Academic Information

General Requirements
To earn a PhD at Washington University, a student must complete 72 semester hours, maintain satisfactory academic progress, pass certain examinations, fulfill residence and teaching requirements, write, defend, and submit a dissertation, and file an Intent to Graduate form on WebSTAC (https://acadinfo.wustl.edu).

Semester Hours
Programs vary greatly in distributing their students’ semester hours between those earned by taking courses and those earned by doing research, but the completed semester hours must total 72. Full-time students register for 9-12 hours per semester and thus finish this requirement in their first three to four years of graduate study. Thereafter, full-time student status can be maintained by registering for doctoral continuing student status. Part-time student status can be maintained by registering for nonresident student status.

Courses
To count toward the 72-hour requirement, courses must be offered at the graduate level, taken for a grade, and approved in advance by the student’s adviser and program as eligible to count toward the student’s degree. Depending on the program, graduate-level work begins with courses numbered in the 400s or 500s. Audited courses and courses taken pass/fail cannot be counted toward the degree and may not be eligible for tuition remission. Students should consult their advisers regarding these options.

When certain conditions apply, graduate students may be permitted to register for Arts & Sciences courses numbered below 400, but they may not ordinarily be counted for credit toward a graduate degree, and they are not covered by tuition scholarships unless taken in addition to 9 hours at the graduate level or approved by the Dean of the Graduate School or his designee. University College offers undergraduate and graduate courses in the evenings during the academic year and both by day and at night during the summer. Full-time students in the Graduate School who wish to take graduate courses in University College or Summer School for credit toward their degree programs must obtain the approval both of their academic adviser and of the Dean of the Graduate School. Tuition remission may be available for such approved course work.

Registration
Students newly admitted to Graduate Arts & Sciences receive from the University Registrar information on creating a WUSTL Key that is used to register online via WebSTAC during open registration periods. All registrations require online approval by the student’s faculty adviser and are monitored by the Graduate School.

Grades
Credit-conferring grades for graduate students in Arts & Sciences are these: A, outstanding; B, good; C, conditional (an A, B or C grade may be modified by a plus or minus); S, satisfactory; and U, unsatisfactory (used almost exclusively for semester hours earned by doing research). Other grades are F, failing; N, not submitted yet; X, final examination missed; and I, incomplete. The mark of I becomes a permanent part of the student’s record after the lapse of one calendar year unless the program in which the mark was assigned requests an extension of time.

Arts & Sciences uses a 4-point scale for calculating grade point averages, with A = 4, B = 3, and C = 2. A plus adds .3 to the value of a grade, whereas a minus subtracts .3 from the value of a grade.

Retaking a Course
Graduate students may be allowed to retake a course with prior permission from their department or program. The department can refuse the student’s request. If permission to retake a course is granted, both registrations will show on the transcript. The grade for the first enrollment will always be replaced by the symbol R, whether or not it is lower than or equal to the original grade. The grade for the second enrollment will be used to calculate the GPA. The grade for the first enrollment will not be replaced with an R until the second enrollment is completed and its grade has posted. A student who retakes a course without prior permission might not receive permission retroactively and might not receive credit for the second enrollment. No student may use the retake option to replace a grade received as a sanction for violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. The R option may be invoked only once per course, and the original grade option must be retained.

Transferred Credits
For PhD students, the maximum credit ordinarily transferable is one full year of study (24 semester hours). Applications to transfer credit are not ordinarily approved, however, until one full year has been completed at Washington University. Academic credits counted toward requirements for the bachelor’s degree are ordinarily not transferable toward the doctoral degree. Likewise, academic credits counted toward requirements for any completed graduate degree are ordinarily not transferable toward a subsequent degree of equivalent or lower level.

Satisfactory Academic Progress
Satisfactory academic progress for students in PhD programs is monitored by the Graduate School as well as the degree program. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress
may result in immediate dismissal or in placement on academic
probation for the ensuing year. Most financial awards, and all
federally funded awards, are contingent on the maintenance of
satisfactory academic progress. Moreover, satisfactory academic
progress is a prerequisite for service on any committee
approved by the Graduate School. The following are minimal
standards of satisfactory academic progress for PhD students;
degree programs may set stricter standards, but must not relax
these.

