

Department of Political Science
Graduate Handbook

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Introduction

The University of South Carolina, founded in 1801, is one of the oldest universities in the United States and is located near the state capitol in the heart of Columbia. The central mission of the University is to advance knowledge and higher learning throughout the University community and its commitment to becoming one of this country's foremost centers of teaching, research, and public service. To this end, the graduate program in Political Science has produced many distinguished academics and more than a few public leaders, both nationally and abroad.

This handbook provides an overview of the policies and procedures of the graduate program and contains the criteria that the department uses to determine student advancement in the program at the University of South Carolina. It serves as a guide for prospective graduate students and is the primary reference for current graduate students in the program. If any questions remain unanswered after reading this handbook, please direct them to the current graduate director:

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Students in the program are also able to answer inquiries and are ready to provide assistance. Further information is available on the [department web page](#) or the [Graduate School's webpage](#).

Program Descriptions

The Department of Political Science (POLI) offers three graduate degree programs, all of which have consistently received strong evaluations from a wide spectrum of national rankings: a PhD in Political Science, an MA in International Studies, and an MPA in Public Administration. We also offer three dual degrees. Students can also pursue a dual degree in Law and Public Administration ([JD/MPA](#)), Social Work and Public Administration ([MSW/MPA](#)), or Public Health and Public Administration ([MPH/MPA](#)).

Students with an MA or a BA degree who are interested in pursuing a more academically oriented program and who hope to eventually obtain the PhD degree should apply directly to the PhD program in Political Science. Students who have earned at least a BA degree who are interested in a more professionally oriented program with an international focus should apply to the MAIS program. Students with at least a BA degree who are interested in a more professionally oriented program leading to employment in government should apply for the MPA program. Students interested in a terminal MA degree in Political Science are generally not considered for admission.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science

The primary goal of the [PhD program in Political Science](#) is to produce professional scholars who are capable of making important contributions to the understanding of politics and political interactions through research and teaching. The program is designed to place students in academic jobs that best suit their career interests (either research institutions or liberal arts/teaching-oriented institutions), although the training is valuable for government or private employment that emphasizes research skills. The program focuses on introducing students to the fundamental theories, techniques, and tools of social scientific inquiry. The doctoral degree requires that students gain a thorough knowledge in a selected area of specialization, a general knowledge of research methodology, and the ability and dedication to carry out novel research in uncharted areas.¹

In addition to reading both classic and cutting-edge research, students will learn sophisticated methods for research design and analysis, providing them with the tools they need to conduct an independent research agenda. Although the methodological skills of our faculty are wide ranging and cover both qualitative and quantitative approaches, graduate training in the department is heavily oriented towards quantitative research. All graduate students are expected to learn statistics and programming using statistical software such as [R](#) and [Stata](#). Familiarity with basic statistics and computer programming—coding—is highly recommended; students who anticipate joining the program should consider taking courses on these topics beforehand and/or prepare by reading introductory materials *prior* to starting.

Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS)

The [Master of Arts in International Studies \(MAIS\) program](#) is a professionally oriented program geared toward service in governmental, non-profit, and private sectors, both domestic and international. The MAIS curriculum combines coursework in relevant Political Science sub-fields (primarily IR/CP) with skills courses in data analysis, and with the option to take further classes in data analysis and research design, or to select from a variety of public administration courses that provide practical, marketable skills to help students qualify for jobs in the government and non-profit sectors. Students can also take several classes outside POLI (technically up to 18 credits, though these

¹The five primary fields of study include American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, Public Administration/Public Policy, and Public Law, while secondary fields include Political Theory, and Research Methodology.

need approval by the Director of the MAIS program). There is no language requirement, though students can take up to 6 credit hours of language courses as electives.

There are two degree paths available for MAIS students: course-based and thesis-based. Normally, the master's candidate will follow the non-thesis track, which involves completing 30 hours of substantive course work. Alternatively, master's candidates may also pursue a thesis track, which involves completing 24 hours of substantive course work plus six hours of thesis credit for a total of 30 hours. The program may require more hours in the event of deficiencies. An oral comprehensive exam is required of master's candidates not completing a thesis. Competency in research methodology (signified by grades of at least a B in POLI 502, 701, and 706) is required for the MA degree.

Master of Public Administration (MPA)

USC offers a NASPA-accredited [Master's of Public Administration Program](#). The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program provides a graduate and professional education that incorporates managerial and analytical skills. It advances the understanding of issues facing the public sector. Please see the [MPA Handbook](#) for more details on the MPA program.

Entering the Program

Applications and Admissions

Admission to each program is based on an evaluation of the applicant's potential, whether it is for professional work (MAIS and MPA) or for conducting rigorous social science research (PhD). Admission is based on a holistic evaluation of the candidate's complete academic background including grades, test scores, past research accomplishments, and the evaluations contained in letters of reference. The decision also depends in part on the qualifications of the total pool of applicants.

Application criteria

To be considered for admission, a completed application package must be received by the appropriate deadline. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Note that the university charges an application fee for students using the general application that is non-optional and non-refundable. A formal application, which should be submitted via the [Graduate School's website](#), consists of:

- An official application form
- Curriculum Vitae/Resume

The resume should include education, academic publications, work experience, extracurricular activities in college, foreign travel, language ability, government and community service, and other relevant experiences and activities.

- Official GRE Scores (verbal, quantitative, and analytical)

Note: The GRE requirement is not typically waived. Students wishing to apply to the program should plan in advance to take the exam. For more information, see https://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/locations_dates/.

- Official Transcripts

From all colleges and universities attended for credit (undergraduate and graduate). Unofficial transcripts are required to be uploaded to your application.

- Personal Statement

Normally two to three pages, typed, double-spaced. This is your opportunity to explain who you are, your educational and career goals, your qualifications and academic record, background, experiences, and interests.

- Three letters of recommendation

These should be from individuals familiar with your academic record and potential.

- Writing Sample

The writing sample should demonstrate your ability to conduct academic research and/or show evidence of critical thinking. It can be a paper from a previous college course or a published manuscript.

- TOEFL or IELTS score for international students when English is not your native language.

Note: international students who have been educated in and received a degree from an English-language instruction institution in a country in which English is the main language may be exempted from the requirement.

(See all [international student requirements](#).)

Application deadlines

Applications to the PhD and MAIS programs are accepted only for fall admission, while applications to the MPA program are accepted for fall or spring admission. Students applying for the MA (MAIS or MPA) or PhD degrees should be aware of the following deadlines for applications for the coming academic year:

- December 15th, for students applying for fall admission, departmental assistantship and fellowships (funding applies to the PhD program only).
- April 1st, for students applying for fall admission only.

We encourage students to apply well before these final deadlines. Students who wish to be considered for the highly competitive university-wide fellowships are advised to apply by December 1st if possible. Applications to the PhD program received after December 15th will be considered for financial aid if there is still aid available, but those applying after December 15th run the risk that all the money may be allocated before their application is considered.

Once all the materials listed above are received, members of the Graduate Committee closely examine each application before arriving at a decision. Applicants for admission to Graduate School at UofSC can check the status of their application at the [Graduate School website](#).

Costs and Financial Support

The following costs are for the 2022-2023 school year for students taking our normal full-time load of 9 hours per semester:

- In-state graduate tuition (full-time):
\$6,867 per semester, (part-time): \$572.25 per credit hour
- Out-of-state graduate tuition (full-time):
\$14,880 per semester, (part-time): \$1,240 per credit hour

Tuition increases are sometimes announced in the summer for the next fall term.

For up-to-date information on the cost of tuition and required fees, visit the [Bursar's Office website](#).

Graduate Assistantships and Fellowships

The major source of university-related financial support in the department's graduate program is Graduate Assistantships. Graduate assistantships allow the student to pursue course work while gaining valuable professional experience. Typically, these are teaching assistantships. Assistantships entail a stipend, a reduction in tuition costs, and part-time work for a professor or the department. Out-of-state students awarded a graduate assistantship are entitled to receive the in-state-tuition rate. The graduate studies program normally offers two levels of assistantship funding: full-time (requiring 20 work hours/week) and half-time (requiring 10 work hours/week).

