



Department of Political Science
PhD Regulations / Handbook
2023 – 2024

Disclaimer: If there is a discrepancy between this Handbook and the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#) will prevail.

McMaster University
Department of Political Science
Ph.D. Degree in Political Science

The [Department of Political Science](#) at McMaster University offers the Ph.D. degree in the fields of Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Comparative Public Policy, International Relations, and Political Theory.

Graduands can expect to be qualified to conduct research and teach at the university level in all fields.

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Land Acknowledgement

The Department of Political Science gives honour and thanks to the Haudenosaunee and Anishanaabe nations, the traditional inhabitants of the lands where McMaster stands. We acknowledge a debt to those who were here before us and recognize our responsibility, as guests, to respect and honour the intimate relationship Indigenous peoples have to this land.

2023-2024 Important Dates

Monday, September 4	Labour Day Holiday, Department is closed
Tuesday, September 5	Undergraduate classes begin, Fall 2023, Term 1
Wednesday, September 6	Final day for <u>late</u> Mosaic enrollment
Thursday, September 7	Welcome Reception and Lunch
Friday, September 8	Graduate course enrollment worksheet due
Monday, September 11	Graduate classes begin, Fall 2023, Term 1
Friday, September 22	Last day to add courses in Mosaic for Fall 2022, Term 1
Saturday, September 30	Last day to complete and pass SGS 101 and SGS 201
Saturday, September 30	National Truth & Reconciliation, NO CLASSES
October 9 – 15	Mid-term recess, NO CLASSES
Friday, November 10	Last day to drop courses for Term 1 (please note that all courses on a student's record after this date will require a grade)
Wednesday, December 6	Last day of Undergraduate classes for Fall 2023, Term 1
Friday, December 8	Last day of Political Science Graduate classes, Fall 2023, Term 1
December 22 – January 1	Department and University closed for the Holiday Break
Monday, January 2	Department and University reopen for Winter 2024
Monday, January 8	Undergraduate and Graduate classes begin, Winter 2024, T2
Monday, January 15	Last day to Drop/Add Term 2 with Department approval
Friday, January 19	Last day to add courses in Mosaic for Winter 2024, Term 2
Monday, February 19	Family Day Holiday, Department and University closed
February, 19– 25	Mid-term recess, NO CLASSES
Friday, March 15	Last day to drop courses for Term 2 (please note that all courses on a student's record after this date will require a grade)
Friday, March 29-30	Good Friday Break, no classes or examinations Department and University closed
Wednesday, April 10	Last day of undergraduate classes for Winter 2024, Term 2
Friday, April 12	Last day of Political Science graduate classes for Winter 2024, T2
Friday, April 12	PhD Comprehensive Examination Ballot to be distributed
Wednesday, April 17	Language Exam (French)
Monday, April 22	PhD Comprehensive Examination Ballot due
Monday, May 1	Distribution of PhD Comp Exam Study guides
Mon. Aug 26-Fri. Aug 30	PhD Comprehensive Exam, Major Field 1 / 2024
Monday, September 2	Labour Day Holiday, Department is closed
Mon. Dec 2-Thu. Dec 5	PhD Comprehensive Exam, Major Field 2 / 2024

More detailed information on [Sessional Dates](#) can be found online in the [2023-2024 School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#)

Admission Procedures

Admission to the Ph.D. program normally will require a M.A. degree with an average of at least an A- (A minus) from a recognized university. Applicants must complete the required online McMaster application form, arrange to have 3 academic references submitted to the Department, submit one original transcript(s) from all universities attended and evidence of English proficiency where required (i.e., TOEFL), resume/CV, and submit a statement of their research interests (maximum one page, single spaced) and reasons for choosing McMaster University for their Ph.D. degree in Political Science. **The deadline for submission of applications can be found on the [Department of Political Science website](#).**

Degree Requirements

Normally, candidates for the Ph.D. will:

1. Complete 18 units (6 half courses) of course work beyond the M.A. level.
2. Demonstrate reading and research competence in an approved language other than English.
3. Complete required comprehensive examinations in Major Field 1 and one other in Major Field 2; and
4. Submit a thesis on an approved subject and defend it by oral examination.

Required Courses

For students in Canadian Politics

- 796 / Research Design and Methods

TWO additional courses in Canadian Politics, **one** of which shall be

- 760 / Political Institutions of the Canadian State

OR

- 761 / The Social, Cultural and Economic Foundations of Canadian Politics

For students in Comparative Politics

- 740 / Theories of Comparative Politics
- 796 / Research Design and Methods

ONE other from the following list:

- 706 / Comparative Politics of Health Policy
- 716 / Comparative Authoritarianism
- 730 / Technology and Politics
- 732 / Laboratories of Democracy? Public Policy in Canada & other Federal Systems
- 746 / Issues in Comparative Politics
- 748 / Democracy and Diversity
- 749 / Topics in Gender and Politics
- 762 / Comparative Political Economy

For students in Comparative Public Policy

- 783 / Comparative Public Policy
- 784 / Quantitative Political and Policy Analysis
- 796 / Research Design and Methods

For students in International Relations

- 772 / Theories in International Politics or 771 Advanced Concepts of International Relations Theory
- 774 / Global Political Economy
- 796 / Research Design and Methods

For students in Political Theory

- 796 / Research Design and Methods

TWO other courses from the following list:

- 715 / Liberalism and Imperialism
- 734 / Marx and Marxisms
- 750 / Issues in Political Theory
- 755 / Lying in Politics
- 756 / Politics and Its Others
- 757 / Theories of Political Community
- 758 / Cosmopolitanism and Its Critics

Additional Information

Other approved courses will be drawn from other departmental courses, and courses offered by other departments and schools. At least three of these selected units should be from Major Field 2. Students should consult with their supervisor on the appropriate courses to take.

