POLITICAL SCIENCE

Ph.D. REGULATIONS

Revised for September 2017
ADMISSIONS

Potential applicants are advised to consult the “Admission Requirements” set out in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar. In addition, the following regulations also apply in the Department of Political Science.

Admission to the Ph.D. program in public policy or international relations in the Department normally will require a Master’s degree with a clear average of at least A- from a recognized university.

Applicants should submit the following to the Department:

(a) Completed on-line application through MOSAIC at: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/academic-services/how-apply
(b) ONE (1) official transcript from all universities attended, including undergraduate work;
(c) Letters of recommendation by three (3) instructors familiar with the applicant’s work;
(d) A 500 word statement of their research interests and reasons for choosing McMaster University for their Ph.D. degree in Political Science.
(e) Application fee of $100 (Canadian) by Credit Card.
(f) Evidence or English proficiency where required, i.e. TOEFL

The deadline for submission of applications is February 1st for September entry only. Applications may be submitted after this date, but there is no guarantee that there will be places available in the program.

Recommendations for admissions will be made to the Graduate Faculty by a Ph.D. Admissions Committee which will consist of the Graduate Committee and the International Relations and Public Policy faculty. Sub-committees of IR and Public Policy work through their respective field files and agree upon the top 10 candidates for their field (including possible supervisors). These ten candidates are recommended to members of the other field. A Graduate Committee along with members of the International Relations and Public Policy faculty convene a meeting where consideration is given to the final 20 candidates. This structure would not prevent any individual from raising particular cases or reading all applications.

In the case of students seeking to transfer into Political Science PhD from another PhD discipline, candidates are required to prepare a regular application which will be evaluated along side all new applications in the next admission cycle.
Calendar Copy

McMaster University
Ph.D. in Political Science

The Department of Political Science at McMaster University offers the Ph.D. degree in the fields of Comparative Public Policy and International Relations.

The public policy specialization will include courses and comprehensive examinations in:

- Approaches and methods for policy analysis
- A Policy field
- and at least two political systems (one of which may be Canada)

The international relations specialization will include courses and comprehensive examinations in:

- International Relations Theory
- International Political Economy
- Globalization and Transnationalism

Graduands can expect to be qualified to conduct research and teach at the university level in comparative public policy or in international relations and in one other field of political science in Canada.

Admission Procedures

Admission to the Ph.D. program normally will require an M.A. degree with an average of at least an A- (A minus) from a recognized university. Applicants must complete the required online McMaster Admission Form, arrange to have 3 academic references submitted to the Department, submit one original transcript(s) from all universities and evidence of English proficiency where required, i.e., TOEFL, and submit a 500 word statement of their research interests and reasons for choosing McMaster University for their Ph.D. degree in Political Science. The deadline for submission of applications is February 1.

Degree Requirements

Normally, candidates for the PhD will:

1. Complete 18 units (6 half courses) of course work beyond the M.A. level, including the following required courses:
For Students in Comparative Public Policy
*783 Comparative Public Policy
*784 Quantitative Political and Policy Analysis
*796 Research Design & Methods

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

Other approved courses will be drawn from other departmental courses, and courses offered by other departments and schools. At least three of these selected units should be from Major Field 2.

All courses are half courses (3 units) unless otherwise specified.

2. Demonstrate reading and research competence in an approved language other than English.

3. Complete the required comprehensive examinations in Comparative Public Policy or International Relations and one other field: and

4. Submit a thesis on an approved subject and defend it by oral examination.

Supervisors and Supervisory Committees

Successful applicants will be assigned a temporary supervisor of studies upon admission. No later than six months following arrival, a supervisory committee for each Ph.D. student will be appointed by the Graduate Committee, on the recommendation of the student and a willing thesis supervisor. This committee will consist of at least three members: a thesis supervisor, one other member of the Department and a third member, whose scholarly interests include the area of the student’s main interest, and who may be from outside the Department.

Comprehensive Examinations

Students in the Ph.D. program will write comprehensive examinations in two fields:

For Students in Comparative Public Policy
Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields - public policy and a second field drawn from one of Canadian politics, comparative politics, international relations or political theory.
Major Field 1
In the Public Policy field, students will write an examination covering the three subfields of public policy:
- Theories and approaches to comparative public policy
- Public administration
- International dimensions of public policy
In addition to these examinations but still part of the major field, students must write a major paper that provides a review of current literature on the politics of a specialized policy area. This paper will provide a basis for evaluating substantive knowledge of a policy area in at least two political systems. Normally, this paper must be submitted prior to the written comprehensive examinations.

Major Field 2
To be selected from:
- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- International Relations
- Political Theory

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

Normally, students will write their Major Field 1 exam in August of their first year and their Major Field 2 exam in December of their second year. Accordingly, the major paper that comprises part of the Comparative Public Policy field will be due in December of that year.

For Students in International Relations
Students will write comprehensive examinations in two fields – international relations and a second field drawn from one of Canadian politics, comparative politics, political theory, or public policy.

