

PhD in History

Degree Requirements

To obtain a PhD in history at the University of Missouri, a student must fulfill the following requirements:

1. residency
2. course work
3. foreign language and/or historical/research technique
4. comprehensive examination
5. dissertation and oral defense

Residency

A minimum of two semesters of full-time enrollment (9 hours each semester) or three semesters of part-time enrollment (6 hours each semester). Enrollment in all graduate courses requires the consent of the student's advisor and the instructor(s) of the class.

Course Work

The minimum requirement for the PhD degree at the University of Missouri is 72 hours of graduate credit beyond the baccalaureate degree. A student's advisor and committee may require more. Customarily, students in history have more than 72 hours when they defend their dissertations. If a student has earned an MA degree at another institution, with the approval of the student's advisor and committee, the student may receive up to 30 hours of credit toward the 72 necessary credits for the PhD. If a student took additional courses beyond their MA degree at another institution, with the approval of the student's advisor and committee, they may receive up to a maximum of six hours of credit toward the PhD. All credit transfers are determined by the Graduate School. See Graduate School regulations for current credit information. Two-thirds of the courses taken by a PhD candidate within the department prior to the comprehensive examination must be at the 8000 or 9000 level. These include HIST 8085 (Problems), HIST 8410 (Independent Readings PhD Exam), but not HIST 9090 (Dissertation Research).

All doctoral students must take HIST 8080 Maximizing Graduate Studies in History. Every doctoral student who earned a master's degree at another institution must take HIST 8480 Historiography, unless excused by the director of graduate studies. HIST 8480 is offered regularly. Students must enroll in a writing semester within the first four semesters after they enter the program.

Foreign Language: PhD students are *not* required to demonstrate competence in a foreign language for the degree. However, in fields where such languages will be necessary for success, advisors shall make clear to applicants what they expect in terms of language competence. Expectations must be clearly stated *before or when* offers of admission are sent. The student's acknowledgment of these terms will be confirmed in a written response (including email) either separate from, or within, their acceptance of the offer of admission.

For those students in fields where one or more foreign languages are required, up to 6 credits of course work can be fulfilled through 4000-8000 level language courses. Competence in foreign languages may be demonstrated in numerous ways, including exams administered by relevant faculty, the completion of language coursework as

determined by the advisor, or the student's completion of original research otherwise impossible without the required language(s).

Developing a PhD Plan of Study

The committee will meet formally with the student to help them to develop a major field and three additional fields of study. How the student will meet the foreign language and/or historical research technique requirement (see below) will be defined and approved by the advisor and the committee. Members of the advisory committee will meet regularly with the student to ensure they are making satisfactory progress.

Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation

Preparation for the Comprehensive Examination

In the Department of History, each doctoral student must prepare four fields for the comprehensive examinations. The selection of those fields and the faculty who will be the examiners in each should be begun by the doctoral candidate and their advisor during their first semester at MU. The advisor will help the student prepare for examination in their major field. This will cover significant historical themes and historiographical trends in the specific period and area of the student's prospective dissertation topic. The committee must consist of the student's advisor and three additional faculty. At least two of the additional faculty must be members of the History Department.

Students pursuing a doctorate in U.S. History must prepare for examinations in a chronological and/or geographical area of historical study that includes the student's dissertation field, a second U.S. history field that is chronologically tied to the student's dissertation field, a chronological, geographical, and/or thematic area of historical study that is not directly related to the student's dissertation topic, and one additional field that is thematically, chronologically, or geographically appropriate. One of the faculty on the committee may come from an outside department. The committee and fields may be reconfigured with approval of the advisor and the director of graduate studies.

Students pursuing a doctorate in any other field other than U.S. history must prepare for examinations in a chronological and/or geographical area of historical study that includes the student's dissertation field; two fields that are chronologically tied to the student's dissertation field; and a chronological, geographical, and/or thematic area of historical study that is not directly related to the student's dissertation topic. Students must write formal exams on at least three of the four fields.

Areas of Study and Dissertation Topics

What the student learns in this discipline should assist their understanding of and research on their dissertation topic. The student's choice of a discipline to work in for their outside field is potentially as wide as the number of programs and departments in the university. That choice is not confined merely to departments in the College of Arts and Science.