All courses are half courses (three units) unless otherwise specified.

In order to remain in the program a student must maintain a clear B+ average. (For example, two marks of B+ and one of B would not constitute a clear B+ average). Failure to maintain a B+ average will normally result in the student being asked to leave the program.

Comprehensive Examinations

Comprehensive examinations consist of two exams (one in Major Field 1 and one in Major Field 2 [Teaching Field]). Normally, these Examination Periods will be scheduled such that students write their Major Field 1 exam in August of their first year, followed by the Major Field 2 exam in early December of their second year. The fields to be examined at each of these Examination Periods will be determined by the Chair of the Graduate Committee in consultation with the supervisors of the students writing these examinations. Students cannot expect to be exempted from TA/RA duties during Examination Periods.

Students are normally required to have completed at least three units beyond the M.A. level at McMaster in this area prior to writing the comprehensive examination.

For students in Canadian Politics

Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields – Canadian Politics and a second field drawn from one of Comparative Politics, Comparative Public Policy, International Relations, or Political Theory.

Major Field 1

In the Canadian Politics field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of Canadian Politics:

- Institutions
- Representation
- Public Policy and Governance

Major Field 2

To be selected from:

- Comparative Politics
- Comparative Public Policy
- International Relations
- Political Theory

For students in Comparative Politics

Students will write examinations in two fields – Comparative Politics and a second field drawn from one of Canadian Politics, Comparative Public Policy, International Relations, or Political Theory.

Major Field 1

In the Comparative Politics field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of Comparative Politics.

- Theories and Approaches of Comparative Politics
- Comparative Methods
- Contemporary Themes in Comparative Politics

Major Field 2

To be selected from:

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Public Policy
- International Relations
- Political Theory

For students in Comparative Public Policy

Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields – Comparative Public Policy and a second field drawn from one of Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, or Political Theory.

Major Field 1

In the Comparative Public Policy field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of Comparative Public Policy.

- Theories and Approaches to Comparative Public Policy
- Public Administration
- International Dimensions of Public Policy

Major Field 2

To be selected from:

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations

- Political Theory

For Students in International Relations

Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields - International Relations and a second field drawn from one of Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Comparative Public Policy, or Political Theory.

Major Field 1

In the International Relations field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of international relations:

- International relations theory / State of the Field
- Global Political Economy
- Globalization, governance and security

Major Field 2

To be selected from:

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Political Theory
- Public Policy

For Students in Political Theory

Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields – Political Theory and a second field drawn from one of Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Comparative Public Policy, or International Relations.

Major Field 1

In the Political Theory field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of Political Theory:

- History of Political Thought
- Contemporary and Critical Theory
- International Political Theory

Major Field 2

To be selected from:

- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politic
- Comparative Public Policy
- International Relations

The comprehensive examinations will be in the form of a take-home exam (5 working days, for Major Field 1 exam and 4 working days for Major Field 2 exam) with a maximum number of words indicated in the exam. The maximum may vary according to the exam but under no circumstances may it exceed 7,500 words for the Major Field 1 exam and 5,000 words for the Major Field 2 exam. Study guides consisting of bibliographies for each examination paper will be revised at least every other year and made available to students in May in their examination year.

The examining committee for Major Field 1 will consist of the convenor or a delegate, and one other member of the faculty, who would normally be the student's supervisor. The examining committee for Major Field 2 (Teaching Field) will consist of one member of the faculty who is in the field to be examined and one other faculty member. The latter may, when appropriate, be drawn from the wider University Community. Responsibility for appointing members will rest with the appropriate field convenor in consultation with the Supervisor. The examining committees will normally mark the exams and paper and inform the student of the results within one month of the exams taking place. In order for the student to pass, they must receive an A- (A minus) or better from each committee. When a set of exams has been deemed not to have reached the required standard, the student must be provided with a written explanation.

Requests for delays in writing Comprehensive Examinations or writing at other times will be decided on by the Graduate Committee.

A student who fails one or more parts of the Comprehensive Examinations may be asked to leave the program.

Other Regulations

Applicants should consult the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#) for a complete listing of [Regulations for the Doctor of Philosophy Degrees](#).

Department of Political Science - Guidelines and Regulations

Students are advised to consult the regulations set out in the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#). The following regulations are also followed in the Department of Political Science.