With roughly one-half of the graduate students on funding, graduate assistantships and fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis. Students in the PhD program only are automatically

considered for department funding on an annual basis by members of the Graduate Committee and continue to receive awards conditional on the student's performance and the continued availability of funds. Students who are awarded funding as a condition of their admission will normally continue to receive funding for these five years as long as they maintain at least a 3.5 GPA and make normal progress towards completion of their degree. Students in the PhD program normally receive a *maximum* of five years of funding. See section [Outside Employment](#) for conditions on allowable outside work commitments for students receiving funding.

Students should expect award letters in late April or early May. At this time, students who are on teaching assistantships will receive their teaching assignment from the Graduate Director. Graduate assistants are also eligible to receive desk space in an office in the department, which the Graduate Director assigns. Typically, students who are not on a teaching or research assistantship or receiving a fellowship do not receive dedicated desk or office space. Graduate Assistants are expected to report to the graduate director for work beginning one full week before the first day of classes until the last day of finals each semester to receive funding.

Other Sources of Support

Additional forms of financial support are also available:

- Graduate teaching in the department

PhD students have the possibility of teaching their own course at the University of South Carolina, which not only helps to defray the cost of education but provides valuable professional teaching experience. To qualify as a prospective Instructor, the doctoral student typically should have completed and excelled in coursework (and successfully passed the comprehensive examinations), and completed the [Teaching Assistant Development Course \(GRAD 701\)](#). See the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) website for details. The Center for Teaching Excellence at the University of South Carolina also provides a series of teaching workshops for graduate students and a Preparing Future Faculty program for graduate students.

- University assistantships and fellowships

A number of [merit-based financial awards and fellowships](#) are available through the Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences.

- Professional fellowships

There are many different fellowships available to graduate students from professional organizations; some enhance the funds available to students over the course of their education, while others support research opportunities and doctoral work. Examples include:

- The [NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)
- Research grants from the [Centennial Center](#) and [other grants and awards](#) associated with the American Political Science Association, such as the [APSA Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant](#) and [APSA Diversity Fellowship Program](#)
- Fellowships from the [Social Science Research Council](#)

Students are particularly encouraged to apply for these awards, which enhance your visibility and increase competitiveness.

- Educational loans, work-study, and outside employment

The University of South Carolina provides financial support for graduate studies for American citizens and permanent residents through its [Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships](#). This includes educational loans and part-time work-study opportunities. It is also possible for graduate students to find employment on campus. Work-study and University employment not only are a particularly good way to get financial support and gain good practical experience (depending on the University office in which one works); it may also allow the student to pay tuition at an in-state residency or assistantship rate. Local off-campus employment is also possible throughout metropolitan Columbia.

- Departmental grants and awards for education, travel, and research.

On different occasions, the department offers funds to graduate students that they can use to cover the costs of tuition, research, and work-related travel. One example is the annual Outstanding Doctoral Student Award (page 24). Students who are planning to present original research at a professional conference can submit a request to the graduate director for funds to offset the costs of travel and related conference fees. Funding is not guaranteed each year but is dependent on availability, the number of requests, and student performance. Students who have not presented their research in the department before attending the conference are not eligible to receive funds for conference travel.

Funds awarded to students that are not tied to the assistantship are usually held in reserve and used to reimburse students for costs *after* the expense has occurred. Students should check with the department business manager or graduate director to make sure that an expense qualifies for reimbursement. To receive reimbursement for travel, a travel request form (page 39) must be submitted to the business manager at least 10 days prior to travel with detailed cost estimates. No travel is permitted without an approved travel request form. After the travel has been completed, students must submit a travel reimbursement form (page 39) to the business manager with itemized receipts attached for all expenses being reimbursed.

Getting Settled

Upon admission to a graduate program at USC, students must complete a number of steps to enroll in courses, which the [Graduate School website](#) covers. These steps include:

- [Setting up university credentials and personal account](#)
- [Registering for classes](#)
- [Getting health insurance](#)
- [Submitting your official transcripts](#) (if applicable)
- [Requirements for teaching assistants](#) (if applicable)
- [Showing proof of citizenship and residency](#)

The new student page also has information on support for [international students](#) and [student disability services](#). Students are expected to consult this information to get set up in advance of the start of the first semester.

International students

International students face additional prerequisites when getting started. For example, all new international students must obtain a student visa; and all international students who will serve as teaching assistants must take and pass a mandatory English For Foreign Students (ENFS) proficiency exam. To help with these added requirements, International Student Services assists international students getting settled at USC, providing services such as assistance with visas and employment opportunities, information on life in Columbia, and answers to many common questions. All international students should consult the International Student Services website to ensure that they have met requirements for international students: <http://www.iss.sc.edu/>

The University of South Carolina has established a [special orientation program](#) for international students that begins the same as the reporting date indicated on the I-20 form. The orientation program includes time for the mandatory [English For Foreign Students \(ENFS\) proficiency exam](#), academic advisement from your faculty adviser, and registration for classes. The ENFS also offers [courses for international students](#) so that they can improve their written and oral English communication skills.

New international students each fall are met with the hospitality and assistance of a community organization dedicated to serving them: the [Columbia Council For Internationals \(CCFI\)](#). CCFI works closely with the University to provide assistance and friendship to international students, and their services do much to ease the personal and cultural adjustments that they must make. Examples of some of the many CCFI programs are the Arrival Hospitality Program, Community Host Program, Furnishings Program, International Hour, and Speakers' Bureau.

General Advising Information

The following sections cover general topics associated with graduate academic regulations. For additional information, see the [Graduate Academic Regulations](#) page on the Graduate School website.

Course Advising

The graduate programs at the University of South Carolina are supervised by a distinguished and experienced faculty who provide students a diversity of major disciplinary interests and methodological orientations. A list of the faculty, along with information about their current status and position, doctoral degree, and teaching and research interests is on the [Department of Political Science website](#). Students will consult with advisors regularly for advice on coursework, research, teaching, and professionalization.

For the first year of graduate school, the graduate director serves as the student's advisor. All graduate students are required to choose an advisor by March 1 of their second semester in the program. Students are able to change advisors at any point in the program. To select/change advisors, students must complete and submit a signed Advisor Contract (page 39) to the graduate director.

Each semester, the graduate director will require official course advising for the following semester. Each student should fill out the course advising form (page 39) with the courses they intend to take, have their advisor sign, and then submit it to the graduate director.

Full-Time Status

For graduate students who do not have a graduate assistantship, 9 hours is considered full time. For graduate assistants, 6 hours is considered full time. International students are required to enroll in classes full time during the fall and spring semesters to maintain your visa status. International students are also required to enroll full-time in summer if it is the first or last semester and the student does not otherwise qualify for a reduced course load.

Minimum Grades Standards

Students must maintain a grade of C or higher in a class for it to count toward fulfilling degree requirements. For a core course, a grade of B or higher counts towards fulfilling degree requirements. To maintain degree-seeking status and to graduate, the Graduate School requires that students have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Additionally, the average of all grades recorded on the Program of Study (at or above the 700-level) must be at least 3.0. Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average drops below 3.00 will be placed on academic probation by the Graduate School and given one calendar year to improve their grade average. After this probationary period, students who have not raised their cumulative grade point average to 3.0 or higher will be prohibited from enrolling in additional graduate courses, either as a degree or non-degree student. Students who earn three grades below B or one grade of F will be subject to removal from the program, barring extraordinary circumstances and subject to the discretion of the Graduate Director. For additional information on Graduate School rules regarding academic progression and graduation, see the [Graduate Academic Regulations](#).

Outside Employment

Full-time graduate assistants are not permitted to engage in outside employment that might interfere with their primary obligation and commitment to the university. The program expects that students are fulfilling the time commitment associated with their assistantship (full time or half time) and dedicating sufficient time necessary to attend classes and complete required coursework. Students receiving an assistantship will be required to disclose potential conflicts of commitment by reporting the amount of hours regularly spent in outside employment. The department may give preference to students who do not have outside employment when allocating assistantships on a competitive basis.

Students who are unsure about whether their outside employment will conflict with their assistantship obligations should obtain the permission of the Graduate Director. Approval will not be given when, from the nature of the work proposed, it appears that a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment will occur. If outside employment appears to generate a conflict of interest or an unreasonable interference in fulfilling assistantship duties, the department reserves the right to require the student to discontinue the employment, or to reduce it to an acceptable level to continue receiving the assistantship. Students who continue with such activities after being required to discontinue or reduce outside employment to an acceptable level may have their assistantship revoked.

