculty regularly prepare comprehensive examination questions while away from the University and read the student's written answers, sent by email. The faculty member may participate in the exam remotely, or another professor may be chosen (in consultation with the student) will stand in for the absent professor during the oral part of the examination.

*What happens at the oral examination:* The oral exam is scheduled for two hours. It starts with the faculty asking the student to step out of the room for a few minutes. During that time, the advisor—who serves as the chair of the committee—asks for general feedback about the overall quality of the written exams/third field project. The committee then decides how it wants to organize the question period before inviting the student back into the room. Sometimes the student is asked to start with any comments about the written exams and/or project. Faculty might take turns asking questions about all three fields, or a field examiner might start with questions on their field with the other faculty joining in with questions that they have. Most faculty ask questions that are designed to let the student expand upon questions raised by the written exam, to help the student explore the implications of ideas beyond the specific literature, and to encourage the student to respond freely about the complexities of understanding historical events and processes. Towards the end of the session, the student is again asked to leave the room while the committee consults. After the consultation, the student is invited back into the room to learn the results of the exam.

There are three possible outcomes:

**“Satisfactory”** by all members of the committee. If one committee member decides that the exam was “unsatisfactory” the student still passes the examination.

**“Satisfactory with reservations.”** When two or more of the examiners are not quite satisfied with the student's performance, the examiners specify in writing exactly what the student needs to do on rewriting the exam or by writing additional essays to satisfy the examiners. The examiners must state clearly how much time the student has to do the additional work. A copy of this stipulation goes to the Graduate College with the report on the examination. When the student completes the work, the field examiners write to the DGS (or DEO) and the GPC saying the reservation has been lifted. Then the GPC writes to the Graduate College with this information, giving the date of the removal of the reservations. At that time, the Graduate College considers the student has passed the comprehensive examination.

**“Unsatisfactory.”** If two or more examiners decide the student did not fulfill academic expectations, then the student does not pass. The student may take the exam again and does so by discussing the exam with the DGS, who will then consult with the DEO and other faculty as appropriate to decide whether the student should be given this opportunity. If so, the student has to wait at least four months before trying again.

Whatever the outcome of the examination, it is **very important** the examiners sign off on the “Report on Doctoral Comprehensive Examination” form after the oral exam. The report will be sent electronically to each committee member and is due to the Graduate College no later than 14 days after the oral exam.

### *Post-Comprehensive Status*

Once a student has passed the comprehensive examination, “post-comp” status is acquired. A post-comps student **must** register every fall and spring semester. Students do forget, of course, or think about dropping out and then change their minds, so it is possible to register retroactively. If a student disappears for more than a few semesters it can be awkward to just reappear. To be considered a student again, the student must pay all the tuition and fees for the missed semester(s) and talk to the advisor and DGS about restarting their program of study.

### *Dissertation Prospectus*

The prospectus serves as a proposal for the doctoral dissertation. There are no Graduate College regulations for the format and defense of the prospectus. The prospectus is a departmental requirement and completing the prospectus promptly is important in making satisfactory progress through the program. We expect the student to have the prospectus finished and passed by the committee **within two weeks of completing the comprehensive examinations**, unless the advisor has approved/arranged another time with the GPC.

The primary purpose of the prospectus is to present a coherent account of a very large research project, even if the final form cannot be known. It is most useful to think of the prospectus both as an extended proposal for a grant application (which the student can actually use to prepare shorter versions for real grant applications) and as an opportunity to think in the broadest possible terms about work that will literally take years to complete.

Submitting the written prospectus to faculty readers who then meet to discuss it, moreover, provides a crucial opportunity to get scholarly advice about the scope of the project, specific research methods, tips for finding other useful sources, suggestions for more effective organization, and comments on the plan's overall strengths and weaknesses. Going through the process of preparing the prospectus and opening it to critical evaluation; in short, is a *constructive* task. No one expects the final dissertation will follow the prospectus to the letter, either in content or in argumentation. Students usually find that research opens up new questions and ideas that are much more interesting (as well as better documented!) than the plans suggested in the prospectus.

The prospectus should be about 5,000 – 7,500 words long and include a bibliography of secondary sources, primary materials, and archival references to be consulted. Some also include a section on a possible organization of the dissertation, with chapter titles and brief summaries of what each chapter will cover.

*The Prospectus Defense:* before the comprehensive examination, the student and advisor need to decide who would best serve to be the core of the dissertation committee. It is this committee that examines the prospectus and normally sits for the final examination of the dissertation. The prospectus committee must include the dissertation supervisor and a person who will serve as “second reader” of the thesis. The second reader—as the name implies—reads several or all of the dissertation chapters as the student writes them and provides important feedback *before* the student prepares the near-final draft. The prospectus committee must have at least one more member, normally a faculty member who has already worked with the student in courses and for the comprehensive examinations. Ideally the prospectus committee is the dissertation committee that will serve at the final defense, having a total of four members, one of whom is a faculty member not in the History Department. For practical reasons, the Department requires only three faculty participate in the prospectus defense, so students are not unnecessarily delayed by unavailable faculty at this stage.