Admissions: see "Departmental Regulations" governing admission to the Ph.D. program.

Supervisor and Supervisory Committee

Upon entering the program, students will be assigned a temporary supervisor, no later than six months following the student's arrival; a supervisory committee for each student will be appointed by the Graduate Committee on the recommendation of the students and a willing thesis supervisor drawn from the faculty. This committee will consist of at least three members: a thesis supervisor, one other member of the Department and a third member, whose scholarly interests include the area of the student's main interest, and who may be from outside the Department. The functions of the supervisory committee are as follows:

- The supervisor and student should meet on a regular basis to ensure the student is making satisfactory progress towards the timely completion of the degree.
- To provide advice to the student in their preparation for the Comprehensive Examinations.
- To have a formal annual meeting of the Ph.D. supervisory committee and report annually on the student's progress.

After the student has completed their comprehensive examinations the Graduate Committee will review, and if necessary, reconstitute the supervisory committee to reflect the specific dissertation interests of the student. If more than one individual is from outside the Department or university, the committee will have to be expanded beyond three members.

The function of the supervisory committee with regard to the dissertation will be:

- a) To guide the student in developing a thesis proposal and to make arrangements for a Departmental seminar at which the student provides detailed outline of the proposal. The Supervisory Committee, in conjunction with the Chair of the Graduate Committee and one other member of the core faculty must approve the thesis proposal.
- b) To meet formally every academic year to assess the student's progress. The Supervisory Committee will inform the student of their conclusions. In all cases, meetings must be concluded no later than August 31st. If progress is deemed unsatisfactory, written notice will be issued. If the committee considers the lack of progress particularly serious, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.
- c) To respond to drafts of the thesis or portions of the thesis within a reasonable period of time (See [Regulations for Degree Progression in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#)).
- d) To arrange for the completed thesis to be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies in accordance with the [guidelines provided by the School of Graduate Studies](#).

If a student feels they are receiving unsatisfactory supervision, they should consult with the Department Chair or the Chair of the Graduate Committee. Supervisory Committees will be reviewed periodically by a Departmental committee made up of the department's faculty and the Chair of the Department as an ex officio member.

Language Requirements

Students must demonstrate reading and research competence in an approved language other than English. Competence in a language is deemed to mean the ability to comprehend government documents, newspapers, and scholarly publications with the aid of a dictionary and, when it is appropriate to the student's intended means of research, to be able to speak and comprehend to a level that will allow the student to conduct interviews.

Language competence will be assessed by the Chair of the Graduate Committee, in consultation with the student's supervisor. Examples of demonstrated competence may include any one of the following:

- i) passing a language test, arranged by the Chair of the Graduate Committee (see below)
- ii) obtaining a mark of B+ or higher on any 6-unit language course offered at a post-secondary institute
- iii) Evidence of at least 60 hours of certified language tutoring, plus evidence that the student is capable of translating documents and/or interviews into English
- iv) evidence that the student speaks and is otherwise competent in a native language/mother tongue other than English.

Students must submit a formal request for assessment of language competence to the Chair of the Graduate Committee. If competence is to be assessed on a basis other than i) a language test, ii) a post-secondary language course, the student should submit an appropriate dossier of supporting evidence, along with supporting letter from his/her supervisor.

Students will be formally notified of the results of this assessment by the Chair of the Graduate Committee.

Students are strongly encouraged to complete the language requirement before seeking approval of their thesis proposal (i.e., normally by April of the student's second year in the doctoral program). However, there may be cases where this is not feasible (e.g., where language training in conjunction with fieldwork). In such cases, the student must outline within the thesis proposal a clear plan and timetable of meeting the language requirement, with this plan to be approved by the relevant committee. **In all cases, the language requirement must be met prior to scheduling the thesis defense.**

Language test

A French language test will be administered at a set date each year, normally at the end of April. An example of the test will be to translate pages of a CJPS article from French into English, and to translate a French language newspaper item into English. Students who are interested in writing a similar test in another language should consult with the Chair of the Graduate Committee.

Thesis Proposal

The thesis subject will be written in the student's field of Canadian Politics, Comparative Politics, Comparative Public Policy, International Relations, or Political Theory. The student will develop their thesis proposal in consultation with the thesis supervisor and other members of his/her Supervisory Committee. The thesis proposal will normally be about 50 double-spaced pages and will include a description of the research problem in the context of the scholarly literature, an overview of research methods and sources, and a timetable for completion.

The thesis proposal shall then be submitted to the student's Supervisor Committee for approval. Following this, the student will give a short oral presentation based on their thesis proposal and answer questions.

The thesis proposal will normally be considered for approval by April of the second year of the student's program. If the student wishes to delay submission of the thesis proposal, they must make a request to the Graduate Committee for permission to do so. The request must be accompanied by a supporting letter from the student's supervisor. Should the Graduate Committee approve the request, it must also set a new, reasonable deadline by which a proposal must be submitted. Students who do not pass a part of all of the Comprehensive Examinations and elect to rewrite the Examinations in April will be required to submit their thesis proposal to the Supervisor Committee by the following September.