Major Field 1
In the International Relations field, students will write an examination covering the following subfields of international relations:
- International relations theory / State of the Field
- Global Political Economy
- Globalization, governance and security
In addition, students must write a major paper that provides a review of current literature in an area of international relations approved by the student’s supervisor. Normally, this paper must be submitted prior to the written comprehensive examinations.

Major Field 2
To be selected from:
- Canadian Politics
- Comparative Politics
- Public Policy
- Political Theory

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

Normally, students will write their Major Field 1 exam in August of their first year and their Major Field 2 exam in December of their second year. Accordingly, the major paper that comprises part of the International Relations field will be submitted in December of that year.

**Other Regulations**

Applicants should consult the [Graduate Calendar](#) for a complete listing of Regulations for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy.
Department of Political Science

Guidelines and Regulations for the Ph.D. Program

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

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

Supervisor and Supervisory Committee:

Upon entering the program, students will be assigned a temporary supervisor. Not later than six months following the student’s arrival, a supervisory committee for each student will be appointed by Graduate Committee on the recommendation of the student and a willing thesis supervisor drawn from the faculty. This committee will consist of at least three members: a supervisor and two other faculty members. One member may be from outside the department but within the university. Composition of the Committee is to be approved by the Graduate Committee. The functions of the supervisory committee are as follows:

(a) To meet with the student at least twice a year to ensure that the student is making satisfactory progress towards the timely completion of the degree.

(b) To provide advice to the student in his/her preparation for the Comprehensive Examinations.

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

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

(a) To guide the student in developing a thesis proposal and to make arrangements for a Departmental seminar at which the student provides a detailed outline of the proposal. The Supervisory Committee, in conjunction with the Chair of the Graduate Committee and one other member of the core faculty must approve the thesis proposal.

(b) To meet formally every academic year to assess the student’s progress. The Supervisory Committee will inform the student of their conclusions. In all cases, meetings must be concluded no later than August 31st. If progress is deemed unsatisfactory, written notice will be issued. If the committee considers the lack
of progress particularly serious, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.

(c) To respond to drafts of the thesis or portions of the thesis within a reasonable period of time (see School of Graduate Studies Calendar).

(d) To arrange for the completed thesis to be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies in accordance with the guidelines provided by the School of Graduate Studies.

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

Course Work:

Students will normally be required to complete 18 units (6 half courses) of course work beyond the M.A. level, including the following required half (3 unit) half courses:

For students in Comparative Public Policy

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

For students in International Relations

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

At least three of these 18 units should be from Major Field 2 (Teaching Field). Students should consult with their supervisor on the appropriate courses to take.

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

Each student will write comprehensive examinations in the Major Field and Major Field 2 (Teaching Field), plus a qualifying paper (QP) as part of the Major Field.

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

For students in Public Policy

Major Field: Comparative Public Policy – within this major field students will write one examination covering the subfields:

- theories and approaches to comparative public policy
- public administration
- international dimensions of public policy

Major Field 2 (Teaching Field): Additionally, students will write 1 examination in one of the following teaching fields: Canadian politics, comparative politics, international relations or political theory. Students are normally expected to have completed at least three units beyond the M.A. level at McMaster in this area prior to writing their comprehensive examination.

For students in International Relations

Major Field: International Relations – within this major field students will write one examination covering the subfields:

- international relations theory/ state of the field
- global political economy
- globalization, governance and security

Major Field 2 (Teaching Field): Additionally, students will write 1 examination in one of the following teaching fields: Canadian politics, comparative politics, political theory or public policy. Students are normally expected to have completed at least three units beyond the M.A. level at McMaster in this area prior to writing their comprehensive examination.
The comprehensive exams will be in the form of a take-home exam (89 hours for the Major Field 1 exam and 65 hours for the Major Field 2 exam) with a maximum number of words indicated on the exam. The maximum may vary according to the exam but under no circumstances may it exceed 7,500 words for the Major Field 1 exam and 5,000 words for the Major Field 2 exam. Study guides consisting of bibliographies for each examination paper will be revised at least every other year and made available to students by May in their examination year.

As part of the Major Field students must also write a major paper (approximately 6,000-8,000 words or 24-30 double-spaced pages, including footnotes and bibliography) which provides a review of current literature on the politics of a specialized policy or international relations issue area. This paper will in the former case provide a basis for evaluating substantive knowledge of a policy field. The paper must be completed and submitted in draft form within three months of writing of the Comprehensive Examinations and in final form before their oral defense of their research proposal.

The Graduate Chair will organize a workshop three months following the second comprehensive examination, where students will make a fifteen minute presentation of their qualifying papers. While this is not part of the evaluation of the qualifying paper, it does encourage its timely completion.

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

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

A student who fails one or more parts of the Comprehensive Examinations may be asked to leave the programme.
Language Requirements:

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

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

i) passing a language test, arranged by the Chair of the Graduate Committee (see below)

ii) obtaining of mark of B+ or higher on any 6 unit language course offered at a post-secondary institute.

iii) evidence of at least 60 hours of certified language tutoring, plus evidence that the student is capable of translating documents and/or interviews into English

iv) evidence that the student speaks and is otherwise competent in a native language/mother tongue other than English.

