

M.A. Program in Philosophy
Graduate Student Handbook
2024-2025

**BOSTON COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

GRADUATE STUDIES HANDBOOK

The Department offers a comprehensive program in the history and problems of philosophy, allowing for concentration in the following areas: ancient philosophy; medieval philosophy; early modern philosophy; continental European philosophy from Kant to the present; social and political philosophy; epistemology; and philosophy of science. A significant feature of the program is the extensive and diverse range of courses available to graduate students every semester.

The department offers an M.A. program and a Ph.D. program as well as a 5th year B.A./M.A. The Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Committee administer these programs. The Graduate Committee is composed of the Chairperson (or the Assistant Chair), the Graduate Program Director, the M.A. Coordinator, the Placement Director, and the Teaching Seminar Coordinator. The Admissions Committee is composed of the Graduate Committee plus additional faculty members as needed. The department also offers an M.A. in Philosophy, Law, and Policy (PLP), a Joint M.A. in Philosophy and Theology, and a Joint M.A./J.D. For these, the student should be in contact with the respective directors of the programs.

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The M.A. Program in Philosophy

Timeline

- Students typically complete the M.A. in two years.
- There is a five year time limit for completing the M.A. Students who may need more time should consult with the Graduate Program Director.

Advisement

- Each student will be assigned a faculty member as an Academic Advisor.
- Students are encouraged to be proactive. They should be in touch with their Academic Advisor early and often.
- See the supplemental document “M.A. Program Graduate Advising Guidelines” for further information.

Requirements for the degree

- 30 credits of coursework, including one course in each of Ancient, Medieval, and Modern philosophy
- Proficiency in one foreign language
- Passing, or Passing with Distinction, the Qualifying Paper

Coursework

- Courses coded PHIL5000 and above may be applied to the fulfillment of the coursework requirement. Courses 5000–6999 are typically joint undergraduate/graduate student courses, whereas those 7000 and above are typically graduate student-only courses.
- Oftentimes, students will take two courses in the Fall semester and three in the Spring semester. Alternatively, students may take three courses each semester of their first year and two courses each semester of their second year. Contact your Academic Advisor for course selection recommendations.
- Students who have completed one full semester of graduate work may apply for transfer credit for up to two (2) graduate courses (6 credits) taken prior to entrance to the program and not applied to another degree program, subject to approval by the Graduate Program Director. Only courses in which a student has received a grade of B or better, and which have not been applied to a prior degree, will be accepted. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the relevant forms.
- After approval by the Graduate Program Director, students may cross-register for (not cross-listed) philosophy-relevant courses offered in other departments at BC or in some other universities that are part of the consortium (viz., Boston University, Tufts, Brandeis, the Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality, or the Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium). Students are limited to one (1) cross-registered course from another university per semester.
- Students are required to take at least one course in each of the three historical areas of philosophy: Ancient (to Augustine), Medieval (from Augustine to Descartes), and Modern (from Descartes to c. 1900). Courses spanning two of these periods may

count only toward one. This requirement does not represent a preference in the department for students to work in the history of philosophy but the long-standing commitment of the department to an appreciation for the history of philosophy. Students who are uncertain whether a course counts as fulfilling this requirement should contact the Graduate Program Director.

- By university policy, graduate students in degree programs must register each semester until they graduate. If, temporarily, they cannot attend the program, they have to apply for a leave of absence with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs of the Morrissey College Graduate School. If a student has finished their coursework but not other requirements for the program, they must register for PHIL8888 Interim Study.

Language Proficiency

- Proficiency may be demonstrated by:
 - Having received a grade of B or better in two semesters of a language class at the elementary college level or one semester at the intermediate college level, or
 - Scoring B1 or above on the CEFR exam, or
 - Receiving a grade of B or better in a language class for graduate students at Boston College (n.b., students may take a language course at Boston College at a reduced rate of tuition—contact the Graduate Program Assistant for information), or
 - Depending on the language, by passing the department’s language examination (for further information on this exam, please consult the Graduate Program Director or the Language Exam Coordinator), or
 - In the case of a native foreign language, by documentation showing that the student has formally studied in this language at high school level or higher.
- All students must complete the Graduate Program Language Requirement Form. Contact the Graduate Program Assistant for the form.
- Students should talk with their Academic Advisors about which language is most suitable for their study plans.

