

On the comprehensives

In order to take comprehensive exams, students must meet minimal expectations for academic achievement, which usually means the completion of at least 3 courses per semester and a GPA of at least B+. Each student's academic record is reviewed by the Fellowship Committee each spring, and a student who does not meet minimal expectations will be so notified by the DGS, and, in a meeting with the DGS and the student's advisor, will be informed of what improvements must occur for the student to be eligible for the comprehensive exams. Students who are so notified and who do not meet these expectations prior to the exams will not be allowed to take them, and will be considered to have failed them one time.

Students who propose to take an exam early must have their academic records reviewed by the DGS to ensure that they are meeting minimal expectations for academic achievement. Students who take the exam early (and only such students) are permitted to take the major without simultaneously taking the minor, which must be taken by or before the normal time.

Students who fail the comprehensive exam on the first attempt will be given written feedback from the orals committee regarding the reasons for the failure and the areas in which improvement is needed. They will also be informed about any problems in their record that could lead to their being awarded a terminal M. Phil. even if they pass the comprehensive on the second attempt. Students who pass may see the chair of the oral examining committee for comments.

If the faculty votes to pass a student on the comprehensive exams, it will then decide whether the student will continue on to pursue their Ph.D. or will receive a terminal M. Phil. In making this decision, the entirety of the student's record and performance will be considered. This includes grades (a B+ is typically a weak grade in Ph.D. studies, although weak grades in other departments may not be counted as heavily as those within our department), the number of incompletes (more than one at the time of the exam weakens the student's record), the quality of the student's research papers, and the performance on the comprehensive exams (students with weaker academic records will be helped by good performance on the exams).

Students who fail the comprehensive exam a second time are terminated from the program.

After discussion with the DGS, students may appeal decisions, but only on the basis of consequential procedural irregularities. Appeals would be decided by the department.

Revision to methods minor

Students wishing to have methodology as their second field must complete all requirements for the minor by May 15 of the student's third year. If a student does not pass the first exam (i.e., if the faculty committee requires revisions of the paper and a second oral exam), all revisions and the second oral exam must be completed by the May 15 deadline. Consequently, students are encouraged to submit their paper and take their first oral exam sufficiently in advance of the May 15 deadline to allow time for revisions and a second oral exam before this deadline. Students who do not pass the exam and

complete all course requirements for the methods minor by the May 15 deadline will not pass the methods minor and thus will not be allowed to continue towards the Ph.D.

Law Minor

For a minor in law, students must take no less than 3 courses in the law school and shall find two law professors who agree to read an original research paper (i.e., a new paper that has not been prepared for class credit) and conduct an oral examination. The arrangements must be approved by a political science faculty member. Students wishing to have law as their second field must complete all requirements for the minor by May 15 of the student's third year. If a student does not pass the first exam (i.e., if the faculty committee requires revisions of the paper and a second oral exam), all revisions and the second oral exam must be completed by the May 15 deadline. Consequently, students are encouraged to submit their paper and take their first oral exam sufficiently in advance of the May 15 deadline to allow time for revisions and a second oral exam before this deadline. Students who do not pass the exam and complete all course requirements for the law minor by the May 15 deadline will not pass the minor and thus will not be allowed to continue towards the Ph.D.

Mini-APSA

In the spring of their second year, students must present a research paper at the Departmental “mini-APSA”. This paper need not be written especially for this occasion, but can be or grow out of one done for a course. Students will not be graded for the exercise, but will receive comments.