Annual Reviews

Each year, the Graduate Committee will solicit feedback from faculty on PhD student performance in coursework, teaching, and professional activities. PhD students are also required to submit materials on their progress, specifically (1) a CV, and (2) a report of activities undertaken during the academic year, covering research, teaching, coursework, and professionalization (page 39). The Graduate Committee will provide students with a summary of their evaluation and whether the student is eligible to continue in the program, as well as concrete recommendations for future progress, typically by the end of April or early May. Continued graduate assistantship funding is tied to performance on annual reviews; poor performance may result in a period of probation, while continued poor performance could lead to removal of funding. Upon receiving the Graduate Committee evaluation, students will be required to respond with their intention to continue in the program (deadline indicated in the evaluation), with non-response treated as voluntary separation from the program. Masters students are not required to submit materials for review nor to indicate their continuation in the program but must consult with the graduate director to fulfill course advising requirements.

For guidance on normal progress to degree, see the [PhD Roadmap and Progress Guidelines](#) section in the Appendix. See also the outline of doctoral program progress posted by the Graduate School ([online here](#) and page 34 in the Appendix).

Transfer of Credit

With the approval of the graduate director and Graduate Dean, students who have taken graduate courses in another program or university may transfer credit into POLI graduate programs *as long as the course did not contribute towards a previous degree*. For MA students, a maximum of twelve semester hour credits may be considered (nine, if applied to a previous degree). For PhD students, a maximum of eighteen hours of relevant coursework can transfer from another graduate program. This requires the submission of adequate documentation (including official transcripts, course catalogue descriptions, and course syllabi) to determine the relevance of the courses to the

student's graduate program of study. According to the Graduate School, transfer work applicable to a graduate degree must have received a grade of B or higher and been completed within six years prior to the date of the UofSC degree completion (eight years if part of a former doctoral degree program). To receive a transfer of credits, students must complete and submit a [Request for Transfer of Graduate Credit](#) form (see also page 38).

Revalidation of Out-of-Date Courses

Students may revalidate out-of-date USC graduate courses that are over six years old for the master's program and over ten years old for the doctoral program. It is the discretion of the department and the graduate director which of its graduate courses are appropriate for revalidation. To revalidate a course, [Permit for Revalidation Examination](#) (see also page 38) must be completed and a revalidation fee must be paid. UofSC provides no revalidation mechanism for courses completed at another institution.

Independent Study

An independent study can be approved by the graduate director for research seminar status. The purpose of an independent study is to allow the student to pursue an area of academic interest not adequately covered by the regular course structure. It cannot be used to fulfill a core requirement. To take an independent study, the student must complete a graduate [Independent Study Contract](#) form (see also page 38) in consultation with the instructor, advisor, and graduate director. To complete the contract, the student should identify an instructor and collectively agree on the content of the course, anticipated output, and the standards by which the instructor will assign a grade. Once signed by the student, instructor, and advisor, the independent study contract should be submitted to the graduate director for approval. An approved copy of the Independent Study Contract must be sent to the Office of the University Registrar before registering for the course. Note: No more than 6 hours of independent study may be used on a Master's program of study and no more than 9 hours of independent study may be used on a doctoral program of study.

Special Enrollment (Z-Status)

Students nearing the completion of their doctoral degree or Master's degree requiring a dissertation or thesis are eligible for special enrollment status that permits them to be enrolled for less than the normal requirement of 9 hours for graduate students or 6 hours for students serving as graduate assistants (This is known as Z-Status). Z-status allows the student to be certified as half-time or full-time if the student has completed all course work required for the degree *except* for thesis (799) or dissertation preparation (899) credits.

According to the Graduate School, a Z-status request for under-enrollment privilege must be term-specific and is normally limited to two terms, although it may be extended beyond two terms with the approval of and justification from the academic unit and with the approval of the dean of The Graduate School. To receive Z-status, students must complete and submit a [Request for Special Enrollment Form](#) (see also page 38). For more information, see the [Graduate Academic Regulations](#).

Courses Outside of the Department

Graduate students may take related course offerings in other departments across the campus, and in College of Arts and Sciences' Centers and Programs such as the Women's and Gender Studies

Program. Students must verify with the graduate director which courses are eligible and how they would count towards degree progress.

External Training

Students are able to apply for and take courses in programs outside of the department, such as summer classes offered by the [Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research \(ICPSR\)](#) and the [Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models \(EITM\)](#) Summer Institute, and the [Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research \(IQMR\)](#). Many programs offer competitive scholarships to cover the cost of registration and attend sessions. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out and apply for these opportunities to enhance their research methods training.

Feedback on Conference Presentations

Though it is not a formal requirement of the program, graduate students are expected to participate in academic and professional conferences and to present original research. Before submitting a proposal to a conference, students must first get permission from their advisor. Students are recommended to secure an email confirmation that the submission is approved. This requirement is a formality if the proposal is for students whose papers are coauthored with their advisor or another faculty member in the department. For solo papers or those coauthored with other graduate students, students should send their advisor the proposal abstract as well as any additional information requested when requesting permission.

For papers not coauthored with a faculty member, students must also submit a copy of the finished paper to their advisor for feedback no later than one month before the conference start date. For students without an advisor, the graduate director will serve in this role. Students must practice conference presentations before a group of faculty and/or students no later than two weeks before the conference start date. The graduate director will organize the opportunity for students to practice their presentation and for observers to attend.

Students can request a waiver from the graduate director for any of the above rules if there is good cause. For example, if conference dates fall during break or soon after the start of the semester, the presentation rule might be waived (or the deadline might be altered). For advanced students who have proven themselves as capable presenters, the graduate director might grant a blanket waiver. However, students should not not assume that any rules are waived.

Degree Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science

PhD Curriculum

Students who are admitted to the Ph.D. program who have a Master's degree in Political Science or a closely related field will be required to complete a minimum of 30 hours. The distribution of these courses across fields will depend upon the coursework completed as part of the Master's program, but will at a minimum consist of POLI 701 (Theories of Political Inquiry), POLI 706 (Advanced Methods of Political Analysis) and one additional core course, and three courses in the student's first field. An individual's specific requirements, including the number of required post-Master's hours, will be determined by the graduate director in consultation with faculty from the student's first field; this will be done by the end of the student's first semester of coursework.

Students who complete the requirements of the PhD curriculum and leave the program without advancing to PhD candidacy are eligible to receive a terminal Master's degree.

Overview of Requirements

Core	4 courses/12 hours
1 st field	5 courses/15 hours
2 nd field	3 courses/9 hours
Electives	3 courses/9 hours
Coursework Minimum	15 courses/45 hours
Dissertation Preparation	18 hours
Minimum Total	63 hours

For a list of courses, see the [POLI Courses by Field in Political Science](#) section in the Appendix.

Core Curriculum - 4 courses/12 hours

All three of the following:

POLI 502 Methods of Political Analysis

POLI 701 Theories of Political Inquiry

POLI 706 Advanced Methods of Political Analysis

One additional research methodology course from the following two:

POLI 709 Qualitative Methods of Political Analysis

POLI 803 Research Methods in Political Science (Maximum likelihood)

First Field - 5 courses/15 hours

Chosen from any fields of Political Science except Research Methods.

Second Field - 3 courses/9 hours

Chosen from any fields of Political Science.

Electives - 3 courses/9 hours

Approved by the students advisor and the graduate director, designed to provide the skills necessary to achieve the research and teaching interests of the student. May be taken either inside or outside of the Political Science Department.

Notes on Substitutions and Credit Totals

Substitution of a core requirement is allowed with permission from the Graduate Committee (in consultation with relevant faculty. For the Research Methods second field, students are required to take 9 hours of course work beyond the core POLI 502, 701, 706, and (one of) 709/803 courses. While some classes could be double-counted in the core and in the first or second field, doing so does not reduce total credit requirements students need to meet the PhD requirements.

