



Political Science Graduate Student Handbook
 University of Illinois at Chicago
 April 2017

Welcome to the Department of Political Science! This description of the procedures and requirements of the Political Science Master of Arts (MA) and Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago is meant to be a first base of reference for graduate students. Procedures and forms are subject to change, so think of this handbook as a living document and remember to seek further advice from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the Department Head, and the rest of your faculty.

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MASTER OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Master of Arts in Political Science prepares students for a significant range of postgraduate opportunities: application to a doctoral program; employment at the junior college or high school levels; employment in public service, government, and non-profit organizations. Students will gain theoretical and methodological training in the discipline of Political Science. MA candidates demonstrate command of the requisite skills by successfully completing coursework and a major research paper requirement.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Master of Arts in Political Science requires a minimum of 32 hours of graduate level course credit for completion. Required coursework totals 20 semester hours, and at least 12 of the elective hours should be at the 500-level. Up to 8 of these credits (two courses) may be taken outside the Department if the student and the DGS, in consultation with other advisors, agree the material will further the student's progress and education and will not be available through our Department. The maximum time to complete the program is five years from the date of entry. Full-time students generally complete the program within two years.

In POLS 593 (2 hours) students complete a major research paper under the supervision of two faculty members.

Waivers for specific course requirements for students who have previously taken equivalent graduate level course work may be submitted to the DGS, but waivers are approved only in very unusual circumstances. No credit hours will be granted for waived course requirements, and students will still need to complete 32 semester hours of credit to graduate.

Elective courses are to be selected from [Department offerings](#). These and approved courses from outside the Department will be provided on subfield lists. Students may wish to take other electives to meet subfield requirements, in which case they must submit a request for approval to the Department. Such requests may be for courses offered in cognate Departments at UIC or at other universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program. All such requests will be reviewed by the relevant subfield committee who will then inform the DGS of their decision. The committee will base its assessment on information about the course provided by the student.

To count toward graduation, required courses must be successfully completed with grades of B or better. Students who receive a C in any required course must meet with the DGS to review their academic progress.

Two outstanding Cs in required courses will result in dismissal from the program, unless students retake the classes in which they received a C grade at the earliest possible opportunity and earn grades of B or A.

Students are not allowed to repeat the same course for credit if they received a grade of B or higher, but may audit courses that they have already completed successfully. Credits earned through repeating the same course do not count towards graduation.

We want our MA students to succeed and this requires, at a minimum, satisfactory progress through the program. If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the Department may recommend to the Graduate College that the student be dismissed from the program. Unsatisfactory progress includes: (1) failure to comply with Graduate College rules; (2) grades of C or below or incomplete grades; (3) undue delays in completing required courses; (4) failure to enroll in required courses before taking other courses unless specifically approved by the Department; and (5) two or more withdrawals from the same core course.

Financial aid normally is reserved for PhD students. However, exceptionally qualified MA students may be considered for Department assistantships, depending on the availability of funds.

Master's students may apply to enter the Department PhD program. To apply, you will need to submit a statement of purpose, two letters of recommendation by Department faculty, and a DGS evaluation of your progress in the MA program. DGS evaluations always involve consultation with colleagues who have worked closely with students.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (For students entering Fall 2017 and thereafter.)

Required Courses	Credit Hours
Required courses MUST be completed with a grade of B or better.	
1. Pols 401 Data Analysis I	4
2. Pols 506 Profession of Political Science (To be reduced to 1 hour upon EPC approval)	2
3. (Pols 500 Seminar in Public Policy and Governance (to be replaced with Theories of Democracy and Representation upon EPC approval)	4
4. Pols 505 Research Design and Methods	4
5. One Subfield Gateway Course among: Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	4
6. Pols 593 Independent Research for MA	2
Total Required	20
Electives (at least one in Political Science)*	
1. Elective 400 or 500 level course	4
2. Elective 500 level course	4
3. Elective 500 level course	4
Total Electives	12
Grand Total	32
*Note on additional Graduate College requirements: the Graduate College requires 9 hours at the 500-level; independent study courses like Pols 497, 498, and 596 do not count toward this requirement.	

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

The Doctorate of Philosophy in Political Science emphasizes the study of political action and behavior, culture, and institutional structures and settings. The Department at UIC is unusual in the commitment of its members to a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches. By taking advantage of its Chicago location and its status as a land-grant urban university with a diverse student body and world-class faculty, the Department can offer outstanding doctoral training.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The PhD in Political Science requires completion of 72 hours of graduate level course credit for those with relevant Master's degrees (Graduate II standing) and 96 hours for those without. The maximum time to complete the program is seven years from the date of entry for those with a Master's degree and nine years for those without. The Department expects full-time students to complete all requirements except the dissertation in four years.

Requirements for program gateway courses cannot be met by substituting courses from other programs, and waivers for subfield gateway courses are approved only in very unusual circumstances.