1. Students are expected to proceed at a pace appropriate to
enable them to finish within the time limits discussed below.
No later than the end of the fourth year of full-time graduate
study, students are expected to have completed all PhD
requirements except for the dissertation.
2. Students are expected to maintain a cumulative grade point
average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in courses that count
toward their 72 hours. Thus, among courses of equal weight,
each grade of C must be balanced by at least one A. (Note
that plus and minus marks alter the numerical value of a
letter grade.)
3. Students are expected not to carry at one time any more
than 9 semester hours for which the grades of I (incomplete),
X (final examination missed), or N (not yet submitted) are
recorded. The Graduate School may deny a student with
more than 9 unfinished credits permission to register.
4. After four years of full-time graduate study, doctoral students
who cannot identify three faculty members who are willing
to serve on their Research Advisory Committee are not
considered to be making satisfactory academic progress.
The Title, Scope, and Procedure form must be filed before
the fifth year in order to identify membership of the student's
Research Advisory Committee.
5. Students in doctoral programs have up to seven calendar
years, dated from their first registration in a graduate degree
program at Washington University, to complete degree
requirements. Extension of the period of doctoral study may
be granted on an annual basis if circumstances warrant.
Extensions are obtained by application to the student to
the degree program, endorsement by the degree program
to the Graduate School, and approval by the Graduate
School. Students will not be allowed to register for an 11th
consecutive year.

**Qualifying Examinations**

Progress toward the PhD is contingent upon passing
examinations variously called preliminary, qualifying, general,
comprehensive, or major field exams. The qualifying process
varies according to the program. In some programs, it consists
of a series of incremental, sequential, and cumulative exams
over a considerable time. In others, the exams are held in a
relatively short period. Exams may be taken orally or in writing;
they may be replaced by one or more papers. The program,
which determines the form these required examinations take, is
responsible for notifying the Graduate School of the student's
successful completion of them.

**Residence Requirements**

The residence requirements for the PhD are:

1. that each student must earn at least 48 semester hours of
   the required 72 at Washington University and
2. that each student must spend at least one academic year
   registered for full-time credits (9-12 in the fall followed by
   9-12 in the spring) at Washington University.

Any exceptions to these requirements must be approved by
the Dean of the Graduate School. All PhD programs prefer that
students remain full-time and in residence throughout their work
toward the degree.

**Teaching Requirement**

Graduate students must meet department and Graduate School-
wide teaching requirements. PhD students must demonstrate
competency in teaching at the basic level and at the advanced
level. For more information, students should consult their
Director of Graduate Studies for discipline-specific guidelines on
fulfilling the requirements.

**The Dissertation**

Each candidate, as evidence of mastery of a specific field
of knowledge and capacity for original, scholarly work, must
complete a dissertation. The subject must be approved by
a Research Advisory Committee consisting of at least three
tenured or tenure-track faculty members. This committee
is ordinarily led by the student's major adviser and must be
approved by the Graduate School.

A Title, Scope, and Procedure Form for the dissertation must
be signed by the committee members and by the program
Chair. It must be submitted to the Graduate School at least six
months before the degree is expected to be conferred or before
beginning the fifth year of full-time enrollment, whichever is
earlier.

A Doctoral Dissertation Guide, which gives instructions
regarding the format of the dissertation, is available on
the Graduate School’s Policies and Guides page (http://
grduateschool.wustl.edu/policies-and-guides); it should be read
carefully at every stage of a student's dissertation preparation.
The Graduate School requires each student to make the full
text of the dissertation available to the committee members for
their review at least one week before the defense. Most degree
programs require two or more weeks for the review period;
students should check with their faculty.

**Dissertation Defense**

Approval of the dissertation by the Research Advisory
Committee is necessary to bring it to the defense. The
committee before which the student is examined consists of at least five members, who normally meet two independent criteria:

1. Four of the five must be tenured or tenure-track Washington University faculty; one of these four may be a member of the emeritus faculty. The fifth member must have a doctoral degree and an active research program, whether at Washington University, at another university, in government, or in industry.

2. Three of the five normally come from the student’s degree program; at least one of the five must not.

All committees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences or by his or her designee, regardless of whether they meet the normal criteria.

The committee is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School upon the request of the degree program. The student is responsible for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to his or her committee members for their review in advance of the defense. Faculty and graduate students who are interested in the subject of the dissertation are normally welcome to attend all or part of the defense but may ask questions only at the discretion of the committee members. Though there is some variation among degree programs, the defense ordinarily focuses on the dissertation itself and its relation to the student's field of expertise.

**Dissertation Submission**

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation online to the Graduate School. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest UMI, but the university permits students to make whichever choices they prefer. Students are asked to submit the Survey of Earned Doctorates separately. The degree program is responsible for delivering the final approval form, signed by the committee members at the defense and then by the program chair or director, to the Graduate School. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning the degree only when their dissertation submission has been accepted by the Graduate School.

**Graduation Information**

Students are responsible for filing an Intent to Graduate form in order to have each earned degree conferred. The Intent to Graduate is available online through WebSTAC. Deadlines for filing an Intent to Graduate are listed on the Graduate School’s website. No degree will be awarded if this form has not been filed. Students who do not complete their degree requirements by their intended graduation date must re-file for the next graduation date.

