

PHILOSOPHY, MA

The Department of Philosophy offers work leading to the doctor of philosophy with a major in philosophy.

The MA is granted to PhD program students when they pass their preliminary examinations and become a dissertator. When a student must leave the program early and is unable to complete a PhD, a terminal MA is granted upon satisfying the department's criteria for a master's degree.

The PhD degree is awarded in recognition of a successfully completed program of advanced studies in philosophy, culminating in a dissertation which represents a contribution to philosophy or to philosophical scholarship.

The PhD program falls into two major stages. The first consists of work that prepares the student for admission to candidacy for the PhD degree. Studies during the first stage of the program are devoted to acquiring the philosophical skills and learning needed to do philosophy in the second stage when writing a successful dissertation.

The department offers five years of support to all incoming graduate students. Support begins with the first fall semester and continues for at least nine additional semesters, provided the student makes satisfactory academic progress and carries out duties acceptably as a graduate assistant.

The department assigns a faculty member as placement officer and devotes a significant portion of staff resources to help graduates find employment.

ADMISSIONS

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This master's program is offered for work leading to the PhD. Students may not apply directly for the master's and should instead see the admissions information for the PhD (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/philosophy/philosophy-phd/>).

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

[The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student.](#) [Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid.](#) [Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.](#) Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

We offer five years of support to all incoming graduate students, beginning their first fall semester, and continuing for at least nine additional semesters, provided the student makes satisfactory academic progress and carries out duties acceptably as graduate assistants. The support may vary from year to year between assistantships and lectureships.

Note to International Students

Please be advised that all students who are not United States citizens must prove that they have the financial means to live and study in the U.S. before they are granted a visa. For an explanation of this policy, see International Applicant Financial Information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/international-students/#financialinformation>).

Additional Financial Aid

Citizens of the United States and permanent residents should contact the Office of Student Financial Aid (<https://financialaid.wisc.edu/>) (608-262-3060) for more information on eligibility, how and when to apply, and types of aid.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirements>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policies>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW-Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	34 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	21 credits taken in PHILOS seminars (courses numbered between 800 and 989).

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	30 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.50 GPA required.
Other Grade Requirements	Philosophy requires a grade of B or better in all PHILOS seminars.
Assessments and Examinations	None.
Language Requirements	No language requirements. Students in the History of Philosophy area may find it important to take additional language courses in consultation with their advisor.

REQUIRED COURSES

Philosophy courses in our department are divided into two categories. Students are expected to complete courses in both categories:

1. Ethics, aesthetics, and social and political philosophy; and
2. Metaphysics, epistemology, logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, or philosophy of science.

First year graduate students may not register for PHILOS 599 Directed Study, PHILOS 699 Directed Study, or PHILOS (<https://guide.wisc.edu/courses/philos/>) courses numbered 990-998. No more than one course numbered between 400-600 may satisfy the minimum credit requirements for the MA.

Code	Title	Credits
Proseminar		3
All students are expected to take the first year proseminar in their first semester in the program.		
PHILOS 902	Proseminar in Philosophy	
Teaching Seminar		1
Students must take this course during the first year of teaching.		
PHILOS 904	Teaching Philosophy	
Other Seminars		30
Students must also complete 30 credits or 10 seminars from the following:		
PHILOS 701	Reading Seminar ¹	
PHILOS 903	Seminar: Epistemology	
PHILOS 911	Seminar-Logic	
PHILOS 916	Seminar-Philosophy of Language	
PHILOS 920	Seminar-Philosophy of Science:Causation, Explanation & Probability	
PHILOS 941	Seminar-Ethics	
PHILOS 951	Seminar-Philosophy of Mind	
PHILOS 955	Seminar Social and Political Philosophy	
PHILOS 960	Metaphysics Seminar	
<i>History of Philosophy Requirement (6 credits)</i>		
Within the 10 seminar requirement, students must complete 6 credits of History of Philosophy courses.		