Scheduling the prospectus defense is just like scheduling the comps. The prospectus meetings are scheduled for 90 minutes. Sometimes the student is asked to step outside for a few minutes at the start while the advisor (who is the chair of the committee) canvasses opinions and the faculty members decide how to proceed with questions and comments; in other cases the student remains in the room and the advisor simply starts the conversation. Usually prospectus meetings quickly become stimulating discussions about the student's project, with the faculty providing useful information on further contacts, resources, cautions—and ideas for improvements—about methodology, and general encouragement for the student scholar. Students are encouraged to use this forum to ask faculty questions about particular concerns they have about the intellectual merit and feasibility of their plans. If a member of the prospectus committee is away from Iowa City, they can participate remotely.

At the end of the meeting, the student may be asked to step outside while the faculty deliberate. The committee can come to three decisions about the prospectus: acceptance, request revisions, or rejection. If the committee requires revisions, these are usually discussed with the student, and the committee decides when they need to be made and who will approve them so the prospectus can be passed. If the prospectus is rejected, the committee discusses the reasons with the student and decides when a new prospectus needs to be submitted to the existing committee or, if necessary, a new committee.



*Paperwork for the Prospectus:* **There is a departmental form** that records the results of the prospectus meeting; the student and committee members should fill it out promptly and completely. This often is the only document that gives the DGS and GPC the working title of the dissertation. The form also has a place for the committee to designate the second reader of the dissertation, which should be decided upon at the end of the prospectus discussion (if not long before!).

#### *All But Dissertation (ABD) status*

Once the prospectus is passed, all that remains is researching and writing the dissertation. Some students move away from Iowa City during this period of the program for a variety of personal and professional reasons. Experience shows, however, that continued contact with faculty and graduate peers can be helpful in making good progress through this stage of the process. For that reason, **we encourage students to remain in Iowa if possible (with the exception of absences dictated by the research program)**. Whether in Iowa City or elsewhere, every ABD student needs to:

1. Review the Graduate College's Thesis Manual online (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/theses-and-dissertations>). This will give formatting rules and style requirements for the final version. Knowing this information in advance can make the last stages much less painful, no matter how versatile word processing software is now. (At least realize the larger margins required by the Graduate College mean fewer words per page and hence can make a rather long dissertation grow to very large proportions). The Graduate College requires electronic submission of the dissertation.
2. Register every fall and spring semester in order to remain in good standing with the Graduate College and the Department.
3. Consult regularly with the advisor. At the very least, the student must keep the advisor informed on dissertation progress, including submitting draft chapters for timely advice to both the advisor and second reader. Students may find it useful to prepare a "semester plan" in conjunction with their advisors every semester in order to establish what will constitute satisfactory progress for a grade of "S" for registered thesis hours.
4. Keep the History Department office up to date with a current mailing address and telephone number and update "student information" in MyUI as needed.

#### *Time to Degree—The "Five Years Beyond Comprehensives" Rule:*

A student cannot stay an ABD in good standing in perpetuity. According to the regulations of the Graduate College, if a student has not defended the dissertation within 15 sessions (includes Fall, Spring and Summer) from the date of the comprehensive examinations, then they must **re-take the comprehensive exams**. This policy is designed to make sure a person getting a doctoral degree is up to date in the literature and methods of the field and discipline. When a student reaches this point, the Graduate College sends a letter reminding the student about the time that has elapsed since the comprehensive exams. (A copy of this letter is also sent to the DGS.) Only with the request of the Department can the Graduate College consider waiving the requirement to retake the comps exams, and then for only one year at a time.

The Department recommends waivers to the Graduate College, but it is up to the Associate Dean of the College to make the final decision. When the College approves a waiver for a student in the five-year plus category, it is only for one year.

The longer a student takes to complete the dissertation, the harder it might be to retain a thesis supervisor and the original core of the dissertation committee. **If at any time a student cannot find a member of the Department who is prepared to serve as thesis supervisor, then they will not be able to continue as a graduate student in the Department.**

*The Final Examination: The PhD defense*

When the student, advisor and second reader agree the dissertation is finished and ready to defend, the last hurdles are getting the examination scheduled, defending the dissertation and making the single thesis deposit.

*Initial Steps:* In the first six weeks of the semester, if the student wishes to defend the dissertation, **the candidate must complete an “Application for Degree”** on [MyUI](#) and coordinate with the GPC to ensure all deadlines are met.

*Forming the full examining committee:* In consultation with the advisor, the student makes sure the second reader, the third "core" member of the earlier prospectus committee and at least one other faculty member can serve on the final examination committee. One of the faculty members must come from another department. If previous members of the committee are on leave or no longer at the University of Iowa, or have decided to withdraw from the committee, other appropriate regular faculty must be asked to join the committee. (If three faculty members plus an advisor cannot be found who are willing to serve on the doctoral committee, the student will not be able to complete the degree.) It is courteous to ask each professor—given the approximate date of the defense—how soon before the exam they need a copy of the thesis in order to be able to read it carefully. The Graduate College guideline is a minimum of two weeks before the exam. This simply may not be enough time for a faculty person with numerous commitments facing a 400+ page thesis unless ample notice has been given that it is coming. Once the exam has begun, no faculty member can resign or be dismissed from the committee.

Two questions regularly come up about the constitution of the dissertation committee:

1. *What if the advisor is no longer a UI faculty member?* When members of the department take positions at other universities, some continue to supervise their doctoral students who have finished the prospectus and are well into research and writing. In that case, the faculty member can only continue to serve as the main advisor if they can be present at the defense. If that is not the case, then they must select a co-advisor who can attend and chair the defense.