M.A. Qualifying Paper

- M.A. students must write, submit, and pass (or pass with distinction) a research paper, called the Qualifying Paper or QP, on a topic of their choice. For students completing the program in two years, this is typically submitted for evaluation by November 1 of the third semester.
- The maximum length of the paper is 7,000 words, all inclusive.
- The students must work with a Qualifying Paper Mentor (of their choosing) on this paper. The Qualifying Paper Mentor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Professors of the Practice may serve as co-mentors. The Qualifying Paper Mentor must approve the paper prior to submission.
- Students are encouraged to derive the paper from a term paper.
- Contact the Graduate Program Assistant for information regarding how to submit the qualifying paper.
- See the supplemental document “The M.A. Qualifying Paper” for more information.

M.A. Thesis

- Students may write an M.A. thesis over two consecutive semesters. Doing so counts towards two courses (6 credits), and each semester the student must register for PHIL8801 Master's Thesis.
- It is the responsibility of the student to secure a Thesis Supervisor and second reader and to prepare a thesis proposal.
- A copy of the proposal and the names of the Thesis Supervisor and a second reader must be presented to the Graduate Program Director prior to registering for the thesis.
- The typescript of the thesis must be prepared according to a recognized manual of style (e.g., the MLA) and to the formal specifications of the Morrissey College Graduate School.
- The M.A. Thesis is different from the Qualifying Paper, but the Qualifying Paper may be derived from the M.A. Thesis.

Standing

- A student will be deemed to be making poor progress toward completion of the degree when accumulating two or more Incompletes turned into Fs for coursework, and/or two or more grades of C or less.
- Any student in this situation must meet immediately with the M.A. Coordinator or the Graduate Program Director, who will give specific directions for what must be accomplished to return to good standing.
- Students can be removed from the program after being in bad standing for two semesters.
- Students with three or more F's are barred from registration for further courses.
- By Graduate School policy, students are expected to maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

Funding

- Neither funding nor tuition remission from the Morrissey Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is normally available for students in the M.A. program.

Graduation

- In order to graduate, the students must have satisfied all the requirements for the degree and must notify the Graduate Program Assistant of their intent to graduate at the start of the semester they intend to graduate.
- There are three possible graduation months: May; August; and December.

The M.A. Qualifying Paper

Nature, Length, and Format

- The Qualifying Paper is a research paper in addition to any paper written for coursework, although it may be derived from a class paper. It must be different from the M.A. Thesis if the student is writing one, though it may be derived from the M.A. Thesis.
- The maximum length of the paper is 7,000 words, all inclusive. The minimum length is to be determined in consultation with the Qualifying Paper Mentor.
- The student must follow the formatting instructions which are at the end of this document.

Qualifying Paper Mentor

- All M.A. Qualifying Papers must be read by the student's Qualifying Paper Mentor before submission. The Qualifying Paper Mentor need not be one's Academic Advisor. The Qualifying Paper Mentor must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Non-tenure track faculty members may serve as Qualifying Paper Co-Mentors; however, final approval for submission must be given by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member.
- The Mentor will communicate to the Graduate Program Assistant that he or she has read the paper and finds it suitable for submission.
- Qualifying Paper Mentors are advised not to approve a paper for submission unless the writing is intelligible English, perhaps having some flaws, but not enough to impede sense; the formatting is up to code (pagination, sections, bibliography, citations, etc.); the abstract and paper length are within the parameters; and there is a discernible topic, thesis, and (not necessarily successful) argument to the paper.
- A Qualifying Paper Mentor's approval to submit the essay is not an assurance the essay will pass.

Submission Dates

- The paper must be anonymized and submitted electronically on or before November 1.
- Students who do not plan to apply to graduate school in their final year of the program may instead submit their Qualifying Papers in the Spring by March 1, although they are also encouraged to aim for the November 1 deadline.
- Note that students who submit and pass their Qualifying Papers in the Spring term may not be cleared to graduate in the Spring semester if review takes longer than expected. In such cases, they may be cleared to graduate in August.
- Please contact the Graduate Program Assistant for information regarding how to submit the Qualifying Paper.