PHILOS 830	Advanced History of Philosophy
PHILOS 835	Advanced History of Philosophy
Logic	
Students must select one of the three options to complete this requirement.	
<i>Option 1</i>	
Pass a proficiency exam administered by our Logic Committee.	
<i>Option 2</i>	
Pass an advanced UW logic course like those listed below. Students may apply the one of the following courses toward the seminar requirement.	
PHILOS 511 or PHILOS 512	Symbolic Logic Methods of Logic
<i>Option 3</i>	
Pass a course at another institution that includes or surpasses the content of PHILOS 511 or PHILOS 512. The Logic Committee will review documentation related to the relevant course's content and determine whether the student thereby satisfies the logic requirement.	

Total Credits **34**

¹ No more than one PHILOS 701 course may satisfy the minimum credit requirement.

Seminar Requirement

Each of the other listed seminars (except for the Proseminar and Teaching Seminar) meets with a concurrently offered PHILOS 701 Reading Seminar. Students who complete PHILOS 701 in place of the other listed seminar attend all the seminar meetings and complete the readings, but have a substantially lighter workload, determined by the professor before the beginning of the semester.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 6 credits of graduate coursework taken as a graduate student from other institutions. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No credits from a UW-Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to transfer toward the degree.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 9 credits of coursework numbered 500 or above taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. Coursework earned ten or more years prior to admission to a master's is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION

Students who have four or more grades of "Incomplete" may not register for further work until these Incompletes have been removed. It is the policy of the philosophy department not to give Incompletes, except when illness or events beyond the student's control prevent the completion of course work.

If a student who is not making satisfactory progress (a) has at any one time three or more Incompletes that have been on the student's record for one semester or more, or (b) has not passed the dissertation prospectus examination by the end of the ninth semester of residency, or (c) has at any time a cumulative GPA of less than 3.5 in philosophy graduate seminars (those numbered 800 and above), then the student will be placed on probation; and if after two semesters there is still a deficiency, the student will be removed from the program.

No student while on probation is eligible for appointment as a TA, PA, or RA nor will that student be recommended by the department for a fellowship.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects students to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

The assistant to the chair serves as the advisor for the first year or so. Students then select an advisor and, as coursework and other requirements are completed, a committee of faculty is selected by the student to serve as advisors.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

12 credits

TIME LIMITS

The program of study that you work out will be designed for completion, normally, by the end of the sixth or seventh semester of full-time graduate studies.

To make satisfactory academic progress, a student must attempt to complete the logic requirement by the end of his or her first year. If the student does not fulfill the requirement, then another attempt must be made in the third semester. If the student fails to satisfy the requirement again, another attempt must be made in the fourth semester. If the student fails to pass the requirement by the end of his or her fourth semester, then this will constitute failure to make satisfactory academic

progress. Subject to instructor's willingness, a student may attempt to pass the requirement more than once in a semester.

All entering graduate students will participate in a proseminar in their first term in residence. All graduate students must take the Teaching Philosophy course during their first year of teaching.

A student who is normally enrolled and in residence in the PhD program is making satisfactory progress unless that student:

- has not attempted to complete the logic requirement by the end of the first year in residence and continued to attempt to complete the logic requirement in each subsequent semester until completing this requirement, or
- has not completed the logic requirement by the end of the second year in residence, or
- has not satisfied the history of philosophy requirement by the end of the third year of residence, or
- as not become a dissertator by the end of the fourth year of residence, or
- has not passed the examination on the dissertation prospectus by (a) the end of the ninth semester in residence or (b) within one year after passing the prelim, whichever is later.

Moreover, failure to submit a passing prelim by the end of the seventh semester will result in dismissal from the program.

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)

- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress
- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
 - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.

- b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.
 - c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.
4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Expert ability to think critically about arguments.
2. Expert ability to interpret complex texts accurately and analyze them logically.
3. Ability to communicate very precisely and concisely in both writing and in speech.
4. In-depth familiarity with the history of Western philosophy and the major debates within that tradition.
5. Interpretative charity, and intellectual honesty, which includes appropriate attribution to others of their ideas, and recognition and frankness about the limitations of one's own ideas.