Registration for elective political science courses prior to satisfactory completion of the core must be approved by the DGS. The DGS serves as the advisor for all first year students. After the first year, students are encouraged to select a primary advisor in their subfields.

We want our PhD students to succeed and this requires, at a minimum, satisfactory progress through the program. Students must complete all required courses with a grade of B or better in order to continue in the program. If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, the Department may recommend to the Graduate College that the student be dismissed from the program.

Unsatisfactory progress includes: failure to comply with Graduate College rules; grades of C or below or incomplete grades; two or more withdrawals from the same course; failure to enroll in required courses when available before taking other courses unless specifically approved by the Department; undue delays in forming exam, proposal, or dissertation committees or in following their recommendations; and failure to complete other program requirements.

Students who receive a C in any course must meet with the graduate director to review their academic progress. Two outstanding Cs in required courses will result in dismissal from the program, unless the course is retaken at the earliest opportunity. Retaking a course will not expunge the original C grade from the transcript or from the GPA calculation.

Students are not allowed to repeat the same course for credit if they received a grade of B or higher. Students may audit courses that they have already completed successfully. Credits earned through repeating the same course do not count towards graduation nor do they count for preliminary examination purposes. Auditing can be a great substantive way to encounter new material and new approaches, but students do not receive credits for auditing a course.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (for students entering Fall 2017 and thereafter)

The First Year: Program Core

Gateway courses introduce students to the basic approaches and methods of analysis in political science. Students must take gateway courses in the first year of study or as soon as they are next scheduled.

Required courses must be completed with grades of B or better. Courses earn four credit hours unless otherwise noted.

<i>REQUIRED COURSES</i>	
Fall Semester	Credit Hours
Pols 401 Data Analysis I	4
Pols 506 Profession of Political Science (To be reduced to 1 hour upon EPC approval)	2
3. (Pols 500 Seminar in Public Policy and Governance (to be replaced with Theories of Democracy and Representation upon EPC approval)	4
One Subfield Gateway Course*	4
Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics	
Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics	
Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics	
Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory	
Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	
OR	
One 500-level elective (with DGS permission)	
Spring Semester	
Pols 501 Data Analysis II	4
Pols 505 Research Design and Methods	4
One Subfield Gateway Course* among:	4
Pols 551 Seminar in Urban Politics	
Pols 570 Seminar in Comparative Politics	
Pols 560 Seminar in American Politics	
Pols 504 Seminar in Political Theory	
Pols 571 Seminar in International Relations	
OR	
One 500-level elective (with DGS permission)	
TOTAL	26
* May be taken during second year of study.	

Students are expected to complete the gateway courses *in at least two* subfields. Students are encouraged to take more than two gateway courses in order to expand their knowledge of the discipline as a whole.

For electives, subfields will list approved [offerings in the Department](#), in cognate Departments at UIC, or in other institutions through the [Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program](#).

The Second through Fifth Years of study: Course Requirements, Fields, Prelim Exams, Dissertation

In years two through five, students develop a plan of study in consultation with subfield committees and an advisor selected by the student. Students will specialize in two subfields. Requirements for both specializations are the same.

After successful completion of the program core, students, in consultation with advisors, will choose to be examined in one of three core areas of specialization: **American politics, urban politics** or **comparative**

politics. A second exam field can be chosen from American politics, urban politics, and comparative politics. Students with interests in political theory and international relations can pursue these areas as a second area of specialization, but shall do so only with Department approval. Two exams over the same subfield are not allowed. A third exam will be based on the student's proposed dissertation work.

Independent studies must be approved by the professor and the DGS. For students in their first two years of the PhD program, independent studies should be used to master material in a specific subfield area when a course in this area is not being offered or is not available through other Departments or through the Metropolitan Exchange Program.

For independent studies to be approved, students must submit to the DGS a schedule of readings and assignments worked out with their instructor. Students are not allowed to take more than two independent studies in the first two years. For students who have not reached All But Dissertation (ABD) status, independent study credits should not be used to write papers for publication or to work on projects.

Courses and Fields: American, Comparative, Urban

For both the first and second fields, students are expected to complete the gateway courses. For the first field, students have to complete at least three additional substantive courses, as outlined in the Required Courses section on page 5. For the second field, students must complete the gateway course and three additional substantive courses. Students are encouraged to take courses in additional fields as electives.

Courses are often cross-listed but cannot be double-counted. A course used to satisfy requirements for one field cannot also be used to satisfy requirements for a second field.

American subfield

The American subfield focuses on theories that seek to explain the way politics operates in the United States, the institutions of congress, the presidency and the courts, state and local politics, political behavior, political economy, public opinion, campaigns and elections, and political communication/psychology. Many of the theoretical approaches used in American politics cross over into both urban and comparative politics.