The three history faculty who, together with the advisor, will help the student prepare for the comprehensive examinations, must each test their student on material in a different area. Thus the student will be working on three different areas, plus the dissertation field.

Documenting Exam Preparation

The advisor and the other committee members must explain how they want the student to prepare, what they want the student to master, and which criteria they will use to assess the examinations in their particular field. These explanations must be in writing, and copies of each placed in the student's permanent file.

Comprehensive Examination Requirement

Comprehensive exams may be scheduled at the end of an appropriate readings course as soon as the student and advisor agree that the student is prepared. The oral defense should be completed within thirty days of completing all written exams. Comprehensive exams are administered by a committee consisting of the student's advisor and three other faculty members; one may be from a discipline other than history. These should be the faculty members who helped the student prepare for the examinations. Sometimes it may be necessary to find substitutes. The director of graduate studies and the Graduate School must approve any substitutions, and new committee members must describe their expectations in writing for the student and submit it to the student's permanent file.

Comprehensive Exams Processes

The comprehensive exams are given in two stages. The first is a series of at least three written exams. The second is an oral examination, which is conducted if the student passes the written portion. A report of the decision, signed by all members of the committee, must be sent to the Graduate School and the student no later than two weeks after the comprehensive exam is completed. One of the written exams must be in the major field; the committee will determine the subjects of the other exams, and their number.

Special Note: All members can require the student to write on their areas of expertise. Therefore, the written examinations could cover all four areas.

All members of the committee will read the written exams and discuss them within two weeks after their completion. If they determine the student has not successfully completed the exam, they will inform them immediately and discuss the results. Failure ends the comprehensive exam at this point. The committee must provide the student with an outline in writing of the weaknesses and deficiencies of their work.

A copy of this must be placed in the student's permanent file. If at any time the student believes that parts of the exam are unclear, or the decision of the committee is incorrect, or the advice given by the committee is inadequate, they may send a written request for clarification and rectification to the committee. A copy of this request should be sent to the Graduate School as well. The committee must respond to this request in writing within two weeks and a copy must be filed with the department and the Graduate School.

At least 12 weeks must pass before a student who failed can take the comprehensive exams again.

If the committee determines that the student did satisfactory work on the written examinations, they will schedule an oral examination. This second stage of the comprehensive exams will cover all four fields. Each member of the committee will test the student. At the end of the oral examinations, the committee discusses the student's performance on each field and on the entire examination. This discussion includes both the written and the oral parts of the whole process. Then they vote pass, fail, or abstain on the student's total performance on the exam.

Criteria for Successful Completion of the Comprehensive Exam

To complete the comprehensive exams successfully, the student must receive a vote of pass from at least three of the four examiners. Should two or more votes be negative or abstentions, the committee follows the same procedure outlined above for failure to pass the written part. These students must repeat the entire examination, not just the fields failed, and not just the oral portion. If the candidate fails the second examination, the examining committee must enter on its report to the dean of the Graduate School a recommendation to prevent the student's further candidacy.

Dissertation and Oral Defense

Soon after successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student and advisor will form a dissertation committee of four faculty members. One member of the committee must be from outside the department. The student will develop with their advisor and committee a dissertation topic and a plan of research. They should keep in regular contact with the advisor. Together they will decide when written work will be read by other members of the committee.

Travel Funding

When students begin work on their doctoral dissertations, they may apply for departmental fellowships and travel grants to assist their research and writing.

Satisfactory Progress

The department requires PhD candidates to make satisfactory progress towards completion of their degree.

Annual Review

Each spring, students must complete a graduate student activity report in myVITA. The student's faculty advisor will report and determine if the student is making satisfactory progress toward a degree. The student and advisor should meet to discuss the student's progress, confirm expectations for the coming year, and address any concerns either one may have regarding the report.

If the student is making satisfactory progress, the advisor and the student decide together on what reasonable goals are for the next twelve months. These goals will define "satisfactory progress" at the next assessment meeting. Failure to do so may result in loss of financial aid or dismissal from the program.

Appeals

The student may appeal any assessment to the director of graduate studies. If not satisfied, they may seek the remedies described in the Graduate School catalog.