The Graduate College policy states a former faculty member can automatically be on a dissertation committee within 1 year after leaving the University of Iowa. If it is longer than 1 year, the DGS, DEO, or GPC can appeal in writing to the Graduate College requesting consideration of the former faculty member for the committee for 3-year renewal terms. Reasons may include involvement in previous committees for the student, expertise in the dissertation topic, etc.

2. *What if a person from another University would be wonderful to have on the examining committee?* Normally, a student must select a committee from among UI faculty members. However, students sometimes develop important intellectual relationships with scholars in other institutions who are close to their dissertation research. To make this happen, the student must first get the full approval and support of the advisor. Then the student (or advisor) must submit a request to the GPC with a statement on why it's important this scholar be on the committee and provide supporting evidence (usually a CV is sufficient) they hold an academic position equivalent to one for regular faculty at the University of Iowa (e.g. tenure-track assistant professor, associate professor, full professor), and has appropriate scholarly credentials. The GPC then submits the online “Committee Member Approval Request” form. Note, the Graduate College and the Department do **not** have funds to bring non-UI examiners to campus. Most often, such faculty members participate in the defense remotely. *It is not appropriate for a candidate to pay for the outside person to come to the examination.*

*Dissertation Formatting:* The Graduate College has strict rules about the format of the finished dissertation, which are explained in its [Thesis Manual online](#). Students should review this manual right after finishing the prospectus in order to be prepared for the requirements. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be submitted before the thesis deposit deadline. The Graduate College no longer requires a hard copy of the dissertation.

*Scheduling the Final Examination:* Confer with the GPC on scheduling the final examination. The defense usually takes two hours. The GPC prepares the "Request for Final Examination: Advanced Degree" form, which includes the names of all the people on the committee and is e-signed by the DGS or DEO. This form, which includes the full title of the doctoral dissertation, needs to reach the Graduate College **at least four weeks** before the exam is to take place.

*The Final Examination:* The dissertation defense schedule is added to the [Graduate College Calendar of Upcoming Defenses](#). The exam is open to the public, although non-committee attendees may not participate in the questioning unless they are regular UI faculty and have been invited by the chair of the committee to do so. Only the committee members may vote.

In format, the defense resembles the oral comprehensive examination. The candidate and any visitors are normally asked to step outside while the committee makes an overall assessment of the dissertation and decides how to proceed with questioning. Similarly, after the discussion, the candidate and visitors are usually asked to leave while the committee makes its decision and note one of two possible outcomes, "Report of the Final Examination: Advanced Degree":

**"Satisfactory."** If four of the five faculty decide the dissertation and the defense qualify for the doctoral degree, the candidate has passed.

**"Unsatisfactory."** If two or more members of the committee do not approve the thesis, then the report is "unsatisfactory." If the student wishes to repeat the defense, they need to request a second examination in a letter to the DEO. The DEO, in consultation with the DGS, with individual members of the faculty or with the faculty in a department meeting, makes this decision. If the second examination is approved, the candidate must wait at least until the next academic session to schedule a new defense. Only two examinations are allowed.

All committee members **will complete the paperwork electronically and should do so within 24 hours of the defense**. The examiners must select the correct option (satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or did not attend) on the "Report of the Final Examination: Advanced Degree" and electronically signoff on their status. The form will be routed for the DGS to review and must be completed within 48 hours of the defense.

*Thesis deposit:* In many cases the dissertation may be ready for deposit immediately after the defense. In others, however, the committee may have required minor revisions, including correcting typographical errors. The candidate must correct these prior to submitting the dissertation deposit electronically to the Graduate College. Once the deposit is made, the thesis will again route to all the committee members electronically where they can approve or reject the final submission. If they reject the dissertation, they must provide a specific reason. The thesis deposit deadline is approximately ten days prior to conferral date each semester. **Please [verify the deadlines](#) and do not wait until the last day in case there are issues with the electronic submission.** The thesis MUST be submitted before 5pm on the deposit due date or the candidate will not be allowed to graduate. It is customary for the candidate to give the dissertation advisor a copy of the final version of the thesis, both as a gesture of thanks for the help given over the years and as a foundation for the advisor's most up-to-date letters of recommendation.

*Commencement:* In addition to applying for the degree, a student will need to register to participate in the Commencement ceremony. If a student is planning to attend commencement, it helps to let the advisor and the GPC know as soon as possible. Many faculty advisors or other faculty mentors participate in the ceremony by "hooding" their student when the degree is awarded. There is a deadline to request rental of appropriate University gowns and hoods to wear during the ceremony so it can be awkward to invite advisors to participate at the last minute. If the primary advisor is unavailable, the Department will do our best to make sure a faculty member is there to honor our graduates.

#### *Publication in ProQuest*

All dissertations deposited at UI are automatically published in electronic form by ProQuest. This can make subsequent publication of books or articles based on the same research difficult, as presses may object to publishing material that is already easily available. For this reason, it is possible to request a temporary embargo of the publication of a dissertation on ProQuest. Consult with the advisor and/or the DGS for details.

## Professional Training beyond the Coursework and Dissertation

### *Public History and Engaged Scholarship and Teaching*

First theorized by Ernest Boyer in 1996 as “scholarship of engagement,” engaged scholarship unites academics and community-based non-academics in mutually beneficial projects that aim to answer questions and solve problems through collaborative relationships. Engaged scholarship is not synonymous with applied research; rather it calls for sharing of knowledge, collective problem solving, and making connections to large scholarly questions. It is an interdisciplinary approach that is integrated into research, teaching, and service.