Grades

- The grades, in descending order, are Pass with Distinction, Pass, Pass with Minor Revisions, Pass with Major Revisions, and Fail.

- Students must receive at least a Pass or Pass with Distinction to satisfy the requirement.
- Papers that receive Pass with Minor Revisions or Pass with Major Revisions must be resubmitted with the required changes made, whereupon the paper will be reevaluated. Students who receive a Pass with Minor Revisions or Pass with Major Revisions do not have to wait until the next semester's deadline to resubmit. A grade of Fail requires waiting until the next official deadline.
- Fail means that that paper is not workable in its present form and that the referees deem the paper unsuitable for resubmission even after further work. Students who fail are advised to consult with their Qualifying Paper Mentor, the M.A. Coordinator, and/or the Graduate Program Director to determine how best to proceed.

Graders

- Students may submit the names of up to three tenured or tenure-track faculty members (or, with the permission of the Graduate Program Director, the names of Professors of the Practice) from the department only as preferred graders, excluding the Qualifying Paper Mentor under whose guidance the paper has been prepared. Students should not ask potential referees in advance to serve in this role, as the review process is blind.
- The M.A. Coordinator will choose two tenured or tenure-track faculty members to evaluate the paper. While trying to find the most suitable graders, the M.A. Coordinator is not bound by the names submitted.
- Graders will not be informed of the student's identity until after their grade is submitted. They may receive that information after the decision.
- Students will not be informed of the names of the graders until they receive a grade, after which they will be informed of the graders' names, along with the reports, in case they wish to seek further advice from the graders.
- By December 1, the two graders will each send back a report to the M.A. Coordinator with their remarks and advice for improvement (especially in view of making the paper a good writing sample for future applications), and the grade they have determined after consulting with each other (see below). Additionally, the paper can be annotated in electronic form.
- If graders render different decisions, they shall consult with each other on the grade. If after consulting with each other the two graders do not settle on the same grade, the lower grade is adopted. For example, "Pass with Distinction" from one grader and "Pass with Minor Revisions" from the other result in the final grade "Pass with Minor Revisions." In some cases, the M.A. Coordinator may seek a third grader to decide the grade.
- The M.A. Coordinator will give the student the grade and the reports, and the names of the graders, so that the student can directly request additional feedback from them, if needed.

Evaluation Criteria

- The general standard is a good research paper that demonstrates clarity of writing, solid argumentation, and familiarity with primary and secondary sources when applicable.

- The department recognizes that papers may reflect a plurality of philosophical styles and methodologies (historical, hermeneutical, phenomenological, analytical, textual criticism, and so on). Nevertheless, a Qualifying Paper should have the following qualities, and will be evaluated accordingly:

1. Form

- 1.1. The prose is clear and precise. The flow, pacing, and wording are very good.
- 1.2. The essay's structure is easily discernible: the paper stays focused on the objective stated in the introduction; the way in which the middle sections develop and support the paper's thesis is manifest; the progression of ideas is plain (i.e., the thinking moves logically from one paragraph to another and throughout the paper); a clear outcome is reached in the conclusion (even if a negative one—for example: "It is impossible to establish that...").
- 1.3. The bibliographical information and mode of citation of the sources are consistent and conform to the in-text citation method of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Examples are below.
- 1.4. The paper is preceded by a 200-word abstract and keywords.
- 1.5. The length of the paper is appropriate (to be determined with the Qualifying Paper Mentor, as it depends on the topic, the approach, etc.). Writing samples in PhD applications are typically between 15 and 20 double spaced pages long. The maximum length is set at 7,000 words, all inclusive.