Additional Notes

- A. Student must take the *Gateway Proseminar* in their first field (for the PA/Policy field, both gateway proseminars must be taken). Normally, this should be the first course taken in that field. The gateway proseminars or requirements in each field are:

POLI 760	American Politics
POLI 780	Comparative Politics
POLI 715	International Relations
POLI 770 and 774	Public Administration/Public Policy
POLI 726	Public Law

- B. A *Research Seminar* is generally understood to be a course which will have as a central focus the production of a major paper of original, independent research (e.g., such as a paper suitable for presentation at a professional convention or publication in a scholarly, peer reviewed journal in the field). Proseminars will not typically include a major paper requirement, but instead will provide a broad survey of the professional literature relevant to the topic of the course. Proseminars will often involve one or more examinations and/or short analytical papers.
- C. A topics course in those fields that can be chosen as a major field (i.e., 791, 792, 794, 795, 797, 798) will be offered as a research seminar as frequently as practicable given faculty resources.
- D. Other 700 and 800 courses will be assumed to be proseminars unless otherwise indicated. However, a faculty member may request that a course in their area of specialization be offered as a research seminar for a given semester even if the course has been offered previously as a proseminar. The course would then be offered as a research seminar, with suitable publicity of its status, if approved for inclusion in the term's offerings by the scheduling committee.

PhD Comprehensive Examination

PhD students are required to take comprehensive examinations in both their major and minor fields after the completion of course work. These will be comprehensive exams in that they will cover the entire field and not be limited in either case to the student's course work. Students are strongly encouraged to take these examinations no later than the sixth semester in the program. Students who wish to take comprehensive examinations before completing their coursework may do so with the permission of their advisor and the graduate director.

Each semester that an exam is being offered in a given field, the graduate director will appoint a three-person committee within the field to grade all of the exams in that field. Only regular faculty are eligible to provide input into the questions on field exams and to be members of the three-member examination committee. Neither retired nor adjunct faculty members can serve in these positions. This committee may consult with other faculty members in the field in determining the questions for the field exam. If the faculty in a field is unable to reach a consensus on the three questions to be offered on the field exam, the graduate director will appoint a subcommittee of the faculty in the field to determine the content of the field exam.

Comprehensive examinations will be take-home exams for which students will answer two of the three questions provided by the committee. The following prompt will accompany the exam, regardless of the subfield (with some changes possible):

The purpose of this exam is to assess your knowledge of key issues in the area of American politics. You have been given broad questions to answer which require a synthesis of relevant material. You are expected to organize your answers carefully, write in a clear and coherent style, and provide informed answers that demonstrate your familiarity with literature in this field. In keeping with standard norms of academic honesty, your work should be your own. You may consult books, articles, notes, etc. but you may not contact other individuals to discuss the exam. Ask the Director of Graduate Studies for any clarification needed about the examination process, procedures, or deadlines *prior* to starting the exam.

You must answer two of the three questions listed below. Your answer to each question should be approximately 10-12 pages in length (double spaced) and include a standard 12-point font and one-inch margins. Appropriate references and citations should be provided within the text using the APSA formatting style. Please use parenthetical citations within the text of the answer (e.g. Achen 2002) and a list of references with complete bibliographic information at the end of the exam (the list of references will not be counted toward the page length requirement of your answer).

Your exam responses are due within 72 hours of receiving the questions (0900 on 20 February 2023) by email to the Director of Graduate Studies (wilso929@mailbox.sc.edu).

Subfield committees have control over the questions that they ask and how information about the exam is communicated prior to the exam. The committee may designate one of the questions as required. First field exams will normally be given out on a Friday early in the semester. Students will return their first field answers 72 hours after receiving the questions. Second field exams will normally be given out on Friday one or two weeks later. Students will return their second field answers 72 hours after receiving the questions.

Faculty members on the examination committee will grade each major field question separately and will also give an overall grade for each student's major field exam. These grades will be *Pass with Distinction*, *Pass*, and *Fail*. The dimensions on which faculty members will evaluate exams will be the level of theoretical sophistication, the quality of the student's original analysis (students will not be allowed to merely recite the literature but instead will be required to provide an analytical evaluation), and the knowledge of the literature as demonstrated by works cited and the exam itself. The same process will be used for minor field exams.

For major and minor field exams, an oral exam may also be required at the discretion of the committee. If a subfield plans to require an oral exam for all students in addition to the written portion, the committee should inform students prior to the exam. Oral exams can also be used to follow up after the written portion has been assessed, at the discretion of the committee and without advanced notice, to provide committee members with the opportunity to follow up with the student on aspects of their submissions that require clarification. The oral exam will normally be given within one month of the written exam.

Students who take their major field exam in their sixth semester (or before) and who fail the exam will be given a second opportunity to take this exam, while students who take this exam in their seventh semester or later will have only one opportunity to pass the major field exam. The same applies to the timing of the second field exam. This provision applies to full-time graduate students; part-time student will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students who do not satisfactorily pass the comprehensive exam will be required to leave the program. Students may not attempt a different field exam if they do not pass the comprehensive exam in their first or second fields.

PhD Candidacy Exam and Dissertation

Candidacy Exam

For students to be admitted to PhD Candidacy in Political Science, they must pass a qualifying examination (after completing the Comprehensive Examination) that consists of a written proposal and oral defense of a dissertation prospectus. The qualifying examination ideally should be completed in the same semester as the completion of the Comprehensive Examination or in the semester immediately following. The written dissertation proposal must be defended publicly* before the student's Dissertation Committee and the results submitted to the Graduate Director and the Graduate School. After successful completion of the qualifying examination, the student is awarded the designation of PhD candidate.

* All prospectus defenses must be publicly advertized at least one week prior to the defense. The candidate (student) should contact the Graduate Coordinator (or Graduate Director) in advance with notification of the defense with the following details:

- date, location, and time of the defense
- candidate's name
- prospectus title
- list of committee members

The following is an example of a typical notification:

The prospectus defense of [candidate] is scheduled for [date]. This defense will be held in [location], at [time]. [candidate]'s defense is entitled, "[title]."

[candidate]'s committee members are as follows:

[person 1] – Committee Chair

[person 2] – Committee Member

[person 3] – Committee Member

[person 4] – Outside Member, [university name]

[person 5] – Outside Member, [university name]

Notifying the department normally consists of the Graduate Coordinator (or the Graduate Director or Committee Chair) posting a flyer in the department and circulating an email about the defense.

Dissertation

The final phase of the doctoral program is the development, writing, and defense of the Dissertation. The PhD Dissertation is expected to represent a substantial contribution to knowledge within the broad area of Political Science. The graduate director, in consultation with each student, will appoint a Dissertation Committee and a chair of that committee and submit a Committee Appointment form (see 38) to the graduate director. The committee consists of four or five faculty members, one of which must be a member of the USC faculty from a different department or a faculty member at another university. The dissertation committee must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The student should consult closely with the Dissertation Committee, and especially with the chair of that committee, along all stages of the dissertation process. As discussed above, a completed Dissertation Proposal must be formally defended publicly before the Dissertation

Committee and submitted to the graduate director. Upon successful completion of the Dissertation, the student must defend it publicly before the Dissertation Committee and submit a Dissertation Approval form (see [38](#)) to the graduate director.

Students must also submit the completed dissertation to the Graduate School, which both validates the formatting for publishing and acts as the gateway for electronic publication of the thesis/dissertation. For information on formatting and submission deadlines, see https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/academics/thesis_and_dissertation/index.php.

For forms associated with the PhD Candidacy Exam and the Dissertation, see the [Commonly Used Forms](#) section in the Appendix.

MA in International Studies (MAIS)

MAIS Curriculum

Overview of Requirements

Core	8 courses/24 hours
Thesis or additional electives	2 courses/6 hours
Coursework Minimum	10 courses/30 hours
Minimum Total	30 hours

For a list of courses, see the [POLI Courses by Field in Political Science](#) section in the Appendix.

Core Substantive courses - 4 courses/12 hours

Both of the following:

POLI 715 International Relations Theory

POLI 780 Theories of Comparative Politics

and

Six additional hours of internationally-themed courses
(which may include courses outside POLI)

Core Skills courses - 4 courses/12 hours

Both of the following:

POLI 502 Methods of Political Analysis

POLI 706 Advanced Methods of Political Analysis

and

Six additional hours of skills courses
(which may include research design, Public Administration courses,
and courses outside POLI)

Electives - 2 courses/6 hours

If not choosing the thesis option. Approved by the student's advisor and the graduate director, designed to provide the skills necessary to achieve the research and teaching interests of the student. May be taken either inside or outside of the Political Science Department. Electives can consist of additional substantive or skills courses. Additionally, students who prefer to take foreign language courses may take up to 6 hours as electives. Students must verify with the graduate director which courses are eligible and how they would count towards degree progress.