Publicly engaged history takes place both inside and outside the academy. The big tent of public humanists includes public artists, oral historians, museum people, archivists, non-profit workers, historical consultants, government historians, oral historians, cultural resource managers, curators, film and media producers, historical interpreters, historic preservationists, policy advisers, local historians and community activists. Numerous polls and think pieces on public humanities tell us most employers of public humanists are consistent in the top skills they seek in a new hire including, good writing and research skills; appreciation for history (or field specific to their institution); understanding of audience; an ability to work well with others; good communication skills; and organizational skills. Any student of history should have those skills by the time they defend a master’s exam or dissertation. Additional skills that can be acquired in class or on the job include comfort with technology, production skills, business skills, project management skills, and marketing. The best endeavors are based on rigorous research and critical analysis and in the core principles of public humanities work—collaboration and mutual benefit to scholars and the public.

The graduate program in History offers both coursework and GA assignments (History Corps) for students interested in exploring public history. In addition, the Obermann Center’s Graduate Institute on Engagement and the Academy offers an intensive, funded course for graduate students across the Humanities.

### *Training as Teachers*

The Department is committed to training good teachers as well as good scholars. Students’ success in teaching, which is as important as the academic fields of study expected of PhD candidates, becomes the basis for strong recommendations to potential employers. There are several stages to training in teaching:

1. Teaching assignments are made on a semester-by-semester basis and will be subject to considerations of enrollment, scheduling, and ensuring as many students as possible gain experience in their desired fields.
2. All newly appointed TAs are required to participate in a Graduate Orientation held in the fall during the week before classes begin. The workshop is organized by a senior TA in the department with faculty and departmental staff providing support, and it incorporates presentations, discussions, simulations, syllabi reviews, and instructional videos that prepare students for their teaching experiences. Above all, experienced History TAs describe in detail their own teaching experiences and lessons learned. The orientation also draws on The Center for Teaching, an institutional resource on pedagogy that assists faculty and students campus-wide with teaching methods and problems.
3. Students entering the program with no teaching experience will be assigned as a shadow TA—with limited classroom responsibilities. They will be expected to attend staff meetings for the course, attend lectures and some discussion section meetings, and assist at the History Writing Center or other designated additional duties, like grading and/or leading a section.
4. TAs with classroom responsibility in survey courses are required to participate in weekly staff meetings for their courses.
5. All TAs are visited in the classroom at least once per semester while conducting discussion sections by regular faculty members (or by the TA’s advisor on request). These visits are to enhance personal

and professional growth that leads to improved performance. As a follow-up to these visits, the faculty meet with TAs to discuss with them impressions of their teaching capabilities. The Department reserves the right to pull a TA out of class for more training if there are problems of a serious nature.

6. TAs are required to administer a departmental course evaluation questionnaire at mid-semester and end of semester. These provide direct feedback from students in the discussion sections. The mid-semester evaluation forms are electronic and can be completed during class time. An assigned student delivers the completed forms to the History Department Office. The TA does not see the mid-semester evaluations until grades are submitted at the end of the semester. Evaluations are used as a source of information on TA's teaching success. The answers on the mid-semester forms are summarized and discussed in a private meeting with the course faculty supervisor. Hence there are various means for TAs to receive feedback on their teaching efforts from experienced instructors. The end of semester evaluation is available through the ICON Student Evaluations tool and students are to fill them out without the instructor present. The evaluations are maintained in the Department Office.
7. After a period of assisting in multi-section courses, TAs may be assigned full responsibility for a single-section course of their own. More detail on Graduate Instructor-Taught courses appears later in this document.

### Support for Graduate Study

This section details financial aid and how we distribute it. Several steps in the process of allocating aid take place behind closed doors, where students' work is talked about, evaluated, judged and ranked. That is the reality of academic life (and certainly does not stop with the award of a PhD degree). This section contains explicit comments about "expected progress" (prominent above in the discussions of degree requirements). This section also discusses the opportunities for additional funding available through Departmental and Graduate College fellowships and grants, as well as teaching in other units.

#### *The Principle of Eligibility and Aid upon Program Entry*

All entering students start our program in one of two categories: with an offer of major aid (a Fellowship or Assistantship) or without. Normally, the only students whom we admit without aid are MA Terminal students.

All new PhD students enter the UI History Department with up to five years of funding. We keep our admissions process tightly tied to the funding we receive for graduate student support each year and our hopes for this funding in future years. All students must understand that **changing economic conditions, university policies and collegiate priorities may affect graduate student funding**. There are no absolute guarantees beyond the year-to-year allocations we receive from CLAS (for TAs) and from the Graduate College (Fellowships). Aid is distributed to students each year based on priority lists for categories of students. The lists are finalized in Feb/Mar at the time of the annual Department aid allocation meeting. **"Eligibility" is a priority category for TA assignments**. In the department aid meeting the first level of priority goes to students with Graduate College Recruitment or Lulu Merle Johnson Fellowships; the second level of priority is for students with eligibility. All students with eligibility are considered for an assignment for the following academic year. However, **any student may have aid denied if not making adequate progress through the program**. Please note this restriction applies to **all** aid within the control of the department. Information about each student's progress is collected by the DGS in advance of the aid meeting; in addition, each student's advisor is expected to present information about the student's progress in writing or orally at the time of the aid meeting.