2. Content

- 2.1. The intent of the paper is clearly formulated at the outset.
- 2.2. The methodology is appropriate to the topic (e.g., historical research, hermeneutical approach, phenomenological analysis, literature review and critique).
- 2.3. Presuppositions are made explicit.
- 2.4. The key aspects of the topic are addressed.
- 2.5. The pertinent philosophical concepts are clearly defined and explained, and they are correctly employed.
- 2.6. The primary and secondary sources are pertinent and satisfactory.
- 2.7. The summaries or interpretations of the sources are accurate. The quotations and paraphrases supporting the interpretation or the point being made are suitable.
- 2.8. The paper makes a good case for its central claim(s): it offers appropriate evidence in support and addresses possible objections with fairness.
- 2.9. Whenever possible, the essay avoids technical jargon. When not possible, the terminology is clearly explained.

Formatting

- The Qualifying Paper must be anonymized. The student's name should appear nowhere in the document or in the metadata.
- Every paper should use a 12-point serif font (Cambria, Times New Roman, or other typical font), with standard 1-inch margins, and double-spaced.
- Every paper must have a cover page stating (a) Title; (b) M.A. Qualifying Paper; (c) Date Submitted (n.b., not the date due).

- The second page should begin with (a) the Title, (b) a 200-word Abstract, and (c) Keywords.
- Every paper must have a bibliography formatted according to a standard style. Templates for common entries are as in the following document.

The Chicago Manual of Style *Online*

Author-Date: Sample Citations

Go to Notes and Bibliography: Sample Citations

The following examples illustrate the author-date system. Each example of a reference list entry is accompanied by an example of a corresponding in-text citation. For more details and many more examples, see [chapter 15](#) of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For examples of the same citations using the notes and bibliography system, follow the Notes and Bibliography link above.

Book

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Grazer, Brian, and Charles Fishman. 2015. *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Smith, Zadie. 2016. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press.

In-text citations

(Grazer and Fishman 2015, 12)
(Smith 2016, 315–16)

For more examples, see [15.40–45](#) in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Chapter or other part of an edited book

In the reference list, include the page range for the chapter or part. In the text, cite specific pages.

Reference list entry

Thoreau, Henry David. 2016. “Walking.” In *The Making of the American Essay*, edited by John D’Agata, 167–95. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation

(Thoreau 2016, 177–78)

In some cases, you may want to cite the collection as a whole instead.

Reference list entry

D’Agata, John, ed. 2016. *The Making of the American Essay*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation

(D’Agata 2016, 177–78)

For more details, see [15.36](#) and [15.42](#) in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Translated book

Reference list entry

Lahiri, Jhumpa. 2016. *In Other Words*. Translated by Ann Goldstein. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

In-text citation

(Lahiri 2016, 146)

E-book

For books consulted online, include a URL or the name of the database in the reference list entry. For other types of e-books, name the format. If no fixed page numbers are available, cite a section title or a chapter or other number in the text, if any (or simply omit).

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Austen, Jane. 2007. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Penguin Classics. Kindle.

Borel, Brooke. 2016. *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ProQuest Ebrary.

Kurland, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. 1987. *The Founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>.

Melville, Herman. 1851. *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. New York: Harper & Brothers. <http://mel.hofstra.edu/moby-dick-the-whale-proofs.html>.

In-text citations

(Austen 2007, chap. 3)

(Borel 2016, 92)

(Kurland and Lerner 1987, chap. 10, doc. 19)

(Melville 1851, 627)

Journal article

In the reference list, include the page range for the whole article. In the text, cite specific page numbers. For articles consulted online, include a URL or the name of the database in the reference list entry. Many journal articles list a DOI (Digital Object Identifier). A DOI forms a permanent URL that begins <https://doi.org/>. This URL is preferable to the URL that appears in your browser's address bar.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Keng, Shao-Hsun, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem. 2017. "Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality." *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring): 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690235>.

LaSalle, Peter. 2017. "Conundrum: A Story about Reading." *New England Review* 38 (1): 95–109. Project MUSE.

Satterfield, Susan. 2016. "Livy and the *Pax Deum*." *Classical Philology* 111, no. 2 (April): 165–76.