Students must complete the oral presentation of their thesis proposal prior to embarking on major fieldwork. Students should also note that approval of the School of Graduate Studies is required for any prolonged period of absence from campus (e.g., to conduct fieldwork).

Research Ethics

Should a student's proposed thesis research involve human subjects, the student is responsible for ensuring that their proposed thesis research conforms to the guidelines for such research and for securing approval from the [McMaster Research Ethics Board](#) (MREB) prior to initiation

of research activities. Students will normally submit their application to the MREB within four weeks of the defense of their thesis proposal.

Additional information can be found on the [MREB site](#).

Thesis

The [Ph.D. thesis](#) is to be no more than 60,000 words of text. The thesis must not exceed 300 pages double-spaced inclusive of notes and bibliography). Normally, students will take two years to complete the thesis. They should at all times, maintain regular contact with their supervisor. When required, additional members may be added to the supervisory committee to ensure proper supervision of particular aspects of the thesis.

The thesis defense is to be undertaken according to the regulations set out by the School of Graduate Studies.

Administrative Issues

Terms of Reference for the Graduate Committee

1. Area committees review applications for the Ph.D. program, selects candidates to be admitted, and recommends funding to the Graduate Committee.
2. In consultation, with area committees, the Graduate Committee assigns and approves supervisors and committee members for Ph.D. supervisory committees.
3. Graduate Committee maintains the Departmental regulations for the Ph.D. program.
4. Graduate Committee establishes processes for setting Ph.D. comprehensive examinations.
5. Graduate Committee annually reviews the progress of Ph.D. students.
6. Graduate Committee ranks students for external scholarships such as the Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Scholarships (SSRHC).
7. Graduate Committee seeks to promote the Department's ability to recruit Ph.D. students through preparing publicity and other means.
8. Graduate Committee reviews and develops the Ph.D. program as needed.

The Graduate Committee will interpret these guidelines and regulations should that prove to be necessary.

Graduate Course Offerings

Political Science

The complete list of Political Science graduate courses is available in the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#). Political Science grad courses being offered for the 2023-2024 academic year are listed on the [Department of Political Science website](#) and through the [class search](#) function in Mosaic.

School of Graduate Studies

Required Supplementary Courses for ALL Graduate Students

All graduate students, including part-time students, exchange students and visiting students must complete and pass the course SGS 101 Academic Research Integrity and Ethics and SGS 201 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) within the first month of their first term after their admission to graduate studies at McMaster. All students are required to take and pass SGS 101 and SGS 201 in order to graduate. Students may not graduate or register in subsequent academic years without having successfully completed this course.

SGS 101 (1) Academic Research Integrity and Ethics

This course will introduce incoming graduate students to the standards of academic integrity expected at McMaster. It will provide examples of acceptable and unacceptable practices and will clarify the responsibility and expectations of graduate students with respect to academic integrity. Students will be exposed to the Academic Integrity Policy of McMaster and best practices will be described that will minimize the likelihood of incorrectly attributed work from appearing in their assignments and research records. Students may not graduate or register for subsequent years in a graduate program at McMaster unless they have received a passing grade in SGS #101.

You must enroll in this online course through Mosaic, and it will be available to you via [Avenue to Learn](#) to complete.

SGS 201 (1) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

All graduate students are required to complete appropriate training required to complete their research and studies (health and safety training, ethics training, biosafety training, etc.), as determined by their home Department or Program. All graduate students also are required to complete training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), which can be completed on-line [avenue.mcmaster.ca]. Having an understanding of how we can identify and reduce attitudinal, structural, information, technological, and systemic barriers to persons with disabilities is core to McMaster University's commitment to supporting an inclusive community in which all persons are treated with dignity and equality, and completion of AODA training is critical as McMaster's graduates move forward in their varied, chosen professions. Students may not graduate or register for subsequent years in their program until they have completed their required training.

You must enroll in this online course through Mosaic, and it will be available to you as well in [Avenue to Learn](#).

School of Graduate Studies / McMaster University (mandatory requirements)

Health and Safety Training

McMaster's [Health and Safety Training Program](#) is designed to provide mandatory and site-specific safety training for all employees, grad students, volunteers and visitors working at McMaster.

Self-registration for training courses offered by EOHSS, the [Faculty of Health Sciences Safety Office](#) (FHS Safety Office), the [Biosafety Office](#) and the [AODA Office](#) is available through the self-service functionality in [Mosaic](#).

As a [graduate student at McMaster you are required to complete the following](#) Core 8: 1) Asbestos Awareness, 2) COVID-19 Awareness, 3) Ergonomics, 4) Fire Safety, 5) Health & Safety Orientation, 6) Slips, Trips & Falls, 7) Violence & Harassment Prevention, and 8) WHMIS 2015. The training material is available in [Avenue to Learn](#) 1 business day after registering in Mosaic.

Mandatory TA/RA in Lieu Training (Anti-Oppression and Pedagogy)

In accordance with the CUPE Local 3906, Unit 1 collective agreement, the [Mandatory TA Training](#) was established to provide an institution wide or Faculty specific training program for Unit 1 members. This training is understood to be a program of professional education and will include instruction on topics in pedagogy and anti-oppression.