#### *Recruitment Fellowships for Incoming UI Graduate Students*

The Lulu Merle Johnson Fellowship is the highest award conferred by the University of Iowa and provides a year service-free in the first year of the doctoral program. For years 2 through 5 of the program, fellows are appointed in History as a TA. For details on the program see: [Lulu Merle Johnson Fellowships](#)

The Graduate College Iowa Recruitment Fellowship Program enhances departmental recruitment packages by offering our most accomplished new doctoral students a stipend supplement for up to five years and fellowship support for up to four summers. Tuition scholarships are to be paid during the academic years (fall, spring) along with a graduate appointment by the department, while the Graduate College will provide up to 1 credit hour tuition and benefits for the summer terms. See [Iowa Recruitment Fellowship](#) for details.

Both of these fellows are also eligible for other Graduate College post-comp or dissertation fellowships.

#### *Department/University Funding for All Graduate Students*

The staple of graduate student support is teaching. *Teaching Assistants (TAs)* are employment governed by rules that apply to UI employees. In contrast there is some funding available through *Graduate Aid* and this subject to faculty expectations about academic progress that have nothing to do with an employer/employee relationship.

#### *Teaching Assistantships (TAships)*

On the employment side, graduate students are represented by a union, COGS Local 896, which negotiates with the University—not with departments—on employment issues. The History Department may have Union Stewards. Please consult with them on any questions or comments that concern employment. Alternatively, students may talk with the DGS at any time about employment issues as well, but we encourage our graduate students to be fully informed about both COGS and Departmental/ University perspectives on their positions.

Technically, TAs work for the University (the source of funding), not for the History Department, although the department makes the employment assignments and oversees TA teaching effectiveness. Like other employees who teach, TAs are obliged to abide by the policies laid out by the University and CLAS. More information is available on the [College's website](#). Additionally, it is University policy that graduate students may be employed **by the University** for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the academic year. A full workload may be made up of a combination of duties assigned by the Department. A breakdown of those duties is located on the Department of History's Expected TA Effort Chart included with the offer letter.

All TAs have their teaching skills evaluated by the Department. If a TA is not able to teach effectively, and problems persist after discussions and individual work with the TA advisor on teaching skills, the Department has an obligation to UI undergraduates to remove the TA from the classroom or to deny further teaching assignments to the graduate student. All students must realize **teaching performance is considered when reassigning TA positions to graduate students each year.**

The Department sees TAships as a vital way to support graduate students through the PhD program. The fundamental duty of graduate students is to learn their discipline and to complete their degrees. The focus for these goals is mastering sophisticated critical thinking, research skills and steady productivity. Teaching is of central importance in academic life and we value it highly. If graduate students perform poorly in the classroom, we cannot allow them to continue to teach. Yet students need to learn to balance teaching with research, and to appreciate the close connections between the two. As time-consuming as good teaching is, students must understand a devotion to their students is never considered a valid excuse for not making sufficient progress towards their own degrees.

**Survey Courses:** One of the available TA positions is for our large survey classes: West and the World: Ancient; West and the World: Medieval; West and the World: Modern; Civilizations of Africa; Civilizations of Asia in one of its incarnations—China, Japan, Korea, and South Asia; two courses in American History; and two courses in African American History. All of these courses fill the "General Education Requirement" (GER) in "Historical Perspectives," "Diversity and Inclusion," or "International and Global Issues" for undergraduates.

Each Survey course is assigned a faculty member as the lecturer/faculty supervisor and graduate students are assigned to lead discussion sections to supplement the lecture. The department will assign both new and experienced TAs to these courses. Such GER courses enroll many students who have no intention of becoming History majors (and who may not be interested in history at all) and so provide a few challenges to the lecturer and TAs.



**Graduate Instructor-Taught (GIT) Courses:** After teaching discussion sections in a survey course, and successfully passing the comprehensive exam, our graduate students may move on to teach a class they design and implement. These classes generally fulfill undergraduate GER requirements in "Historical Perspectives," "Diversity and Inclusion," or "International and Global Issues." Like the large introductory lecture courses, they attract a wide range of students; however, they work quite differently from the large surveys. These courses are all clustered around general topics and content criteria, within which graduate instructors design their own syllabi (including specific topics, reading assignments, written assignments and examinations) and teach the entire course content on their own.

The "GIT Coordinator" is a faculty person other than the DGS, oversees administration of these classes, including the preparation of syllabi, distribution of teaching times, reviewing the mid-semester TA course evaluations and discussing them with each TA, attending sections to provide feedback about teaching skills, and acting as the administrative liaison between the Department, CLAS, and the individual TA.

**Other Courses:** There are times history intersects with other subjects and the department gets requests for TA assistance in such courses. Some examples include (but are not limited to) International Studies, German, and Global Health Studies.

**Writing Center TA Positions:** TAs in the Department's Writing and Teaching Center assist undergraduates—primarily students in GER courses—with history writing assignments. The Writing and Teaching Center is **not** an editing service, and other TAs and undergraduates alike must understand this. These TAs may produce handouts on how TAs can compose effective assignments (from "thought papers" and book reviews to essays) and examination questions; they offer mini-workshops for groups of undergraduates to learn how to write more effective essays on examinations; and they work with individual students (targeted, *we hope*, by TAs early in the semester) who make a commitment to improve their history writing over a series of appointments.