In-text citations

(Keng, Lin, and Orazem 2017, 9–10)

(LaSalle 2017, 95)

(Satterfield 2016, 170)

Journal articles often list many authors, especially in the sciences. If there are four or more authors, list up to ten in the reference list; in the text, list only the first, followed by *et al.* ("and others"). For more than ten authors (not shown here), list the first seven in the reference list, followed by *et al.*

Reference list entry

Bay, Rachael A., Noah Rose, Rowan Barrett, Louis Bernatchez, Cameron K. Ghalambor, Jesse R. Lasky, Rachel B. Brem, Stephen R. Palumbi, and Peter Ralph. 2017. "Predicting Responses to Contemporary Environmental Change Using Evolutionary Response Architectures." *American Naturalist* 189, no. 5 (May): 463–73. <https://doi.org/10.1086/691233>.

In-text citation

(Bay et al. 2017, 465)

For more examples, see 15.46–49 in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

News or magazine article

Articles from newspapers or news sites, magazines, blogs, and the like are cited similarly. In the reference list, it can be helpful to repeat the year with sources that are cited also by month and day. Page numbers, if any, can be cited in the text but are omitted from a reference list entry. If you consulted the article online, include a URL or the name of the database.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Manjoo, Farhad. 2017. "Snap Makes a Bet on the Cultural Supremacy of the Camera." *New York Times*, March 8, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/technology/snap-makes-a-bet-on-the-cultural-supremacy-of-the-camera.html>.

Mead, Rebecca. 2017. "The Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker*, April 17, 2017.

Pai, Tanya. 2017. "The Squishy, Sugary History of Peeps." *Vox*, April 11, 2017.

<http://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/11/15209084/peeps-easter>.

Pegoraro, Rob. 2007. "Apple's iPhone Is Sleek, Smart and Simple." *Washington Post*, July 5, 2007. LexisNexis Academic.

In-text citation

(Manjoo 2017)

(Mead 2017, 43)

(Pai 2017)

(Pegoraro 2007)

Readers' comments are cited in the text but omitted from a reference list.

In-text citation

(Eduardo B [Los Angeles], March 9, 2017, comment on Manjoo 2017)

For more examples, see [15.49](#) (newspapers and magazines) and [15.51](#) (blogs) in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Book review

Reference list entry

Kakutani, Michiko. 2016. "Friendship Takes a Path That Diverges." Review of *Swing Time*, by Zadie Smith. *New York Times*, November 7, 2016.

In-text citation

(Kakutani 2016)

Interview

Reference list entry

Stamper, Kory. 2017. "From 'F-Bomb' to 'Photobomb,' How the Dictionary Keeps Up with English." Interview by Terry Gross. *Fresh Air*, NPR, April 19, 2017. Audio, 35:25. <http://www.npr.org/2017/04/19/524618639/from-f-bomb-to-photobomb-how-the-dictionary-keeps-up-with-english>.

In-text citation

(Stamper 2017)

Thesis or dissertation

Reference list entry

Rutz, Cynthia Lillian. 2013. "King Lear and Its Folktale Analogues." PhD diss., University of Chicago.

In-text citation

(Rutz 2013, 99–100)

Website content

It is often sufficient simply to describe web pages and other website content in the text ("As of May 1, 2017, Yale's home page listed . . ."). If a more formal citation is needed, it may be styled like the examples below. For a source that does not list a date of publication or revision, use *n.d.* (for "no date") in place of the year and include an access date.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Bouman, Katie. 2016. "How to Take a Picture of a Black Hole." Filmed November 2016 at TEDxBeaconStreet, Brookline, MA. Video, 12:51. https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_bouman_what_does_a_black_hole_look_like.
 Google. 2017. "Privacy Policy." Privacy & Terms. Last modified April 17, 2017. <https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>.
 Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017. <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>.

In-text citations

(Bouman 2016)
 (Google 2017)
 (Yale University, n.d.)

For more examples, see 15.50–52 in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. For multimedia, including live performances, see 15.57.

Social media content

Citations of content shared through social media can usually be limited to the text (as in the first example below). If a more formal citation is needed, a reference list entry may be appropriate. In place of a title, quote up to the first 160 characters of the post. Comments are cited in reference to the original post.

Text

Conan O'Brien's tweet was characteristically deadpan: "In honor of Earth Day, I'm recycling my tweets" (@ConanOBrien, April 22, 2015).

