

Philosophy Ph. D. Requirements

Program Unit Requirements for Candidacy

Ph.D. students need 11 program units in philosophy (with a grade of B+ or above):

- These are typically made up of ordinary graduate level courses in the UM Department of Philosophy. You must have a *minimum* of 6 such units.
- Some special courses are eligible, but within limits: at most, one program unit may come from Reading Courses (596) or Independent Literature Surveys (598). The Dossier Reading Course or DRC (599) is required for the PhD, but it *does not count* as a program unit *for Candidacy*.
- Graduate-level courses in another graduate philosophy program may also count, if approved by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), but again within limits: at most 4 program units.

Nota bene: Satisfying these departmental requirements will satisfy most of Rackham's requirements. But Rackham also requires you to take *at least 4 credit hours in a "cognate subject"* (with a grade of B- or above).

Distribution Unit Requirements for Candidacy

Six of your units must be distributed as follows. Everyone must take at least:

- One unit in history of ancient philosophy
- One unit in history of modern philosophy
- One unit in ethics (normative ethics, meta-ethics, history of ethics, or political philosophy)
- Two units in distinct areas of metaphysics and epistemology (epistemology, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, philosophy of science)

The remaining distribution unit can be satisfied in *one* of two ways:

Another unit in a distinct area of M&E, *or*

Another unit in a distinct area of ethics (at least one must be in normative ethics or meta-ethics)

Nota bene: Some seminars, including the Proseminar, might be counted in various ways. Please clear with the instructor early in the term which areas it could satisfy, and of these which *you* intend it to satisfy.

Up to three distribution units can be satisfied by courses from another graduate program, if approved by the GSC. The committee will decide whether it should count as a program unit, a distribution unit, or both, based on pedagogical considerations in the individual student's case, after other requirements have been met, no earlier than 31 October of the student's *second* year. Approval should not be presumed.

Up to one distribution unit can be satisfied by a 3-hour examination, by petition to the GSC.

Other Requirements for Candidacy

To become a candidate, you must also satisfy the following requirements:

Proseminar (597)

Logic (414 or higher)

Cognate subject requirement (4 credit hours)

The logic requirement can be satisfied (a) with courses taken at other institutions, if approved by the GSC, or (b) by examination.

Forming a Dissertation Committee

Upon achieving candidacy, Rackham requires each student to form a dissertation committee. At this stage, it is largely an informal requirement, since you can alter the composition of the committee at any time. (Adding faculty always requires their consent; removing them does not.) You can use this transitional period as an opportunity to explore which faculty would be best to work with.

Dossier Reading Course & Dossier

In the term during which you complete the requirements for candidacy, or in the Fall or Winter term immediately following it, you should enroll in the Dossier Reading Course or DRC (599), under the direction of a faculty member of your choosing who has agreed to your request. The aim of the Reading Course is to help you find and develop a viable dissertation topic and begin work on it.

The work you do in the DRC is meant to culminate soon thereafter in a dossier, consisting of two documents, relating to the proposed dissertation:

- i.* a draft of a substantive chapter (*not* an introduction or survey)
- ii.* a draft of a prospectus

When you reach this stage, you will form a committee of two faculty members to review the dossier (see next paragraph). They will provide comments to you and to the GSC. If the GSC approves the dossier, you should finish revisions on the prospectus in short order and proceed on to a prospectus defense.

The dossier committee is meant as a trial balloon for the final constitution of your dissertation committee: you should ask faculty members to review the dossier who you think you would like to have on your dissertation committee (although agreeing to review the dossier does not obligate either you or faculty members). That way, they can provide useful feedback at an early stage on the overall shape of the project as well as some of the details, and indicate what revisions they would want to see in a prospectus. A positive recommendation on the dossier indicates that they think you are ready to proceed to a prospectus defense and the dissertation itself.

Prospectus & Prospectus Defense

A prospectus should motivate and frame the central problem your dissertation will address and then lay out the strategy you plan to pursue in answering it. It should include a reasonably detailed overview of the chapters you intend to write and a bibliography on the general subject. Any further, more specific requirements and guidelines will be provided by the dossier committee.

Once you have finished the prospectus and confirmed who will serve on the dissertation committee and in what capacity, you may proceed to the prospectus defense. This allows the committee to meet together with you in person to review the game plan and any changes that might be advisable before you proceed to the main work. Since the dossier will typically have prepared the way for this meeting, the prospectus defense should be an opportunity for constructive guidance, and not a separate new hurdle.

Dissertation & Dissertation Defense

In order to begin work on the dissertation proper, you must have (a) achieved candidacy; (b) satisfactorily completed the DRC; (c) had your dossier approved; and (d) successfully defended a prospectus.

To receive a Ph. D., you must (e) submit a finished dissertation and (f) successfully defend it at a dissertation defense in front of your committee.