**History Writing Center Supervisor:** This is a senior graduate student with a dedication to improving graduate students' teaching skills. This person fills a vital role in the Department, responsible for developing the TA orientation we hold every August. The History Writing Center Supervisor works closely with the DGS over the entire year to develop resources for improving teaching, and to schedule meetings where resources from around campus (Student Disability Services, etc) give presentations to TAs. This person also directs/coordinates the History Writing Center.

**History Corps:** A group of graduate students, a faculty advisor, and collaborators from the across the UI and Iowa City are working to take the student-managed oral and digital history project—known as History Corps (HC) (<http://thestudio.uiowa.edu/historycorps/>)—to a publicly engaged intellectual and interpretative digital project. Established in 2011 as the "UI Humanities Story Corps" and based on the model of an oral history exhibit, HC has expanded its pedagogical and collaborative reach (university, local, and state entities) through more complex and collaborative undertakings. (See [2008 Flood photographic essay](#))

**Summer Session Teaching:** Teaching during the summer is most often done by adjunct faculty, and the number of courses available is limited. If summer teaching opportunities become available, the history department staff will notify eligible graduate students.

**Other opportunities for employment:** Students who have exhausted their aid in the History Department or who wish to gain experience outside the History Department might apply for TAs in other units in the University. These include (but aren't limited to) the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies; the Rhetoric Department; the Labor Center; the Iowa Women's Archives; and Student Services. These 20 hour per week assistantships are open to advanced graduate students at the same pay as graduate instructorships. Announcements of such opportunities are posted on the GHS-Official listserv. Many hire in late spring for the following fall. The Department is happy to support the applications of its advanced students in applying for such positions, which can provide useful career experience.

Students can check with Human Resources to learn about positions open around campus for other forms of work, such as clerical services or check on the [Graduate College's site for GA/RA positions](#).



Kirkwood Community College, Cornell College, Coe College, and several other nearby institutions also sometimes hire UI ABDs for teaching history courses. We send announcements about such opportunities through the GHS-official listserv.

### *The Annual Assignment of Major Aid*

Each spring the Department reviews the progress of every graduate student in the program who applies for major aid. This review process culminates at a department meeting, usually in February or March, where the faculty discuss a comprehensive report presented by the DGS. The process starts when the DGS announces the availability of **Major Aid application forms** and sets a due date, which is usually in late January or early February. We use the forms to establish a list of students who are seeking a TAship in History. Because students get fellowships or travel grants for research, or for other reasons plan to be away from Iowa, we simply do not know who needs a teaching appointment each academic year. Even if a student is fairly confident they will be away for research, if the slightest possibility of staying and teaching exists, the student should apply. Additionally, these forms provide specific information on how much support the student is seeking—full year or partial.

In addition to the application form, which the student fills out, we require the advisor to write a brief statement about the non-quantitative aspects of a student's progress.

*The Order of Priority in Aid Allocations:* When the DGS presents the report on aid assignments, it includes a list of all the graduate students who have applied, grouped according to priority categories. The DGS starts with the number of TAships allocated to the Department by CLAS. This number, determined in December or January, is based upon the existing enrollments in History courses taught with or by TAs (with some other considerations taken into account).

Given the initial number, the DGS orders all the graduate students who have applied for major aid according to **priority category**. Within each category, students are then ranked according to degree progress, alphabetically, or by some other conventional means. In addition to the categories below, our TA allocation must cover students newly admitted to the program. In order to maintain a healthy graduate program, we must admit and fund a reasonable number of new students each year.

Here are the priority categories. The first three categories fall under the category “eligible,” and so continued aid is assumed unless the student is not making adequate progress towards degree or such serious problems have arisen with the TA's teaching that we can no longer support a teaching role for that student.

1. **First year students.** With first-year students, we have at most one semester of completed courses by which to judge their progress towards the degree. The presumption is that first-year students are on track and can be assigned a TA position. We still know very little about each student's overall capabilities to sustain graduate level work in our department, much less to work relatively independently on original projects; hence faculty observations about these students' accomplishments are crucial.
2. **All students with eligibility remaining.** As mentioned previously, all students accepted into the PhD program are given five years of eligibility.
3. **Students beyond eligibility.** We turn to this list after completing all discussions and decisions about allocations to students with eligibility as well as new admits. It is not uncommon that departmental teaching assignments are made to students in this category, but these assignments are often made in late spring or even in summertime. As in other categories, this is a ranked list based upon student's progress toward the degree and past teaching success.
4. **Students who forgot to apply for major aid and appear in May - August hoping for an assignment.** This is a DGS category, not one that can be considered at the Department meeting. Because it has too often been a category with real students in it, it is here as a warning that once assignments are made, no student is dismissed from a position to make room for a late comer, no matter how much eligibility one may have.