[Self-registration for training courses](#) is available through the regulatory training tile in Mosaic. Once registered, the training will be available in Avenue to Learn approximately 15 minutes after registration (between 7am and 9pm). For additional information please review the [frequently asked questions document](#).

University Regulations

For complete listing of [Regulations for PhD Degree](#), students are advised to consult the current edition of the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#).

Other Administrative Information

Personal Information

Students are responsible for keeping the personal contact information, such as addresses and phone numbers up to date. Additions and changes must be completed through your Student Center in Mosaic.

Transportation

All full-time graduate students hold a 12-month, unlimited ride bus pass with the Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). The HSR bus pass remains valid from September through August each year. More information about this can be found on the [Graduate Student Association website](#).

CUPE

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), [Local 3906](#), Unit 1, represents all individuals employed as teaching assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants in lieu (RAs in lieu), demonstrators, tutors & super tutors, and markers. If you are a TA or an RA in lieu of a TA, you are a member of CUPE. Union dues are deducted when you receive TA/RA payments. The [Union office](#) is in KTH-B111.

Dental Plan

All full-time graduate students who are receiving a TA and/or RA in lieu of a TA of 130 hours or greater will have Dental Plan premiums deducted each month for the full year, September to August). Provisions for opting out of the [Dental Plan](#) or for obtaining family coverage can be found online through the CUPE Local 3906 website.

Full-time and part-time graduate students in September or January paying McMaster fees are automatically covered by the [GSA Health & Dental Plan](#).

Graduate students that aren't covered by the CUPE 3906 Dental Plan as of September 1 are also automatically covered by the GSA Dental Plan.

See [Graduate Students Association](#) website for more information on support and services offered by the GSA.

Employment Regulations

Full-time graduate students are expected to pursue their graduate degree on a full-time basis and make satisfactory progress toward timely completion of all program requirements. It is not possible, or desirable, for the university to monitor and enforce the employment activities of its graduate students outside the university. However, it is both possible and desirable for the university to ensure that it does not itself create a structural situation that jeopardizes the ability of the graduate student to make full-time progress towards the completion of graduate program requirements. Accordingly, it is recommended that full-time students who are participating in McMaster-based paid employment should work no more than an average of 20 hours a week to a maximum of 1005 hours in the academic year. Full-time graduate students are responsible to ensure that any employment obligations do not interfere with academic progress and should be aware that employment obligations are not an acceptable basis for unsatisfactory progress.

Full-time and Part-time Status

Full-Time Status

A full-time graduate student must: have been admitted to a graduate program as a full-time student; be pursuing their studies as a full-time occupation; identify themselves as a full-time graduate student; be designated by the university as a full-time graduate student; for most programs (and all research-based programs) be geographically available and visit the campus regularly which normally means multiple times per week; written permission from the department/supervisor is required for studies to normally be off campus. Other programs may have different requirements and may be conducted fully on-line. Without forfeiting full-time status, a graduate student, while still under supervision, may be away from the university (e.g. visiting libraries, doing field work, attending a graduate course at another institution, etc.) provided that, if any such period exceeds four weeks in any one term, written evidence shall be available in the Graduate Studies Office to the effect that this request has the approval of the department or program Chair and Graduate Associate Dean; be considered to be a full-time graduate student by their supervisor or equivalent (designated by the program office); understand that students who change status from full to part-time, do not receive any more time to complete their program and will continue to be charged tuition fees at the full-time level; understand that students who change part to full time will have their term count re-set on a ratio of 2:1.

All active graduate students other than full-time graduate students as defined above are part-time graduate students. See also section 3 Regulations for Degree Progression for more information on program progression.

Part-Time Status

Part-time studies may or may not be possible in a graduate program; where possible, it will be listed in the program entry in the SGS Calendar. Normally a student's status in the program (full or part-time) is determined at the time of admission.

Students who are registered as part-time are expected to be pursuing their studies on a part-time basis and making commensurate progress.

Full Time Off-Campus

On admission to a full-time program, the assumption is that a student will be full-time on-campus. This is known as being "in residence". If a student wants to spend a period of time away from the university in order to complete their research, they must apply to be [full-time off campus](#) and complete the form [RMM 801](#). Requests for FTOC must be for the purpose of graduate study and research off-campus. Students who require to be off campus for personal reasons must request a leave of absence.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students are required to be continuously registered in order to ensure the timely completion of degree requirements. The University, however, allows for a Leave of Absence in four circumstances: 1) medical or disability leave; 2) parenting leave; 3) compassionate or personal leave; or, 4) no course available leave. To request a "Leave of Absence," please consult the [School of Graduate Studies calendar](#).

For information pertaining to "Leave of Absence" for Teaching Assistants, see [CUPE Collective Agreement](#), Article 19 (on page 36).