Funding Impact of Incomplete Reports

Completion of the activity report in myVITA is mandatory to maintain eligibility for financial aid from the department. Receipt of financial aid requires confirmation by a student's advisor that they are making satisfactory progress. No student in the program who applies for or who is seeking renewal of financial aid will be eligible for aid without a complete and up-to-date myVITA on file.

Rate of Completion

A PhD student must successfully complete the comprehensive examination within a period of five years beginning with the first semester

of enrollment as a PhD student. For an extension of this the student must petition the Graduate School by submitting a request to the advisor who, in turn, submits a written recommendation to the Graduate School. The director of graduate studies will also make a written recommendation. In addition, the dissertation must be successfully defended within five years of passing the comprehensive examination. On petition of the candidate and the candidate's department, an extension of time may be granted by the Graduate School.

Admission Criteria

- MA in history or related subject
- Quality of master's thesis or research seminar paper submission
- Official GRE score report, recommended but not required
- English language proficiency demonstration for international students (see MU Graduate School requirements)

Students who do not meet one or more of these criteria may enroll as non-degree graduate students. Contact the director of graduate studies for further details. All admissions of doctoral candidates who did not receive the MA degree from the department are provisional. These students must pass a qualifying examination. See below for information about the qualifying examination.

Application Deadline

The annual application deadline falls in January. See Graduate School application for specific date.

Required Application Materials

To the Graduate School:

- All required Graduate School documents, including Graduate School online application
- One uploaded copy of each college transcript where a degree was earned or is pending (official transcripts required upon admission)
- Short essay explaining goals and expectations in graduate study, including the fields in which the student plans to specialize and the specific faculty with whom the applicant hopes to work
- Substantial writing sample, such as a final research paper from a course (upload to the online application)
- 3 letters of recommendation (submission through the online application system strongly preferred, but postal mail submission directly to the department allowed)
- Official GRE score report, recommended but not required
- English language proficiency demonstration for international applicants

Note: Incomplete applications will not be considered. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all required documents have been received by the January deadline.

The committee may reject otherwise qualified students if:

1. this department cannot provide the applicant with an adequate program in their area of interest
2. no faculty member is available and willing to supervise their work

Admission Contact Information

Anne Tallmage (tallmageam@missouri.edu)
615 Locust Street Building, W110F
Columbia, MO 65211

(573) 882-0250

Qualifying Examination

To be admitted to candidacy for a PhD in history, a student must have earned an MA in history or a related discipline (broadly defined) and have passed a qualifying examination.

Students with an MA from the University of Missouri

Students earning their MA in history at this university may, with the approval of their advisory committee, combine their qualifying examination with their MA defense.

Students Who Earned Degrees at Other Institutions

All admissions of doctoral candidates who did not receive the MA degree from the department are provisional. These students must pass a qualifying examination no later than their third semester in the graduate program at MU. The exam will focus on a research paper the student wrote at MU.

About the Exam

The qualifying examination committee will be composed of the student's advisor and at least two other history faculty members. During the consideration of prospective students, the committee on graduate admissions will consult closely with faculty best suited to advise them.

The basis for the examination will be a substantial research-based seminar paper. The exam will be oral, approximately one hour in length; the examiners will include the student's advisor and at least two other members of the department. It is designed to ascertain the candidate's aptitude and preparation for PhD-level work in history.

Advisor and Advisory Committee

A student will meet with their advisor no later than the semester following passage of the qualifying examination for students who earn their MA in history at the University of Missouri and prior to the qualifying examination for other students. The advisor and student together will plan the student's class work up to the comprehensive exams. They will also choose other members of the student's doctoral committee. That committee will ordinarily consist of the advisor, three members of the history department who are on the graduate faculty, and one graduate faculty member from outside the department. The advisory committee must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School.

Financial Aid from the Program

The department provides qualified students the opportunity to gain college-level teaching experience as teaching assistants for undergraduate courses under the direction of a senior instructor. Applicants may also be nominated for competitive Graduate School fellowships awarded to entering students, which may provide additional stipend funding. Typical half-time Graduate Teaching Assistantships come with tuition coverage for five years, pending renewal, and health care coverage.

Each appointment is subject to annual review.