

French and Comparative Literature, PhD

Doctoral Candidacy

To earn a PhD at Washington University, a student must complete all courses required by their department; maintain satisfactory academic progress; pass certain examinations; fulfill residence and Mentored Experience Requirements; write, defend, and submit a dissertation; and file an Intent to Graduate. For a general layout of doctoral degree general requirements in Arts & Sciences, including an explanation of Satisfactory Academic Progress, students should review the Doctoral Degree Academic Information page of the Arts & Sciences *Bulletin*.

Program Requirements

- **Total Units Required:** 63 for students without an AM; 72 for students with an AM (**Note:** Remission applies for a maximum of 72 graduate-level units.)
- **Degree Length:** 6 years for students without an AM; 5 years for students with an AM
 - **Note:** Students must be enrolled in 9 graduate credits each semester to retain full-time status. As students complete their course work, if enrolled in fewer than 9 graduate credits, they must enroll in a specific Arts & Sciences graduate course that will show 0 units but does count as full-time status. Students should connect with their department to ensure proper enrollment prior to Add/Drop.
 - Romance Languages and Literatures assures funding for up to 12 semesters for full-time students in good academic standing.
 - The dual PhD degree in French and Comparative Literature requires the study of French literature and culture, over the course of which the student virtually duplicates the courses and other preparations expected of a doctoral candidate in French. In addition, students complete the 12-unit core requirement for the Comparative Literature PhD program, which includes Comp Lit 502 Introduction to Comparative Literature. For a description of this core, please review the requirements for the [PhD in Comparative Literature](#).

PhD in French and Comparative Literature

The dual PhD programs require a focus on a "home" literature, in which the student normally duplicates the courses and other preparations expected of a doctoral candidate in that literature or program. This focus is combined with training in approaches, methods, and theories offered by the program in Comparative Literature and articulated by

its core requirements. It is expected that students in the dual programs include one or more comparatist elements in their comprehensive examinations and dissertation. Requirements in the home departments vary.

The dual degree student must in any case complete a minimum of 12 units of course work in Comparative Literature: the 12-unit core requirements for the comparative literature program. These core requirements include Comp Lit 502 Introduction to Comparative Literature and three additional Comparative Literature courses (3 units each) distributed among three of four designated categories.

Upon joining the dual degree program, students must be competent in a minimum of two languages pertinent to their work and their objectives. They must also meet the language requirements of the department in which the primary literature program is located. After joining the program, students have the possibility of acquiring reading knowledge of an additional language pertinent to their dissertation work.

Required Courses

- Four courses comprising the Comparative Literature core requirement, including Comp Lit 502 Introduction to Comparative Literature and three additional courses distributed among designated categories (refer to the PhD in Comparative Literature for the listing of designated categories).
- Courses as required for the PhD in French (refer to the PhD in French Language and Literature for the listing of course requirements).
- Language Requirements:
 - Upon joining the dual degree program, students must be competent in a minimum of two languages pertinent to their work and their objectives. Both languages will be evaluated by an expert in each language.
 - Students must also meet the language requirements of the department in which the primary literature program is located.
- Qualifying Examinations:
 - Comparative Literature PhD dual degree students will take the comprehensive examinations required in French. At least one of these examinations must entail a comparatist element; this element is to be identified and negotiated with the examination committee, which will include at least one faculty member representing Comparative Literature.
- Dissertation Committee:
 - The dissertation committee should include at least one faculty member representing Comparative Literature. The dissertation itself should — in its theoretical grounding, approach, transnational or transcultural scope, and/or interdisciplinarity — speak to the field of Comparative Literature as currently constituted.

Qualifying Examinations

Progress toward the PhD is contingent upon the student passing examinations that are 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 during a relatively short period of time. Exams may be replaced by one or more papers. The program, which determines the structure and schedule of the required examinations, is responsible for notifying the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, of the student's outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful.

Mentored Experience Requirements

Doctoral students at Washington University must complete a department-defined Mentored Experience. The Mentored Experience Requirement is a doctoral degree milestone that is notated on the student's transcript when complete. Each department has an established Mentored Experience Implementation Plan in which the number of units that a student must earn through Mentored Teaching Experience(s) and/or Mentored Professional Experience(s) is defined. The Mentored Experience Implementation Plans outline how doctoral students within the discipline will be mentored to achieve competencies in teaching at basic and advanced levels. Some departments may elect to include Mentored Professional Experiences as an avenue for completing some units of the Mentored Experience Requirement. Doctoral students will enroll in LGS 6XXX Mentored Teaching Experience or LGS 7020 Mentored Professional Experience to signify their progression toward completing the overall Mentored Experience Requirement for the degree.

The Doctoral Dissertation

A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) must be created no later than the end of the student's third year; departments may set shorter timelines (e.g., by the end of the student's second year) for this requirement. As evidence of the mastery of a specific field of knowledge and of the capacity for original scholarly work, each candidate must complete a dissertation that is approved by their RAC.

A Title, Scope & Procedure Form for the dissertation must be signed by the committee members and by the program chair. It must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, at least 6 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 & Template that give instructions regarding the format of the dissertation are available on the website of the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Both should be read carefully at every stage of dissertation preparation.

The Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, requires each student to make the full text of the dissertation available to the committee members for their review at least 1 week before the defense. Most degree programs require 2 or more weeks for the review period; students should check with their faculty.

The Dissertation Defense

Approval of the written dissertation by the RAC is necessary before the student can orally defend their dissertation. The Dissertation Defense Committee that observes and examines the student's defense consists of at least five members, who normally meet these 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 Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, regardless of whether they meet the normal criteria.

The committee is appointed by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences, upon the request of the degree program. The student is responsible for making the full text of the dissertation accessible to their 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. Although 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.

Submission of the Dissertation

After the defense, the student must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation online to the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. The submission website requires students to choose among publishing and copyrighting services offered by ProQuest's ETD Administrator. 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 Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences. Students who defend their dissertations successfully have not yet completed their PhD requirements; they finish earning their degree only when their dissertation submission has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Studies, Arts & Sciences.

Master's Degree Along the Way

Students who do not already hold a master's degree in French literature will receive one from Washington University during the course of their study for the PhD upon successful completion of the AM exam.