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Chicago Manual of Style. 2015. "Is the world ready for singular they? We thought so back in 1993." Facebook, April 17, 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoManual/posts/10152906193679151>.
 Souza, Pete (@petesouza). 2016. "President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit." Instagram photo, April 1, 2016. <https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/>.

In-text citations

(Chicago Manual of Style 2015)
 (Souza 2016)
 (Michele Truty, April 17, 2015, 1:09 p.m., comment on Chicago Manual of Style 2015)

Personal communication

Personal communications, including email and text messages and direct messages sent through social media, are usually cited in the text only; they are rarely included in a reference list.

In-text citation

(Sam Gomez, Facebook message to author, August 1, 2017)

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M.A. Program Graduate Advising Guidelines

Closely mentoring the graduate students is an essential factor of their successful progress through the M.A. program. This document presents departmental guidelines in view of implementing the best practices in the student-advisor relationship. A student's Academic Advisor will help them design a sound course of studies, navigate the program requirements, assess their progress toward the degree, resolve difficulties, and elaborate plans for the future. In addition, students should not hesitate to contact the M.A. Coordinator and/or the Graduate Program Director for advisement.

Regular contact between students and advisors is indispensable

- Both students and advisors should take a proactive role in ensuring that communication is established and maintained.
- They should agree on a schedule of meetings at the beginning of each semester.
- Advisee and Academic Advisor should meet a minimum of at least twice per semester.

Reports

- All advising relationships should involve a formal documentation of the meetings.
- The advisee writes a short summary of the meeting so as to record what has been discussed and agreed.
- The advisee submits this summary to their advisor.
- The Academic Advisor approves or adds comments, and uploads the report in their advising folder for the student.

The remainder of the present document spells out the respective roles and responsibilities of the advisee and Academic Advisor, and specifies the steps to be taken at the different stages in the program. The intention is to ensure that the expectations of all parties are established clearly at the outset and are followed up throughout the student's time in the program.

Student's Role

The department expects that advisees will:

- Take responsibility for their research activity and learning.
- Become familiar with the program requirements and milestones, and with departmental and university regulations and policies.
- Request in due time an Academic Advisor in case they have not been assigned one.
- Contact their advisors as soon as they know them, and keep in touch regularly for the whole time of the advising relationship.
- Expect an answer only within work days and hours.
- Attend the schedule of meetings established at the beginning of the semester, and discuss progress and objectives with the Academic Advisor regularly.

- Notify their advisor when they cannot come to a scheduled meeting, and reschedule it.
- Send written work well ahead of the meeting so that the advisor has sufficient time to read it.
- Allow for a reasonable amount of time for getting recommendation letters, feedback on documents, etc.
- Contribute a summary of the meetings.
- Carefully consider the advice they receive and make every effort to implement it.
- Strive to achieve in a timely manner the course assignments, the goals and milestones defined in the graduate studies handbook, and the particular goals agreed upon with the advisor.
- Adapt their research to the resources the department can offer and avoid projects on topics for which they cannot be supervised competently.
- Report in a timely fashion any difficulty that may arise, to their Academic Advisor, the Graduate Program Director, or the Chair.
- Contribute to the program community, for example by attending other students' presentations, providing feedback and generally being supportive of other students' research activities and efforts.

Academic Advisor's Role

In all advising relationships, Academic Advisors will:

- Make themselves available at the request of the advisee, during work periods and within reasonable limits; expect similarly a response of the advisee during work days and hours.
- Get in touch with their advisee and make sure that regular communication is maintained.
- Establish a schedule of the meetings at the beginning of each semester.
- Check the meeting reports sent by the student and upload them in the Canvas advising folder.
- Inform the advisee and the Graduate Program Director about any extended period of absence.
- Check whether the student is falling behind regarding coursework and grades, and review the student's progress against the objectives of the program.
- Check whether the advisee is aware of the university and departmental regulations and policies, regarding such topics as degree requirements, academic integrity, and teaching responsibilities, when applicable.
- Pay special attention to international students, who have stringent time limits because of their visa (the advisor should be familiar with the requirements implemented by the Office of International Students and Scholars), and who might struggle with language or cultural differences. See below for further information regarding international students.
- Provide guidance regarding research methodologies and resources, and best practice in studying and learning.
- Suggest any useful additional resources (e.g., seminars, workshops, and conferences in or outside the department, Career Center, counseling, etc.)