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

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

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

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

The thesis subject will be written in the field of comparative and/or international public policy, or in international relations. The student will develop his/her thesis proposal in consultation with the thesis supervisor and other members of his/her Supervisory Committee. The thesis proposal will normally be about 6,000 words or 25 double-spaced pages and will include a description of the research problem in the context of the scholarly literature, an overview of research methods and sources, and a timetable for completion.

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

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

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

**Research Ethics:**

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

Additional information can be found on the MREB site: [https://reo.mcmaster.ca/](https://reo.mcmaster.ca/)

**Thesis:**

The Ph.D. thesis is to be no more than 60,000 words of text. (300 double-spaced pages inclusive of notes and bibliography). Normally, students will take two years to complete the thesis. They should at all times, maintain regular contact with their supervisor. When required, additional members may be added to the supervisory committee to ensure proper supervision of particular aspects of the thesis.
The thesis defense is to be undertaken according to the regulations set out by the School of Graduate Studies.

**Administrative Issues:** Terms of Reference for the Graduate Committee and Public Policy and International Relations area committees.

1. Area committees review applications for the Ph.D. program, selects candidates to be admitted, and recommends funding to the Graduate Committee.

2. In consultation, with area committees, the Graduate Committee assigns and approves supervisors and committee members for Ph.D. supervisory committees.

3. Graduate Committee maintains the Departmental regulations for the Ph.D. program.

4. Graduate Committee establishes processes for setting Ph.D. comprehensive exams.

5. Graduate Committee annually reviews the progress of Ph.D. students.

6. Graduate Committee ranks students for Ontario Graduate Scholarships and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Scholarships.

7. Graduate Committee seeks to promote the Department’s ability to recruit Ph.D. students through preparing publicity and other means.

8. Graduate Committee reviews and develops the Ph.D. program as needed.

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

Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Procedures

Setting

1. About 6 weeks before exams are written a list of previous/banked questions will be distributed to members of the area group by the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

2. Members of the area group are asked to submit additional questions to the area convenor.

3. Two weeks before exams, the area group meets and reviews all questions. Supervisors should be invited, but are not required to attend the meeting.

4. Five questions are chosen from the questions available for the Major Field 2 exam. For the Major Field 1 exam in International Relations, seven questions are chosen (2 in International Relations/State of the Field, 2 in Global Political Economy, and 3 in Globalization, Governance and Security). For the Major Field 1 exam in Comparative Public Policy, nine questions are chosen (3 for each subfield). Should the area convenor be unable to get a group consensus on the exam, the method of the selection will be simple majority. In the event of a tie, the student’s supervisor casts the tie-breaking vote.

Two exams have to be set.

1. Public Policy exam by the public policy group
2. International Relations exam by the international relations group.
3. An exam in the teaching field by the appropriate area group.

5. For the Major Field 1 exam, the student picks up the exam at 4:00 p.m. on day 1 and must return the completed exam by 9:00 a.m. 4 days later, no more than 89 hours after picking up the exam.

For the Major Field 2 exam, the student picks up the exam at 4:00 p.m. on day 1 and must return the completed exam by 9:00 a.m., 3 days later, no more than 65 hours after picking up the exam.

6. The examinations are scheduled in an order to be discussed between the Graduate Chair and the supervisors of the students taking the examinations.
Marking the Comprehensive Exam

1. There are 2 markers for each exam. The markers will be determined by the area convenor and the student’s supervisor. At least one of the markers must be from that particular area. A student’s supervisor may or may not be a marker.

2. The graduate secretary distributes the completed exam and grade sheets to markers. Exams with grade and comments are returned to the Graduate Secretary normally within 2 weeks. Comments are to be made only on the grade sheet.

3. When all exams are returned, the Graduate Chair will give each examiner a copy of the other examiner’s comments on each exam. The Chair then determines the final mark – “Pass with Distinction”, “Pass” or “Fail” and returns exams to the Graduate Secretary. When an exam scores a mark of A+ or contains one A+, the Chair will encourage the examiners to discuss the exam and come to a decision as to whether or not it merits a distinction. Distinctions are awarded per exam. For example, there could be a distinction in each of the major exams and the teaching field. The Graduate Chair informs the Graduate School of the results.

4. In the case of “Pass” or “Pass with Distinction” the comments from the grade sheets are given to supervisor who verbally provides feedback to the student.

5. In the case of a “Failure” a letter is given to the student indicating the reasons for the failure and areas needed for improvement. The letter is written by the convenor in consultation with the supervisor. The letter is sent by the Graduate Chair. Included with the letter will be comments of the markers, which will be all typed but anonymous.

6. Both markers must agree for a failing grade to be given to a student. Failure on one question does not automatically represent failure on the exam. If in the judgement of the markers the exam represents a “satisfactory grasp of the subject matter” a passing grade for the overall exam may be given even if one question is not satisfactory. If necessary a third reader can be consulted.

Marking the Comprehensive Paper

The comprehensive paper is marked as a pass/fail by two markers, the supervisor and one other.

APPENDIX II

The ranking of Ph.D. students applying for SSHRC scholarships will be done by a committee composed of the following people: The Chair of the Graduate Committee, and the members of the International Relations and Public Policy fields.