*Progress and Ranking:* Being in a priority category—any priority category—does not guarantee major aid support. Faculty reserve the right to remove any student from the aid list if that student is **not making satisfactory progress** to the degree. The faculty also considers any report the DGS offers about poor teaching performance for individual students, which is based upon review of teaching evaluations and classroom visits. **A student unable to teach effectively cannot be given another teaching assignment.**

These criteria mean the first task the faculty have at the spring aid meeting is to review the entire list and to see which, if any, students are not keeping up with their peers. Because expectations about progress vary according to field (number of new languages to learn, access to research materials delayed, etc.), the faculty are sensitive to the many nuances that affect "progress." Examples of potential problems include, but are not limited to:

- Incompletes in courses, especially if an incomplete has turned to an F (it does automatically after a full semester has passed without a grade change being sent in by the professor)
- Grade point average concerns/probation—graduate students must maintain a 3.33 GPA
- Excessive delay in completing the qualifying essay, comprehensive examinations, or in completing the prospectus after taking the comps
- Excessive delay in completing dissertation chapters

At the spring aid meeting the assembled faculty listens carefully to the advisor's assessment and the comments of those who have had the student in class. The faculty discuss whether enough has been done to encourage the student and to make sure the Department's standards and consequences of poor performance are understood.

Students who are not making progress may get contingent offers or reduction of a full load to a partial one. Contingent offers include making the fall (or following spring) assignment depend upon the successful completion of the qualifying essay or on passing comprehensive exams. We have reduced offers from a full load to half or one-third time for a semester because of poor progress. All of these steps are taken with full communication to the student about why the faculty made such a painful decision and what is necessary to get back on track.

### *Beyond Eligibility*

The distribution of any remaining assignments to students beyond eligibility is among the most difficult tasks the faculty face when distributing major aid assignments. Ranking of students without eligibility depends almost entirely on progress towards the degree, time in the program, and teaching effectiveness. Quite simply, the longer a student works on a dissertation, the less likely it is they will be given a teaching assignment. A very detailed rank-order list is developed at the department meeting. The DGS uses this list when offering assignments that come up at the last minute, as TAs resign their positions for various reasons. When a special need or circumstance arises, faculty grants the DGS authority to make appointments without strict consideration of the rank order.

### *Research and Dissertation Funding*

In addition to TAs for supporting graduate education, there are several grants and fellowships available for graduate students to fund research travel and dissertation writing. This section covers only the awards funded by the Graduate College and the Department. We urge students to apply for outside aid as well. Information on external grants is available from the Division of Sponsored Programs (an office under the Vice President for Research), the Study Abroad Program (applications for Fulbright, Stanley Foundation Travel Awards, etc.), and other University resources. Often the student's academic advisor will be the best source of information on external awards, since these can vary by specialty. The Graduate College has a [Fellowship Incentive Program](#) that offers a financial incentive for graduate students to apply for nationally competitive grants.

Fellowships, travel grants, and dissertation awards have **no connection to eligibility**. That is, students with or without remaining eligibility may apply. If awarded, time spent on a fellowship or other award **does not count** towards eligibility for major aid in the Department. Many full-time awards (including the Ballard and Seashore) prohibit a student from being employed at the same time. Part-time awards, particularly the Department's awards to help with research travel, can be combined in the same year as a TAship or other fellowship. Many students use these awards for summer research; others use them for spring semester travel after a full teaching load in the fall. Finally, some departmental awards can be held with external fellowships and grants. Some external grants do not allow for such doubling up: always check the fine print.

*Graduate College Ballard and Seashore Award:* The Graduate College awards a number of Ballard and Seashore dissertation writing Fellowships each year (the exact number is determined by available resources). These are prestigious competitive awards open to applicants from all humanities and social science departments. Their purpose is to fund full-time work on the **final writing semester of the dissertation**; they are not intended for continuing research work or for travel. Students who cannot make a plausible case that they will be able to finish the dissertation during the fellowship semester will not be nominated. The Graduate College enforces its expectation of completion by reducing the number of awards eligible to departments whose Ballard and Seashore recipients did not finish in the prescribed time.

In early February, and again in September, the Graduate College seeks nominations from departments. Application information can be found on the [Graduate College's site](#). At a minimum, the department expects a polished prospectus; a stronger case can be made when the student provides copies of one or more dissertation chapters. Departments may nominate a limited number of students and a *student may be nominated only once*.

*Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Awards:* This award program provides an opportunity for advanced doctoral students to benefit from protected and supported time to pursue their scholarly research activities. The award is intended to recognize students with distinguished academic achievement during their early graduate training. These achievements should be evident from a combination of outstanding academic performance in coursework, as well as early scholarly research activities. Students who have held TAs in the previous two semesters will have priority.

Nomination packages are requested in February and September. To be eligible, nominees must have passed comprehensive exams during the specified deadline per the [Graduate College website](#). Awardees will receive an academic semester of protected and supported time to fully engage in their scholarly research activities. This award cannot be used in combination with any other source of semester support (e.g., fellowship/scholarship, grant, TAs).

*Internal or Departmental Awards:* Students may not apply for the History Department awards until after they have passed their comprehensive examinations and defended their prospectus. Detailed instructions and information about specific fellowships and awards will be distributed through the GHS-Official listserv well in advance of the deadlines.

The Departmental Fellowships and Awards Committee reviews all submitted applications but gives first priority to students who have not held a Departmental award previously; if there are no suitable first-time candidates for the awards, previous awardees can receive a second one. This eligibility restriction applies only to Departmental awards, **not** to students who have previously held other Fellowships (such as Graduate College or external grants). Students who are nominated for the Ballard and Seashore Fellowships are also ranked for Departmental awards unless they explicitly state in the cover letter that they do not wish to be considered for them. Because the Graduate College nominations and the Departmental awards proceed at the same time, Departmental awards are announced after the Graduate College has decided upon the Ballard and Seashore Fellowships. These announcements may not be made until mid-April.