Student Vacations

Full-time graduate students are expected to be on campus for all three terms of the university year, as specified in [Section 1.3](#). In addition to statutory holidays (see [Sessional Dates](#)) and the closure of the University normally late December until early January, normal vacation entitlement for a graduate student is two weeks of vacation during the year, to be scheduled by mutual agreement with the research supervisor. An exception to this allotment requires approval from the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee.

Students who are also employees of the University must seek vacation approval from their employment supervisor and are entitled to vacation time pursuant to the terms of their employment contract.

Teaching Assistantships/RA in lieu of TA

Some full-time graduate students are offered a TA (or RA in lieu) as part of their funding package. Duties vary according to department/course requirements but will normally consist of leading tutorials, meeting with students, email communication, marking, and other duties as discussed with the course instructor. It is important to note that TA positions will be distributed in the first or second week of September.

Transcripts

Unofficial transcripts are available through Mosaic. Access is available to view and print on demand through the My Academics tab. You can also request an official transcript through Mosaic with options to include official paper transcript via mail, rush official paper transcript and

official e-transcript through Parchment ordering services, in-person pick-up (GH-108) or mail. For rush, courier or fax requests processing charges will apply. More information can be found through the [Office of the Registrar](#).

University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) for International Students

The [University Health Insurance Plan](#) (UHIP) is a mandatory plan for ALL international students (and their eligible dependents: spouse and children) at McMaster University who hold a valid study permit issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and who are FULLY enrolled in a degree seeking program. Students who are fully enrolled and who have a status of Visa will automatically be enrolled and charged for UHIP. You must enrol your accompanying dependents within 30 days of their arrival date in Canada. If you enroll your family members more than 30 days after they arrive in Canada, you must pay a late application fee of \$500.00 PLUS the monthly premium retroactive to the first of the month in which your dependents arrived in Canada.

For more information, please visit the Health Care portal through McMaster's [International Student Services website](#). More detailed information and what you need to know is listed on this site.

Contacts and Facilities

Graduate Committee 2023-2024

Chair: Dr. Peter Nyers, nyersp@mcmaster.ca

MA Advisor: Dr. Katherine Boothe

Professional Development & Placement Advisor: Dr. Nathan Andrews

Member: Dr. Netina Tan

Member: Dr. Lana Wylie (Fall 2023)

Member: Dr. Catherine Frost (Winter 2024)

PhD Graduate Student Representative: TBA

MA Graduate Student Representative: TBA

Area Convenors

Canadian Politics: Dr. Adrienne Davidson

Comparative Politics: Dr. Netina Tan

International Relations: Dr. Marshall Beier

Political Theory: Dr. James Ingram (Fall 2023), Dr. Catherine Frost (Winter 2024)

Public Policy: Dr. Michelle Dion

Administrative Assistant

Manuela Dozzi

Email: dozzim@mcmaster.ca

Office: Kenneth Taylor Hall, Room 527 (KTH-527)

Tel: (905) 525-9140 extension 24742

Please feel free to visit the [Political Science website](#) to view faculty profiles and contact information.

Photocopying/Printing

A network photocopier is available for students to use and is in KTH-501. The service is available at a cost of \$0.10/printed per side (not per page) for black and white printing only. Individual photocopier codes will be given to each student in September.

Mail Services

Each graduate student will have their own mailbox located in KTH-526. This room can be accessed at any time, and we ask that you regularly check your mailbox. The access code for this room will be given to all MA students after the Orientation Session.

Department Checkout Requirements

Upon completion of all degree requirements, students will be required to empty their mailboxes, return any keys (if applicable) and to make sure that their contact information in Mosaic is current and up to date. Any mail collected will be forwarded to you for up to three months.

Departmental website

More information about the department, courses, news, research, people, and contacts can be found on the [Department of Political Science](#) website.

Appendices

Appendix 1 PhD in Political Science Timeline

Schedule: September admission (full-Time) / 4-year

Schedule	Fall Term (Sep-Dec)	Winter Term (Jan-Apr)	Spring/Summer Term (May-Aug)
Year 1 terms 1,2,3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 courses • SGS 101 & 201 • EOHSS (7 modules) • Complete mandatory TA/RA in lieu Anti-Oppression & Pedagogy • Complete TA duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 courses • Complete TA duties • Establish supervisory committee • Complete supervisory committee meeting and formal annual report • Complete & submit PhD comprehensive exam ballot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) • Info session – how to prepare for comp exams (May) • Prepare for PhD Major Field 1 Comp Exam • Write PhD Major Field 1 Comp Exam (end of August)
<p>Complete 18 units (6 half courses) of graduate course work beyond the MA level.</p> <p>Required Courses</p> <p>For students in Canadian Politics: two Canadian Politics (760, 761), POLSCI 796 For students in Comparative Politics: POLSCI 740, POLSCI 796 plus one other Comparative Politics course For students in Comparative Public Policy: POLSCI 783, POLSCI 784, POLSCI 796 For students in International Relations: POLSCI 772, POLSCI 774, POLSCI 796 For students in Political Theory: two political theory courses, POLSCI 796</p> <p>Additional Information</p> <p>Other approved courses will be drawn from other departmental courses, and courses offered by other departments and schools. At least three of these selected units should be from Major Field 2.</p> <p><i>Note: course selection must be discussed and approved by the student's supervisor by completing the course enrollment worksheet at the beginning of September.</i></p>			