The MAIS Thesis Option

If not taking the additional electives Students who plan to apply for PhD programs should choose the Thesis Option. Writing an MA thesis can also be a valuable experience for students who plan to seek professional careers, as it demonstrates a depth of understanding of a particular topic, as well as an ability to conduct original research and present one's findings in a cogent manner. Completing a thesis, however, requires a significant amount of time, preparation, research, and writing. Students who are considering writing a thesis should begin planning in their first semester and should consult with the MAIS Program Director as early as possible. Students who choose the Thesis Option must enroll in six credits of POLI 799B, which may be all in one semester or distributed across more than one semester.

Students must secure approval from a Thesis Director and a Reader to supervise the thesis. The Thesis Director must be a faculty member in the Department of Political Science, and the Reader must be a University of South Carolina faculty member. Students are responsible for obtaining approval from faculty, but students may consult with the MAIS Program Director in finding faculty to supervise the thesis. The student and supervising faculty should agree on the content, structure, and length of the thesis.

Students must successfully defend the thesis. The Thesis Director will determine the date, time, length, and format of the defense, typically held in the student's final semester in the program. After the student has successfully defended the thesis, he or she must submit a completed Thesis Signature and Approval Form to the Graduate Coordinator. The form is available on the Graduate School forms page.

Students must abide by all Graduate School format requirements and deadlines for the thesis. Students can find information on Graduate School requirements and deadlines on the Graduate School's Thesis & Dissertation page.

The MAIS Non-thesis Option

Students who do not take the thesis option may need additional elective credits to reach the required 30 credits for the degree. Any of the approved field courses may count as an elective. Students who wish to take a course that does not appear on that list must receive approval through advisement. Students taking the non-thesis option must also pass an oral examination during their final semester, conducted by the MAIS Director. Typically, this oral examination will cover the substance of a course paper of the student's choice, which must be submitted to the MAIS Director.

Additional Information and Resources

Department Resources

Meetings and Talks

There are a variety of extracurricular options within the department for graduate students to learn, network, and develop their professional skills. Political Science graduate students can present their research and receive feedback from faculty members and fellow graduate students in several different venues and get to know visiting faculty and guests.

- In-house brownbags such as the meetings regularly held by the Public Administration/Public Policy (PA/PP) and International Relations/Comparative Politics (IRCP) working groups allow students to discuss published research and to present original work.
- The Political Science Research Workshop (PSRW) is a scheduled forum that often brings in guest presenters and allows for graduate students and faculty to present research to the department.
- The department offers professionalization meetings geared toward instructing graduate students on rotating topics related to the discipline, usually coordinated by the Political Science Graduate Organization. Examples include preparing for comprehensive exams, creating a personal website and curriculum vitae, and going on the job market.

Although department meetings and talks are considered voluntary, graduate students are expected to attend them frequently. Failure to engage with the department by not participating in events can result in faculty declining to serve as a student's advisor or reductions in assistantships and funding offered by the department.

Political Science Graduate Organization

The Political Science Graduate Organization (PSGO) is an annually elected body of graduate students in the department which represents the interests of the graduate students to the graduate director and the department in general. The PSGO organizes events and coordinates student activities within the department.

Outstanding Doctoral Student Award

The Outstanding Graduate Award is an annual award that recognizes the most outstanding doctoral student in the department for that year, as selected by the members of the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will use materials required for the annual review (activity reports and curriculum vitae). To be eligible for the award, the student must be a matriculated student in the Ph.D. program and have submitted their annual review materials by the required deadline. Recipients will receive a stipend for funds related to research and scholastic activities, subject to funding availability. Depending on competitiveness, the Graduate Committee may divide the award between students and may consider cumulative performance when making their decision. The award is typically announced following the conclusion of the Spring semester.

Evaluation of students for the award considers several different indicators of success. Exemplary performance across all areas is not required to receive the award, but recipients must excel in multiple categories. As selection criteria, the Graduate Committee takes into account the following:

- Academic performance
Indicators of positive academic performance are course grades and faculty feedback.
- Research and scholarly activity
Research contributions may be evidenced through publications, conference presentations, and/or external recognition from one's professional association.
- Professional activity and public service
Evidence of professional activity and public service includes service in the Political Science Graduate Organization (PSGO), service on department and university-wide committees, participation in professional organizations and conference activities, and community engagement.
- Teaching (if applicable).
Exemplary teaching is evidenced through faculty observations and/or student feedback.

Graduate School Resources

Graduate Student Resources Hub

The [Graduate Student Resources Hub](#) supports academic training and professional development by providing individual career coaching, help with applying for national fellowships, and professional development workshops.

Graduate Student Association

The [Graduate Student Association](#) is an elected body of graduate students that represents the interests of graduate students at the university level.

University Resources

Student Success Center

The [Student Success Center](#) provides academic support for graduate students and offers services such as providing free school supplies, the Out-to-Lunch program, and hosting workshops.

Additional Resources

The University of South Carolina offers a number of unique resources to support graduate research, including the following:

- The fourth floor of Gambrell Hall houses the [Walker Institute of International and Area Studies](#), founded in 1961 as the University's center for social science research in international studies. The Walker Institute provides organizational support for research, travel, and consultation, including financial awards for select graduate student research projects.² It also facilitates visits to the Columbia campus by internationally known scholars and practitioners. The Walker Institute normally has international scholars in residence, with its own faculty and graduate assistants involved in research projects abroad. The Institute has developed an ongoing program of academic exchanges with similar organizations in the United States and abroad which allows students and faculty access to facilities and contacts elsewhere. The College of Arts and Sciences also sponsors a number of area studies programs incorporated within the Walker Institute, such as the [Center for Asian Studies](#) and the [Latin American Studies Program](#). These programs often sponsor activities of interest to the entire University community, including colloquia, conferences, guest speakers, and film series.
- Conveniently located in the basement of Gambrell Hall, the College of Arts and Sciences [Computer Lab](#) provides a complete set of computer services to the faculty and students. It has equipment to support word processing and printing, graphics, mapping, and statistical research. The Computer Lab is also a storehouse for the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) data bases. The Computer Lab is very responsive to the needs of students who make regular use of this facility in support of their graduate studies. A supplementary computer lab is also located on the fifth level of Thomas Cooper Library. In addition, room 305 of Gambrell is a graduate lounge and computer lab for graduate students in the Department of Political Science.
- The [University's libraries](#) maintain a vast collection of books—including millions of units in microform—and subscribe to thousands of periodicals and hundreds of online databases to support faculty and student research. A great majority of hard-copy resources are centrally located in the [Thomas Cooper Library](#) and are easily accessed through an advanced computerized circulation system. Graduate students can obtain a library carrel there to do work and store their materials. Other campus libraries available for use are the [South Caroliniana Library](#), which houses information on South Carolina, and specialized libraries in business, law, medicine, mathematics, music, and science disciplines.

²https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/walker_institute/research/student_scholarships_and_grants/index.php

Appendix

POLI Courses by Field in Political Science

The courses listed below are categorized by field. Field designations other than those listed below may be made with the approval of the student's Program Advisory Committee, in consultation with the graduate director. POLI courses other than those listed below, may be used within a field depending on the content of the course. An asterisk (*) denotes a course that may count in either of two fields, although a course may not be double-counted. Further classifications may be sought from the graduate director. Note that the list of approved courses does not indicate that they are regularly offered. Course offerings vary based on need and faculty availability.