**Specific Circumstances**

**Changes in Program of Study**

Students are usually admitted to the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences to study toward specific degrees. Therefore, a change in the degree objective (e.g., from AM to PhD) is subject to the approval of the student's program and of the Graduate School. A request for a change in the subject of study (e.g., from economics to history) requires the approval of both programs concerned as well as that of the Graduate School. Students may be required to fill out a new application for admission before making such changes, but they will not be charged a second application fee.

**Student Grievance Procedures**

From time to time, students may feel that they have legitimate complaints regarding academic matters or an interaction with a faculty member. It is important that students and faculty have a common understanding of how such complaints may be expressed and resolved. Students with complaints regarding academic matters should initially seek resolution from their faculty adviser, then from their Director of Graduate Studies, and finally the chair of their degree program. Complaints which remain unresolved may be addressed to any of the deans in their School. The final court of appeal for all graduate students in Arts & Sciences is the Dean of the Graduate School.

All complaints regarding academic and professional integrity should be addressed to an Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Washington University policies state that members of the university community can expect to be free from discrimination and harassment. Students, faculty, staff, and outside organizations working on campus are required to abide by specific policies prohibiting harassment.

An allegation of sexual discrimination may be appealed to the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, who will determine whether to convene the Title IX Grievance Committee to hear the case. Visit [http://hr.wustl.edu/policies/Pages/SexualHarassment.aspx](http://hr.wustl.edu/policies/Pages/SexualHarassment.aspx) for more information.

**Leaves of Absence**

Students who wish to suspend their graduate study should apply for a leave of absence. A student's application for a leave of absence must be endorsed by the degree program and then approved by the Graduate School.

Such a leave may be personal or medical. In the case of a medical leave the student must present authorization from Student Health Services at the beginning and again at the end of the leave. At the end of any leave of absence, a student is reinstated into the Graduate School under the conditions prevailing at the time the leave was granted. Being on leave suspends student status and financial support from the
Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinary Course Work

PhD students can discuss with their advisers individual courses available outside their school that may advance their research or professional goals. A university tuition agreement signed by all the deans of the university’s graduate and professional schools fosters interdisciplinary study across the schools and allows enrollment in classes outside the student’s home school. Many courses, undergraduate as well as graduate, are available for graduate student enrollment subject to eligibility guidelines:

- Students must be registered full time in graduate degree programs and have the approval of their faculty adviser or administrative officer to take a course outside their home school.
- Courses will be open to students outside the discipline only if the students have met the required prerequisites, have the approval from their department, and the course instructor agrees to admit such students.
- Finally, courses in the evening divisions, including University College and its Summer School, are not part of this agreement, and courses requiring individualized instruction and/or additional fees (such as independent studies or individual music lessons) are also excluded.

Joint and Dual Degree Programs

The university has set up numerous programs permitting students to earn two graduate and/or professional degrees at the same time. One of these programs includes a PhD degree from Arts & Sciences:

Medical Scientist Training Program (MD/PhD in various disciplines)

The Graduate School uses the term “joint degree” to refer to programs in which one or more semester hours are counted toward both degrees. The Graduate School uses the term “dual degree” to refer to programs in which no semester hours are counted toward both degrees. Interested students must apply to and be admitted by each degree program separately, but ideally all applications should be made before beginning graduate or professional study. Joint and dual degrees are ordinarily conferred simultaneously, after all the requirements for both degrees have been met.

Students wishing to pursue joint or dual degrees other than these may be permitted to do so, but such requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Admission to an individualized joint degree program between two Arts & Sciences disciplines on the Danforth Campus must be recommended by the Directors of Graduate Studies for both disciplines and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Admission to an individualized joint degree program involving another school of the university must be recommended by the
Directors of Graduate Studies for both disciplines and approved by the deans of both schools. Recommendations should address a variety of academic and administrative concerns, including the timeline for completion of both degrees and responsibility for funding the student and remitting the tuition. Students should not undertake study toward an individualized joint degree program until it has been fully approved.

**Graduate Certificates**

The certificates offered to full-time students in the Graduate School are all interdisciplinary in nature:

- American Culture Studies
- Film and Media Studies
- Language Instruction
- Latin American Studies
- Translation Studies
- Urban Studies
- Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Graduate certificates are open to students in PhD programs at Washington University. They require 15 semester hours, 6 of which should also be counted toward the requirement of 72 semester hours for the PhD. Interested students must fill out an application for admission to a certificate program and receive the approval of their degree program's chair, the certificate program's director, and the dean of the Graduate School. The application form is posted on the Graduate School's website (http://graduateschool.wustl.edu/prospective_students/application-instructions). Tuition remission is usually available for the additional semester hours required to complete a certificate program; however, earning a certificate does not increase a student's expected time to degree or amount of stipend support. No student will be admitted to, given tuition remission for, or awarded more than one graduate certificate.