Schedule	Fall Term (Sep-Dec)	Winter Term (Jan-Apr)	Spring/Summer Term (May-Aug)
Year 2 terms 4,5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) • Complete TA duties • Prepare for PhD Major Field 2 Comp Exam • Write PhD Major Field 2 Comp Exam (end of November) • Complete language requirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) • Complete TA duties • Complete language requirement • Develop thesis proposal in consultation with supervisor and other committee members • Submit thesis proposal for approval and schedule short oral presentation defense • Complete supervisory committee meeting and formal annual report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) • Complete research ethics • Prepare for field work
<p>Additional Information</p> <p>Language requirement: Students must demonstrate reading & research competence in an approved language other than English. Competence in a language is deemed to mean the ability to comprehend government documents,</p>			

newspapers, and scholarly publications with the aid of a dictionary and, when it is appropriate to the student's intended means of research, to be able to speak and comprehend to a level that will allow the student to conduct interviews.

Research Ethics: Should a student's proposed thesis research involve human subjects, the student is responsible for ensuring that their proposed thesis research conforms to the guidelines for such research and for securing approval from the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) prior to initiation of research activities. Students will normally submit their application to the MREB within four weeks of the defense of their thesis proposal.

Schedule	Fall Term (Sep-Dec)	Winter Term (Jan-Apr)	Spring/Summer Term (May-Aug)
Year 3 terms 7,8,9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Complete TA duties if not on research/field work leave Conduct field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Complete TA duties if not on research/field work leave Conduct field work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Complete field work Complete 1st draft of dissertation
Additional Information Dissertation Draft: During this year, the candidate should aim to submit the first draft of at least a portion of the dissertation to the supervisor, who will return the draft, with corrections and comments, normally within four weeks. The corrected draft should then go to the other supervisory committee members, who provide comments and corrections normally within four weeks.			

Schedule	Fall Term (Sep-Dec)	Winter Term (Jan-Apr)	Spring/Summer Term (May-Aug)
Year 4 terms 10,11,12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Complete TA duties if not on research/field work leave Continue to rewrite dissertation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Complete TA duties if not on research/field work leave Complete final draft of dissertation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register for SGS 700 (placeholder course) Schedule defense by no later than August Submit final copy of thesis to MacSphere in order to complete degree requirements and not have to pay fees for 5th year
Additional Information Postdoctoral Fellowships: Students who will be completing their dissertation this year should discuss applying for postdoctoral fellowships with the supervisor and/or the Graduate Chair. SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship applications are normally due mid-September.			

Supervisory Committee Report Meeting

Students are required to meet at least once per academic year to complete a Supervisory Committee report. This report will be initiated by the Graduate Administrative Assistant once a meeting date has been confirmed. The committee will assess the student's progress in their program. Generally, these meetings take place in the Spring. More frequent reports may be required if a marginal or unsatisfactory evaluation is received.

Major External Scholarships

All doctoral students must apply yearly for all major external scholarships for which they are eligible. These include OGS, SSHRC (or CIHR), and Vanier. Additional scholarships can be found on the [SGS Scholarships](#) website.

Appendix 2 Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Procedures

Setting

1. About 6 weeks before exams are written a list of previous/banked questions will be distributed to members of the area group by the Graduate Administrative Assistant.
2. Members of the area group are asked to submit additional questions to the area convenor.
3. Two weeks before exams, the area group meets and reviews all questions. Supervisors should be invited but are not required to attend the meeting.
4. Five questions are chosen from the questions available for the Major Field 2 exam. For the Major Field 1 exam in International Relations, seven questions are chosen (2 in International Relations Theory/State of the Field, 2 in Global Political Economy, and 3 in Globalization, Governance and Security). For Major Field 1 exam in Comparative Public Policy, nine questions are chosen (3 for each subfield). Should the area convenor be unable to get a group consensus on the exam, the method of selection will be simple majority. In the event of a tie, the student's supervisor casts the tie-breaking vote.
5. For Major Field 1 exam, the student picks up or will receive the exam at 9:00 a.m. on day 1 and must return the completed exam by 4:00 p.m., 5 days later, no more than 103 hours after picking up the exam. For the Major Field 2 exam, the student picks up or will receive the exam at 9:00 a.m. on day 1 and must return the completed exam by 4:00 p.m., 4 days later, no more than 79 hours after picking up the exam.
6. The examinations are scheduled in an order to be discussed between the Graduate Chair and the supervisors of the students taking the examinations.