American Politics

POLI 554	Law & Society
POLI 567	American Local Government
POLI 708	Women & American Politics (=WGST 708)
POLI 720*	Political Communication
POLI 721*	Race & Public Policy
POLI 736	Public Opinion & Political Attitudes
POLI 760	American Government & Politics (gateway proseminar)
POLI 761	American National Government for Professionals
POLI 762*	Politics of the Budgetary Process
POLI 763	Legislative Process & Behavior
POLI 764	Problems of the Presidency
POLI 765	Political Parties & Interest Groups
POLI 766	Electoral Behavior
POLI 767	State Government
POLI 768*	Local Government Administration
POLI 791	Selected Topics in American Politics
POLI 798*	Selected Topics in Public Law
POLI 850	Seminar in Public Law
POLI 865	Seminar in Urban Politics

Comparative Politics

POLI 703*	Democratic Theory
POLI 718	Revolution and Politics
POLI 719	Political and Social Change
POLI 720*	Political Communication
POLI 724*	Religion & Politics (=RELG 724)
POLI 737	Nationalism & Politics
POLI 758	The State and Economic Life (=ECON 745)
POLI 780	Theories of Comparative Politics (gateway proseminar)
POLI 781	Government and Politics of Japan
POLI 782	Problems in Chinese Government & Politics
POLI 783	Dynamics of Middle East Politics
POLI 784	Government & Politics of Europe
POLI 785	Contemporary Russian Politics
POLI 792	Selected Topics in Comparative Politics
POLI 798*	Selected Topics in Public Law
POLI 802*	Seminar in Comparative Administration
POLI 831	Seminar on Europe
POLI 880	Seminar in Democratization and Comparative Politics

International Relations

POLI 715	International Relations Theory (gateway proseminar)
POLI 717	Comparative Foreign Policy
POLI 724*	Religion & Politics (=RELG 724)
POLI 725	International Conflict
POLI 732	International Law
POLI 733	International Organization
POLI 734	Economics of International Politics
POLI 735	International Cooperation
POLI 740	Formulation and Conduct of U.S. Foreign Policy
POLI 741	Contemporary U.S. Foreign Policy
POLI 742	Problems in National Security
POLI 745	Russian Foreign Policy
POLI 746	Chinese Foreign Policy
POLI 747	Japanese Foreign Policy
POLI 749	IR of the Middle East
POLI 794	Selected Topics in International Relations
POLI 795	Selected Topics in International Law & Organizations
POLI 815	Seminar in Advanced IR Theory
POLI 816	Seminar in Comparative Study of Foreign Policy
POLI 817	Seminar on International Organization and Cooperation

Political Theory

POLI 504	Politics & Ethics
POLI 505	Utopian Political Thought
POLI 703*	Democratic Theory
POLI 704	Political Theory & Feminism (=WGST 704)
POLI 705	Theory of Marxism
POLI 707	Classics of Political Theory
POLI 800	Selected Topics in Political Theory
POLI 801	Selected Thinkers in Political Theory

Public Administration/Public Policy

POLI 721*	Race & Public Policy
POLI 754	Public Accountability & Ethics
POLI 755	Grants Administration (=EDRM 800)
POLI 757	Health Politics (=NURS 779 and HSPM 711)
POLI 759	Information Systems & Public Administration
POLI 762*	Politics of the Budgetary Process
POLI 768*	Local Government Administration
POLI 770	Perspectives on Public Administration (gateway proseminar)
POLI 771*	Public Data Analysis
POLI 772	Contemporary Administrative Organization
POLI 773	Human Resources Administration in Government
POLI 774	Public Policy Process (gateway proseminar)
POLI 775	Financial Administration
POLI 776	Policy Formation & Program Planning
POLI 777*	Policy Evaluation
POLI 778	Practicum in Public Administration
POLI 779	Public Administration Internship
POLI 797	Selected Topics in Public Administration
POLI 802*	Seminar in Comparative Administration

Public Administration/Public Law

POLI 726	Seminar in Judicial Politics
POLI 727	Models for Understanding Political Institutions
POLI 728	Judicial Politics in Europe & the Common Law World
POLI 729	Courts in Developing Countries
POLI 732	International Law
POLI 760*	American Government & Politics
POLI 780*	Seminar in Comparative Politics
POLI 798	Selected Topics in Public Law
POLI 850	Seminar in Public Law
LAWS 525	Constitutional Law I
LAWS 526	Constitutional Law II
LAWS 718	Women & Human Rights
LAWS 812	International Human Rights
LAWS 648	Contemporary Constitutional Issues
LAWS 660	Individual Liberties
LAWS 768	Jurisprudence
LAWS 803	Women & the Law

Research Methodology

POLI 701	Theories of Political Inquiry
POLI 706	Advanced Methods of Political Analysis
POLI 709	Qualitative Methods of Political Analysis
POLI 771*	Public Data Analysis
POLI 777*	Policy Evaluation
POLI 803	Research Methods in Political Science
POLI 806	Seminar in Advanced Methods of Political Analysis

PhD Roadmap and Progress Guidelines

The following is a suggested guide for planning courses, graduate milestones, and extracurricular achievements towards the successful completion of a Ph.D.

	Year	Sem.	Actions	Special Forms (see 38)	Hours	
Assistantship	1	Fall	3 courses		9	15 classes/45 hours Coursework
		Spring	3 courses	<i>Advising Contract (39)</i>	9	
	2 ^a	Fall	3 courses		9	
		Spring	3 courses	<i>MPOS/DPOS (38)</i>	9	
	3 ^{ab}	Fall	3 courses		9	18 hours (POLI 899) Dissertation Prep.
		Spring	Comp. exams	<i>Exam Verification (38)</i>	6	
	4 ^{abcd}	Fall	Prospectus	<i>Exam Verification (38)</i>	6	
				<i>Committee Appointment (38)</i>	6	
		Spring	(Z-status)	<i>Special Enrollment (38)</i>	2	
	5 ^{abcde}	Fall	(Z-status)	<i>Special Enrollment (38)</i>	2	
	Spring	(Z-status)	<i>Special Enrollment (38)</i>	2		
		Defense	<i>Dissertation Approval (38)</i>			
			<i>Intent to graduate</i>			

Expected extracurricular activity:

^a Working on research papers

^b Attending conferences and/or external training

^c Teaching (if interested)

^d Seeking external funding (if interested)

^e Job-market activity

Progress Guidelines

Expected criteria are additional factors not required to remain in the program/retain funding, but are essential to good evaluations. Strong performance in this category is also considered when evaluating student performance and granting merit-based awards.

Year 1

Required

- Coursework
 - Complete 502, 701, and 706
 - 3.0 GPA
- Checkpoints
 - Positive evaluations for GA work (if applicable)
- Professional development
 - Attend department orientation
 - Complete TA orientation/training (if applicable)
 - Attend socialization seminars, department colloquia
- Administrative
 - Meet with DGS for initial advising (Fall)
 - select an advisor
 - Provide evaluation materials for annual review (end of Spring)

Expected

- 3.5 or higher GPA
- Actively participate in seminars and professionalization activities
- Complete gateway proseminars for major and minor field, if available
- Approach faculty to discuss research ideas; develop proficiency as a (typically informal) research assistant, particularly with data management, statistics

Year 2

Required

- Coursework
 - Complete final core methods course (Fall)
 - Maintain 3.0 GPA with positive faculty evaluations
- Checkpoints
 - Positive evaluations for GA work (if applicable)
- Professionalization
 - Attend professionalization seminars, department colloquia
- Administrative
 - Provide evaluation materials for annual review (end of Spring)

Expected

- Show clear progress towards completing field course requirements
- Work on research projects
- Prepare paper suitable to present at conference in year 3
- Actively participate in seminars and professionalization activities
- Apply for, as appropriate, additional external training such as EITM, ICPSR, IQMR, etc.
- Apply for and complete, as appropriate, an internship (Summer)

Year 3

Required

- Coursework
 - Complete coursework by end of Spring
 - Maintain 3.0 GPA
- Checkpoints
 - Pass comprehensive exams (Spring)
 - Positive evaluations for GA work (if applicable)
- Professionalization
 - Attend professionalization seminars, department colloquia
- Administrative
 - Complete all paperwork relevant to comps and prospectus defense (Spring)
 - Provide evaluation materials for annual review (end of Spring)
 - Select dissertation advisor and topic, submit paperwork (Spring)
 - Select a dissertation committee, submit paperwork (end of Summer)

Expected

- Present a paper at a professional conference
 - Give a practice presentation in front of faculty and fellow grad students
- Prepare paper suitable to submit to a peer-reviewed journal
- Actively participate in seminars and professionalization activities
- Apply for, as appropriate, additional external training such as EITM, ICPSR, IQMR, etc.
- Apply for and complete, as appropriate, an internship (Summer)

Year 4

Required

- Checkpoints
 - Defend dissertation prospectus (Fall)
 - Positive evaluations for GA work (if applicable)
- Administrative
 - Complete all paperwork relevant to prospectus defense (Fall)
 - Provide evaluation materials for annual review (end of Spring)

Expected

- Research
 - Prepare paper(s) suitable to submit for review and/or work on R&Rs
 - Work on multiple research projects, including solo work and projects coauthored with faculty/peer graduate students
 - Apply for, as appropriate, additional external training such as EITM, ICPSR, IQMR, etc.
 - Apply for and complete, as appropriate, an internship (Summer)
 - Prepare for going on the job market over the Summer

Year 5

Required

- Checkpoints
 - Defend dissertation (typically in Spring)
 - Positive evaluations for GA work (if applicable)
- Administrative
 - Complete all paperwork relating to dissertation, graduation (Spring)
 - Provide evaluation materials for annual review (end of Spring, if not graduating)

Expected

- Research
 - Go on the job market (Fall)
 - Prepare paper(s) suitable to submit for review and/or deal with R&Rs
 - Work on multiple research projects, including solo work and projects coauthored with faculty/peer graduate students

Steps to Doctoral Degree

Note: Copied from the University of South Carolina Graduate School page on [Doctoral Degree Progress](#) (Accessed 02 September 2022). For more information, including important dates and how to contact the Graduate School, [visit their page](#).