### **Other Academic Opportunities for Graduate Students**

There are many opportunities available to History graduate students outside of the Department. We encourage students to take courses in other departments as it can provide important breadth for graduate work. Faculty in the History Department regularly have students from other department in their classes and serve on comprehensive and dissertation committees in many other areas. Such faculty can be important sources for advice about what to take and whom to work with in other departments and programs

In addition to the exciting programs available on campus, graduate students should also be aware of the CIC exchange program. The University of Iowa participates in this program, in which students from the UI can take a course or courses at another participating university. CIC exchanges are arranged through the Graduate College, which can provide the current information on how to apply.

**ATTACHMENT 1: Mock Schedule for a PhD Student Entering with a BA**

<p><b>Semester 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST:6002, Intro to Graduate Studies in History</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Shadow TA</p>	<p><b>Semester 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST:6003 History Theory and Interpretation</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST (e.g. Research Paper)</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything/Language</li> </ul> <p>Full TA</p>	<p><b>First Summer</b></p> <p>Language Training and/or Summer Research</p>
<p><b>Semester 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST (e.g. QRP)</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Qualifying Research Paper by the end of the semester</p> <p>Full TA</p>	<p><b>Semester 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Book Lists for First Two Fields Finalized</p> <p>Third Field Identified and project defined</p> <p>Full TA</p>	<p><b>Second Summer</b></p> <p>Language Qualification completed by the end of the summer</p> <p>Begin Comps prep</p> <p>Summer Research/ Language Training</p>
<p><b>Semester 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh HIST:6004 Comps Sem I - Comps Prep</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Reduced Teaching</p> <p>Prospectus outline due by the first week of the semester</p> <p>Research Paper by end of the semester</p>	<p><b>Semester 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh HIST:6005 Comps Sem II – Comps Exam</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Reduced Teaching</p> <p>Completed Draft of Prospectus due by the first week of the semester</p> <p>Revised Prospectus and Third Field materials due to the advisor one week before the written exams</p> <p>Prospectus Defense follows within 2 weeks of oral exams</p>	<p><b>Third Summer</b></p> <p>Begin Dissertation Research/Travel</p>
<p><b>Semester 7 and beyond</b></p> <p>Students coming in without an MA have 2 more years funding for research and writing. Per their contracts, they will remain registered and will take a reduced load of further classes until they are finished. If they gain outside funding that is added to the total, extending their total numbers of funded years. Ideally, students should submit a research proposal to national (and international if applicable) funding bodies (e.g. Fulbright) at the outset of the 5th semester in order to use that fellowship beginning in the 7th semester.</p>	<p>If successful, an external fellowship would cover the costs of the student's fourth year, and student's internal funding extended to the 6th year. Given the short, 5-year funding range, <b>the sooner a student applies for dissertation research grants and fellowship the better chance they will have of competing the program in a timely fashion.</b> These fellowships support travel and require no teaching; they can also be combined with Department and Collegiate fellowships, extending the student's funding further.</p>	

**ATTACHMENT 2: Mock Schedule for a PhD Student Entering with an MA**

<p><b>Semester 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST:6002, Intro to Graduate Studies in History</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Full TA</p>	<p><b>Semester 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIST:6003 History Theory and Interpretation</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST (e.g. QRP)</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything/Language</li> </ul> <p>Book Lists for First Two Fields Finalized</p> <p>Third Field Identified and its project defined</p> <p>Full TA</p>	<p><b>First Summer</b></p> <p>Language Training/ Summer Research/</p> <p>Language Qualification completed by the end of the summer</p> <p>Begin Comps prep</p>
<p><b>Semester 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh HIST:6004 Comps Sem I – Comps Prep</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Prospectus outline due by the first week of the semester</p> <p>Qualifying Research Paper by the end of the semester</p> <p>Reduced Teaching</p>	<p><b>Semester 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sh HIST:6005 Comps Sem II – Comps Exam</li> <li>• 3 sh 6000-7000 HIST</li> <li>• 3 sh Anything</li> </ul> <p>Completed Draft of Prospectus due by the first week of the semester</p> <p>Revised Prospectus and Third Field materials due to the advisor one week before the written exams</p> <p>Prospectus Defense follows within 2 weeks of oral exams</p> <p>Reduced Teaching</p>	<p><b>Second Summer</b></p> <p>Begin Dissertation Research/Travel</p>
<p><b>Semester 5 and beyond</b></p> <p>Students coming in with an MA have 3 more years guaranteed funding for research and writing. Per their contracts, they will remain registered and they will take a reduced load of further classes until they are finished. Ideally, students should submit a research proposal to national (and international if applicable) funding bodies (e.g. Fulbright) at the outset of the 3rd semester in order to use that fellowship beginning in the 5th semester.</p>	<p>If successful, an external fellowship would cover the costs of the student's third year, and that student's total funding would be extended to the 6th year. Given the short, five-year funding range, <b>the sooner a student can apply for dissertation research grants and fellowship the better chance that student will have of competing the program in a timely fashion.</b> These fellowships support travel and require no teaching; they can also be combined with Department and Collegiate fellowships, extending the student's funding even further.</p>	