Marking the Comprehensive Examinations

1. There are 2 markers for each exam. The markers will be determined by the area convenor and the student's supervisor. At least one of the markers must be from that particular area. A student's supervisor may or may not be a marker.
2. The Graduate Administrative Assistant distributes the completed exam and grade sheets to the markers. Exams with grades and comments are returned to the Graduate Administrative Assistant normally within 2 weeks. Comments are to be made only on the grade sheet.
3. When all exams are returned, the Graduate Chair will give each examiner a copy of the other examiner's comments on each exam. The Chair then determines the final mark - "Pass with Distinction (P+)", "Pass" (P), or "Fail" (F) and returns exams to the Graduate Administrative Assistant. When an exam scores a mark of A+ or contains one A+, the Chair will encourage the examiners to discuss the exam and come to a decision as to whether or not it merits a distinction. Distinctions are awarded per exam. For example, there could be a distinction in the major exam and the teaching field. The Graduate Chair informs the Graduate School of the results. This milestone will be added to the student's record.

4. In case of “Pass” or “Pass with Distinction” the comments from the grade sheets are given to the supervisor who verbally provides feedback to the student.
5. In case of a “Fail” a letter is given to the student indicating the reasons for the failure and areas needed for improvement. The letter is written by the convenor in consultation with the supervisor. The letter is sent by the Graduate Chair. Included with the letter will be comments from the markers, which will be all typed but anonymous.
6. Both markers must agree for a failing grade to be given to a student. Failure on one question does not automatically represent failure on the exam. If in the judgement of the markers the exam represents a “satisfactory grasp of the subject matter” a passing grade for the overall exam may be given even if one question is not satisfactory. If necessary, a third reader can be consulted.

Appendix 3 Review of Applicants for Scholarships

The review of Ph.D. students applying for SSHRC scholarships will be done by a committee composed of the following people: the Chair of the Graduate Committee, and faculty.

Appendix 4 Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University

Just as the University has responsibilities to graduate students, they have responsibilities to the University.

The student’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
- Using the University provided e-mail address or maintaining a valid forwarding e-mail address.
- Regularly checking the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student’s designated primary e-mail account via their @mcmaster.ca alias.
- Accepting that forwarded e-mails may be lost and that e-mail is considered received if sent to the student’s @mcmaster.ca account.

Where applicable, students are responsible for complying with such conditions as indicated in the offer of admission. Students are also responsible for complying with the regulations governing graduate students at McMaster University with respect to full- and part-time status (see sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3). Students are further responsible for informing the School of Graduate Studies within two weeks, which acts as the official keeper of student records, of any change in personal information such as address, name, telephone number, etc. Students are also responsible for reporting through the department any change in student status, course registration, or withdrawal.

Courses

To receive credit for a course, each student is responsible for confirming in the Mosaic Student Center that their enrollment status is appropriate for that course. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have formally enrolled for the course through their department or graduate program.

Research-Based Programs

With regard to research and study, students are responsible for maintaining contact and meeting regularly with the faculty advisor, thesis/project supervisor or supervisory committee, for observing departmental guidelines, and for meeting the deadlines of the department and the School of Graduate Studies. If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Department Chair or Graduate Advisor. It is also the expectation that students will seek clarification when necessary on questions regarding elements of academic and research progress. The provisions for changing a supervisor are outlined in [Section 3.1](#).

Students who undertake to write a master's or doctoral thesis assume responsibility both for creating drafts of the thesis, upholding copyright and intellectual property rights including any research agreements between the university and outside partners, and for responding to direction from the Supervisory Committee. The student shall have the responsibility to write and ultimately to defend the thesis, and the Supervisory Committee has the responsibility to offer guidance in the course of the endeavour, and to recommend or not recommend the completed thesis for defence.

Since enrollment permits access to libraries and certain other academic facilities (including off-campus facilities), it also implies a commitment on the part of each graduate student to use such facilities in accordance with applicable rules, including all safety practices, guidelines and policies. Inappropriate behaviour that is deemed to be in violation of such practices and/or policies may lead to denial of access to the facility. If such a denial of access to facilities means that a student can no longer fulfill their academic obligations, the student will be required to withdraw involuntarily from their academic program. (see also [Section 5.2](#))

Full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year. Vacation entitlement is discussed in [Section 2.5.8](#). Any student who is away from campus for longer than one week, which is not part of the student's vacation entitlement, requires their supervisor's approval in writing. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the department chair is also required. In accordance with government regulations (see [Section 2.5.2](#) students who will be away from campus for more than four weeks require not only permission from the Department but also that of the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and must submit a Request to be Full Time Off Campus. Note that this permission is needed for conferences, field work or studies elsewhere in the world, in order to allow the University to comply with the regulation requiring that a written explanation for such absences be lodged in the Graduate School office. Students may arrange, through the Department and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, to be "full-time off-campus" for periods of up to a year. Students will also be required to complete the Risk Management Manual (RMM) 801 forms and gain approval through EOHSS. In cases of unauthorized absence the student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from graduate study and will have to petition for readmission. No guarantee of readmission or of renewal of financial arrangements can be made and a decision on readmission is not subject to appeal. An exception to this policy would be programs described in the calendar as delivering their curriculum either partially or fully in on-line formats. Please refer to details in individual program descriptions.

In order to receive a degree, the student must fulfill all departmental or program requirements and all University regulations, including those of the School of Graduate Studies. Students who have outstanding financial accounts at the end of the academic year will not receive their academic results, diplomas, or transcripts.