1. Choose Your Committees

Doctoral Committee Appointment Request (DCA) »

Your Doctoral Advisory, Comprehensive Examination and Dissertation Committees may be appointed at the same time.

When should this be completed?

Doctoral Advisory Committee

Should be appointed by the end of your first term of enrollment.

Comprehensive Exam Committee

Should be approved before or when your comprehensive exam is scheduled.

Dissertation Committee

Should be approved before you enroll in your first Dissertation Preparation hours.

2. Complete Admission to Candidacy Procedures

Sign up for the Qualifying Exam

All candidates for a Doctoral degree must take the Qualifying Exam. Sign up with your program's graduate director.

Submit Program of Study (POS) »

You must submit your approved program of study to the Graduate School.

Program of Study Adjustment Form (POSA) »

Make any adjustments to your program of study using this form.

When should this be completed?

At least 60 days before you receive your degree.

3. Complete Program Requirements

Course Requirements

Check with your program for specific course requirements.

Comprehensive Exam

All candidates for a doctoral degree must pass a written and oral comprehensive examination conducted by your academic program under the direction of your Written and Oral Comprehensive Examination Committee.

When should this be completed?

By your final term of study.

4. Submit Dissertation Draft & Schedule Defense

Submit Dissertation Draft

You should submit your dissertation draft to your advisor and your thesis committee.

Schedule Your Defense

Schedule your dissertation defense with your advisor and thesis committee.

When should this be completed?

Refer to your committee for your dissertation draft due date. See deadlines on the [Graduate School calendar](#) to schedule a defense and submit an announcement through your department.

5. Check Dissertation Format

Formatting Requirements »

The Graduate School has very specific formatting requirements for your thesis. Check that your formatting is correct before you submit your thesis or you will be required to reformat and resubmit.

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study before you submit your dissertation. See deadlines on the [Graduate School calendar](#) for specific dates.

6. Complete Dissertation Defense

Complete your dissertation defense, and make any final revisions required by your Committee and the Graduate School.

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study before you submit your dissertation. See deadlines on the [Graduate School calendar](#) for specific dates.

7. Submit Dissertation

Submit Final Approved Dissertation

Be sure your dissertation is properly formatted according to Graduate School requirements before you submit or you will be required to reformat it.

Formatting & Submission Requirements »

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study. See deadlines on the [Graduate School calendar](#) for specific dates.

8. Submit Signature & Approval Form and Survey of Earned Doctorates

Dissertation Signature & Approval Form »

Deliver your completed form and documentation of completion of the [Survey of Earned Doctorates \(SED\)](#) in an envelope or folder marked G-DSF/SED.

How to Address Your Envelope

Attn: [Graduate School Coordinator for Your Program]
The Graduate School
1705 College Street
Suite 552
Close-Hipp Building
Columbia, SC 29208

Make sure your envelope is also marked G-DSF/SED.

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study.

9. Apply for Graduation

Application for Graduation »

Apply on [Self-Service Carolina](#). Click the "Apply to Graduate" link under the "Student" tab.

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study.

10. Send Hooding Program Information

Doctoral Hooding Information

Submit information to be printed in the Doctoral Commencement program through the

Doctoral Hooding Information Portal. This is required of all doctoral graduates, even if you are not planning to attend the ceremony.

When should this be completed?

In your final term of study.

11. Graduate

Commencement Ceremonies »

Congratulations! You made it!

Commonly Used Forms

Graduate School Forms

The Graduate School maintains a [forms library](#) that contains all forms related to Graduate School processes. Below are some of the most commonly used forms.

- [Independent Study Contract](#)
Used to register for an independent study course to be counted as a research seminar.
- [Request for Transfer of Credit](#)
Used to transfer credits from another program or university.
- [Request for Course Revalidation](#)
Used to revalidate out-of-date courses.
- [Masters Program of Study](#)
Lists courses taken for Masters degree; should be completed/submitted by the end of the student's second year. PhD students do not need to complete this.
- [Doctoral Program of Study](#)
Lists courses taken for PhD degree; must be completed/submitted by the end of the student's second year.
- [Comprehensive Exam Verification](#)
Submitted upon successfully passing the Comprehensive Exam.
- [Qualifying Exam Verification](#)
Submitted upon successfully passing the dissertation prospectus defense.
- [Request for Special Enrollment Status \(Z-Status\)](#)
Used to request exemption from full-time status.
- [Doctoral Committee Appointment Request](#)
Officially designates the student's doctoral dissertation committee.
- [Dissertation and Signature Approval](#)
Submitted upon successfully passing the dissertation defense.

Department Forms

The following forms constitute commonly used forms within the department, which are available on Blackboard (POLI-SCI-DOCS organization) or upon request:

- Advising Contract (page [40](#))
Used to select or change advisors.
- Graduate Course Advising Form (page [41](#))
Required annually for advising students on course progress to degree.
- Graduate Student Activities Report (page [42](#))
Required annually for advising students on progress to degree.
- Request for Travel (page [47](#))
Travel request form; must be submitted *prior* to travel to receive reimbursement for travel expenses.
- Travel Reimbursement Information Request (page [48](#))
Travel reimbursement form; must be submitted after travel with receipts to receive reimbursement for travel expenses.

**University of South Carolina
Department of Political Science
Graduate Course Advising Form**

Official course advising is required every semester. As part of the process, each student should fill out this form with the courses they intend to take (in consultation with their advisor) and have their advisor sign and date it. The completed form should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Note: Students cannot enroll in a 711 (Independent Research) or 790 (Independent Reading) course without first obtaining the permission of the instructor for that course.

_____ Fall Spring _____
Student name Semester of courses Year of courses

Dept.	Course number	Course title	Credits	Professor
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

_____ Date _____
Student signature

_____ Date _____
Advisor signature

Comments:

University of South Carolina
Department of Political Science
Graduate Student Activities Report

An annual review of student performance in the program is required each year. As part of the process, each student should indicate their progress towards completion of the degree by completing the relevant sections (leave blank or put 'n/a' if not relevant) and have their advisor sign and date it. The completed form should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should submit an updated copy of their curriculum vitae with the activities report.

Student name

Fall _____ – Spring _____
Year Year

I. Academic Progress

List information about courses taken (and grades); completion of comprehensive major or minor exams; defense of a dissertation prospectus.

II. Instructional Activities

List courses served as a teaching assistant; individual courses or sections offered.

III. Publications

List any publications. Indicate whether they were peer-reviewed and whether they were sole-authored or co-authored.

IV. Conference Presentations

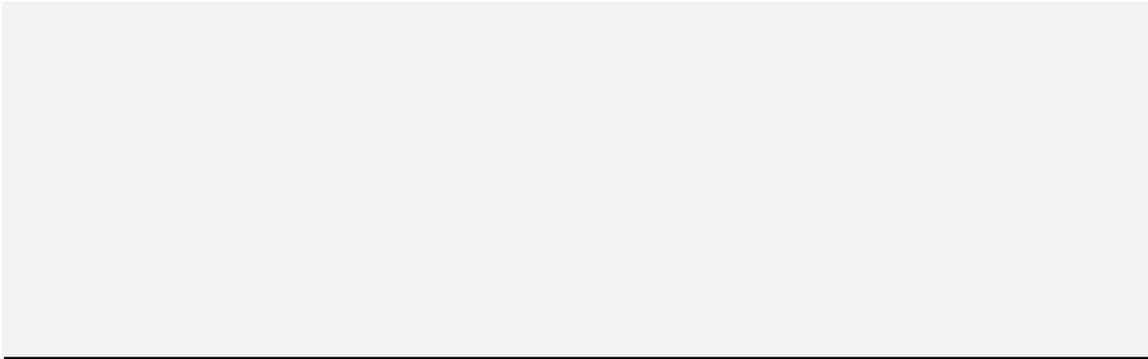
List any papers and indicate whether they were sole-authored or co-authored.