- Motivate the student.
- Check on the student's general well-being.
- Alert the Graduate Program Director or the Chair as soon as an academic problem is detected, a worry arises, or when the advisee does not attend the advising meetings.
- Alert the relevant BC services when non-academic problems are detected (such as psychological crisis, harassment, sexual assault).
- Advise the student on which courses to take.
- Guide the advisee in the preparation of the M.A. Qualifying Paper and selection of a Qualifying Paper Mentor.
- Discuss with the advisee what personal, academic and professional skills the student needs to develop in order to complete his/her studies and prepare a future career.
- Guide the advisee in the preparation of applications to doctoral programs, especially for:
 - selection of programs to which to apply
 - preparation of cover letters, statements of purpose, and/ or CV
 - the writing sample and possible use of the Qualifying Paper
 - obtaining recommendation letters
- Guide, to the extent of their competence, the student in the preparation of applications to other degree programs or to professional positions.

Immigration Regulations and Policies for International Students

Contact Information

Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS)
 Hovey House
 258 Hammond Street
 617-552-8005
 www.bc.edu/oiss
 Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00–4:00 p.m.

OISS Advisor for Philosophy

Susan Shea, Associate Director OISS, sheasc@bc.edu

Walk-in advising hours

Please check their website

Note on visa type:

The following section of the guide pertains to students on F-1 or J-1 student visas. Very occasionally, a student may be studying as dependent of spouse working in the U.S. or with another visa type. Please consult with OISS in that case.

Timeline to complete the degree

Immigration regulations state that students are required to be making “normal progress towards the degree” and finish in that time frame. OISS issues the immigration form (called an I-20 for F-1 student and a DS-2019 for J-1 students) for the length of time

determined to be the normal length of study by the department and the GSAS Dean's Office. This is how long students may remain in the U.S. to finish their degree in most cases.

- M.A. Degree: Two Years, from August of the first year to May of the following academic year, including the Comprehensive Exam or Qualifying Paper. M.A. students are generally expected to take 5 courses each year for a total of 10 courses. They will therefore have two semesters with only 6 credits (see full-time requirement, below).
- Ph.D.: between 5 years and 8 years.
- Note: Immigration extensions cannot be given for incompletes or failures. It is important that students and their advisors take action on any failure or incomplete prior to the end of the allowed period.

Full-time study requirement

- Students on student visas are required to be considered full-time students during the academic semesters. OISS reports their full-time status to the U.S. Government every semester. Students must register every semester of their allowed period.
- Any graduate student registered for under nine credits in a semester will be flagged as less than full-time in the University System. Those students will receive an email from OISS and will be asked to follow up with their department. (n.b., for the Ph.D. program exception to this rule, see below).
- The University System will not let students drop below full-time status or register less than full-time without OISS permission to Student Services. This is a safety in place to ensure students stay in immigration compliance. Please contact OISS for any help registering a student for less than full-time.
 - M.A. students: Since M.A. students have some semesters with six credits only but are approved as full-time by the department (given that they have, for instance, to write a qualifying paper in addition), OISS will need a brief email verification from the department stating that the student is considered full time by department with six credits. If the student has trouble registering for less than nine credits in the system, please contact OISS.
 - Ph.D. Students: Ph.D. students with assistantships will automatically be classified as full-time in the University System. Doctoral Continuation also classifies the student as full-time. However, there are sometimes glitches in the system. If this is the case, contact OISS and they will contact Student Services. Ph.D. students are expected to be in contact with their Academic Advisor about the dissertation progress in order to maintain their immigration status.

Other Immigration Approved Reasons for a Reduced Course Load (must be approved by OISS):

- Academic Difficulties (typically for the first semester only), such as initial difficulties with the English language; unfamiliarity with American teaching methods; improper course placement. This will require documentation from the department for justification.
- Documented illness or medical condition up to 12 months total during the degree.

- Students are allowed to be less than full-time in their last semester if they are taking their last required class to finish. No documentation is needed.