V. Departmental/University Presentations

Report any on-campus presentations such as at the IR/CP or AP/PAPP/PL weekly meetings.

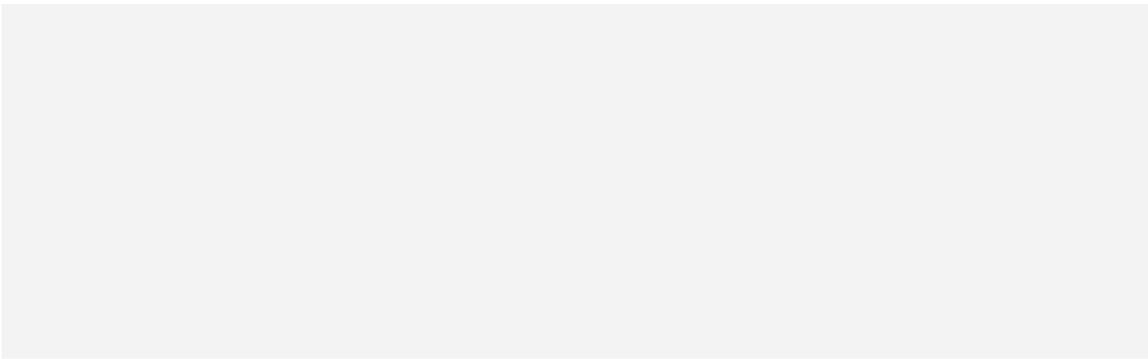
VI. Research Activities

Include activities such as papers submitted and under review, completed working papers, or work on grant or contract funded projects.



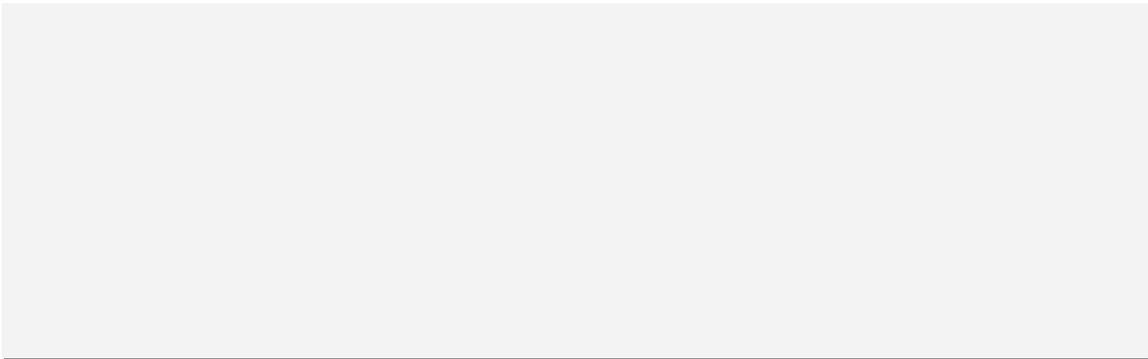
VII. Service Activities

Include activities such as PSGSO officer; service on committees; other professional service.



VIII. Other Educational Activities

Include participation in workshops such as those provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning; summer programs such as ICPSR.



IX. Honors and Awards

List any honors or awards received.

X. Other Information

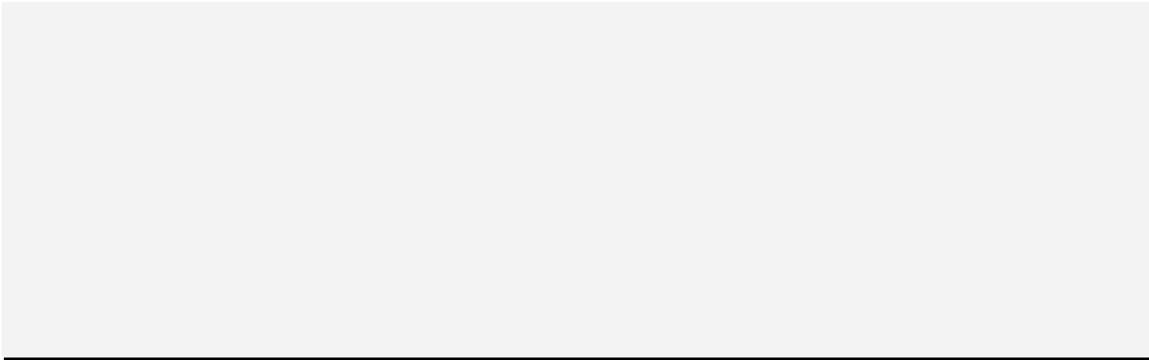
Report any other information relevant to your academic activities during the past year.

XI. Goals for the Next Year

This should not be a detailed plan of specific activities but rather a general statement of goals for the next year. Example:

“Over the next year I plan to present at two professional conferences, to submit two papers to peer-reviewed journals, and to complete my comprehensive major and minor exams.”

Advisor Comments:



Student signature

Date

Advisor signature

Date

DUE: Complete at least **10** working days **prior** to travel

Remember, only one dept. can do paperwork for your trip

REQUEST FOR TRAVEL

Date Received: _____

TA #: _____

Name: _____

VIP #: _____

GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY:

E-mail Address: _____ Phone: _____ US Citizen: YES NO

Practice Talk completed? YES (when/where) _____ No

GRADUATE DIRECTOR: Approved? Yes No **GRAD DIRECTOR SIGNATURE:** _____

Conference Name/Meeting Purpose: _____

Destination of Trip: _____

Dates/Times of trip: Date of Departure _____ Departure Time: _____ am / pm

Date of Return _____ Return Time: _____ am / pm

Purpose of Travel: (Check all activities)

Presenting a Paper: Panel Chair: Panel Discussant: Other: _____
Please explain

Paper Title: _____

Other: _____

Source of Funds: Dean's Commitment POLI SCI Department Other Department* Other**

*If from another dept. please indicate from where & contact name: _____

**If "Other," please explain: _____

ESTIMATED TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Transportation:

Air Fare: \$ _____

(I will need printed ORIGINAL air itinerary with dates & amounts)

(If driving to another airport outside of Columbia, include mileage & airport)

Mileage, if applicable: _____ miles @ \$.53.5/mile (rate subject to change) \$ _____

Estimated subsistence: **Lodging** \$ _____

Per Diem – dependent on times of departure & return (B: \$10 / L: \$15 / D: \$25) \$ _____

Estimated other expenses (registrations, taxis, parking, rental car, etc.): \$ _____

Total Amount Requested: \$ _____

GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY:

Other funding sources and amounts: _____ \$ _____

TRAVELER SIGNATURE: _____

CHAIR SIGNATURE: _____ **TOTAL AMOUNT APPROVED** \$ _____

ALL ORIGINAL RECEIPTS ARE REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT, EXCEPT FOR MEALS (per diem will apply)

Department of Political Science

Travel Reimbursement Information Request (TRV)

PLEASE ATTACH ALL ORIGINAL RECEIPTS (No copies)

Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

VIP: _____ Destination: _____

Date of Departure: _____ Time Departed from Home Base: _____

Date of Return: _____ Time Returning to Home Base: _____

Fund(s) to be charged (Dept. Allowance, Research Fund please name), Start-Up, Other):

EXPENSES: (check all that apply)

Breakfast: depart before 6:30 AM and/or return after 11:00 AM; \$8 in state, \$10 out of state
Lunch: depart before 11:00 AM and/or return after 1:30 PM; \$10 in state, \$15 out of state
Dinner: depart before 5:15 PM and/or return after 8:30 PM; \$17 in state, \$25 out of state

DATE: _____

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Personal Vehicle Mileage _____ (\$0.53.5/mile if USC vehicle available but not used; \$0.575 if USC vehicle not available*)

Hotel/Motel Charges: _____

Parking: _____

Registration Fees: _____

Other: List the expense _____

Amount: _____

Taxi Fares: _____

Rental Expenses: _____

Airline Expenses: _____

Comments:

NOTE: *statement from transportation services confirming the non-availability of a motor pool vehicle must be attached for reimbursement at the higher rate.

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