Additional Resources for Advisors

Student Distress

- If you have concerns regarding the psychological or physical well-being of a student, contact the Student Outreach and Support Team, at 617-552-3470 or through the online Student of Concern Reporting Form.
- If you have an urgent concern after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends or holidays, contact the BC Police Department at 617-552-4440. They will be able to access appropriate assistance for you.
- If the situation is an emergency (immediate threat to safety), call directly BCPD at 911.
- If a student is open to receiving psychological help, direct the student to University Counseling Services, Gasson Hall 001. Phone: 617-552-3310 (same day consultation possible).

Non-emergency questions

Caroline Davis, Associate Dean of Students

caroline.davis.2@bc.edu

617-552-3470

Sexual misconduct

- If you have knowledge of a sexual misconduct case, by law (Title IX) you must report it to TitleIXCoordinator@bc.edu, 617-552-3334. You should tell the student who discloses the case that you are under legal obligation to report it. Students should also be encouraged, but not pressured, to utilize university resources such as the Sexual Assault Network hotline, BC Police, or University Counseling services. It is up to the student to pursue these options, but support for the student for doing so can be helpful.

Discriminatory Harassment

- The following are considered discriminatory harassment:
 - Conduct that, by reference to the race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status of a member or members of the University community, intentionally or recklessly abuses, mocks, or disparages a person or persons so as to affect their educational performance or living or working environment at Boston College.
 - Offensive sexual behavior whenever toleration of such conduct or rejection of it is the basis for a personnel or academic decision affecting an individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating a hostile or stressful living, learning, or working environment. Examples of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include sexual advances, any form of retaliation or threat of retaliation against an individual who rejects such advances, sexual epithets, jokes, or comments, comment or inquiry about an individual's body

or sexual experiences, unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, and displaying sexually suggestive images. A full description of BC policy may be found online.

- If you witness a hate crime or a bias-related incident, you should report it. Contact BC Police Department at 617-552-4440.
- If a hate crime or a bias-related incident is reported to you, assist the student to identify the most appropriate path. The Hate Crimes and Bias-Related Incidents Protocol may be found online.

Privacy Policy

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants four specific rights to a postsecondary student:
 - to see the records that the institution is keeping on the student.
 - to seek amendment to those records and in certain cases append a statement to the record.
 - to withhold the disclosure of a student's educational records except for situations involving legitimate educational interest or as may be required by law.
 - to file a complaint with the FERPA Office in Washington.
- A full presentation of FERPA may be found online.
- A University employee has a legitimate educational interest in access to information when that information is appropriate for use in connection with performing a task that is related to the student's education (which is your case).
- Responsibilities under FERPA:
 - As a general principle, you may not disclose student information in oral, written, or electronic form to anyone except BC staff and faculty who need the information to perform their university functions and have a legitimate educational interest.
 - You have a legal responsibility to protect the privacy of the student educational records in your possession, which are classified as confidential information under BC's Data Security Policy. You may not access educational records for personal reasons.
 - You may not release lists or files with student information to any third party outside your college or departmental unit.
 - Student information stored in an electronic format must be secure and available only to those entitled to access that information. Student information should not be stored on laptops or home computers unless it is encrypted. Personal digital assistants used to read confidential data should be password protected.
 - Student information in paper format must be shredded before disposal or placed in a locked bin for disposal.



Boston College
Philosophy Department

Graduate Program Language Requirement Form

Name: _____ Eagle ID: _____

Please select one of the following options to document your required language proficiency. A transcript is required for options 1 or 2. Please send this form to the Graduate Program Assistant

1. ***College level language coursework completed.** Satisfied by receiving a grade of B or higher in 2 semesters of a language class at the beginner level or one semester at the intermediate level.

Language course(s) and level

2. ***Native language (other than English) proficiency** (approval contingent upon documentation that the student has formally studied in this language at high school level or higher).

Language studied

3. ****Department administered language exam(s) or CEFR exam (please submit certification for CEFR exam)..**

Date(s) taken.

Language(s)

**Graduate Program Director or *Graduate Assistant signature required

Date: _____