Students studying American politics as a first field shall complete the gateway in American politics (Pols 560) and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

Institutions:

- State and local politics
- Congress
- The presidency
- The courts/public law
- Political parties
- Political institutions

Political Behavior:

- Public opinion/political behavior
- Political communication
- Political psychology
- Campaigns and elections
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism
- Latino politics

Other:

- The urban gateway course
- Interest groups

- Political economy

Comparative subfield

Comparative politics focuses on understanding how political actors, institutions, and culture influence political outcomes across different countries. Students studying comparative politics as a field shall complete the gateway in comparative politics and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

- Comparative urban politics
- Political parties
- Democratization and democratic transitions
- Social movements
- Political communication
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism
- Political economy
- Politics of the middle east
- Latin-American politics
- Theories of conflict
- Political institutions and the state

Urban Subfield

Students studying urban politics as a field shall complete the gateway in urban politics and at least 3 courses relevant to the following themes:

- Comparative urban politics
- Interest groups
- Gateway in American politics
- Social movements
- Race, ethnicity & nationalism
- State and local politics
- Globalization and urban planning
- Revitalization and gentrification
- Contested cities
- Political economy

Elective courses are to be selected from offerings approved by the Department. Students may wish to take other electives to meet subfield requirements, in which case they must submit a request for approval to the Department. Such requests may be for courses offered in cognate Departments at UIC or at other universities participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program. All such requests will be reviewed by the relevant subfield committee who will then inform the DGS of their decision. The committee will base its assessment on information about the course provided by the student.

Other Requirements

In addition to these course requirements, students may also be requested by the Department to satisfy an advanced methodology or language requirement appropriate to their plan of study (the nature of some work in the discipline demands extra preparation of this sort). Coursework to prepare for any required language examination does not count toward hours needed for the degree.

Concentrations

Graduate students may use their elective credit requirements to achieve an additional concentration from one of several available interdepartmental programs.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Gender and Women's Studies

Students earning a graduate degree in this Department may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in Gender and Women's Studies. See [Gender and Women's Studies](#) in the *College of Liberal Arts and Sciences* section for more information.

Interdepartmental Concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies

Students earning a graduate degree in this Department may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in Latin American and Latino Studies. See [Latin American and Latino Studies](#) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences section for more information.

Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Survey Research Methodology

Students earning a graduate degree in this Department may complement their courses by enrolling in a concentration in survey research methodology. See [Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Survey Research Methodology](#) in the Graduate College section for more information.

Survey Research Methods Online Certificate Program

[This certificate program](#) is very similar to the one above, except the required hours are less (11hrs vs. 14hrs) and the classes are slightly different. Check out the link for further info.

Preliminary Examinations

To be eligible to sit for the preliminary exams, students must 1) complete the gateway courses, 2) complete additional coursework in both exam subfields, 3) complete dissertation-related courses chosen in consultation with faculty, 4) master the subfield reading lists provided by the subfield faculty committee, 5) submit a major research paper for approval, and 6) complete all incomplete grades. Before taking the preliminary examination, all students must complete an extensive research project. The paper will be evaluated by the project supervisor and one other member of the faculty who has been appointed by the DGS. More information on the preliminary examination procedure is available from the Department Graduate Office. To be eligible to sit for preliminary exams, students must also complete the relevant checklist form and obtain signatures from relevant faculty by the specified deadlines.

Students who seek to have credits from a previous degree recognized for exam purposes should submit a copy of their transcript and relevant syllabi to the relevant subfield committee.

Graduate Students usually complete preliminary examinations by the end of their seventh semester. The Graduate College requires that preliminary examinations be completed within five years of program entry. Department

Students are expected to take preliminary exams in two subfields as well as in their dissertation field. Exams should be taken within the academic year following completion of the core and additional required coursework.

Exams are spaced over a three-week period and are administered in the third week of January or September. The content of exams will be based on the expectation of broad knowledge of listed subfield literature and mastery of major areas to allow students to be admitted to candidacy in the field.

Students will have 8 hours to write responses to questions in each of the chosen fields, and may use books and notes during the exam, but may not consult with others.

The examination is prepared by a committee of Department faculty in accordance with the rules set by the Dean of The Graduate College (see the current Preliminary Exam Preparedness Form for an updated list on committee chairs and members.) The committee consists of at least three members who are UIC Graduate Faculty with full membership, and two of whom must be tenured. The chair of the Committee must be a full member of the UIC Graduate Faculty. At least three faculty members will submit exam questions and grade student responses. All students who are sitting for an exam in the same subfield will receive the same exam.

Exam responses will be emailed to the examiners and the Graduate Office at the close of the examination day.

Grading criteria are based on:

1. Directness
2. Organization and clarity
3. Soundness of argument and logic
4. Knowledge of the field
5. Critical reasoning

For directness, does the answer address the question? For soundness of argument and logic, does the answer address conceptual issues related to the question? For knowledge of the field, does the answer refer to relevant literature? The best exams are productively creative: examiners are looking for an interlocutor, for an informed “mind at work.”

Grades given include:

1. High Pass
2. Pass
3. Conditional Pass
4. Fail

Students who receive high passes in all three exams achieve “pass with distinction” classification and the student will receive a letter from the DGS. Students who receive a conditional pass must address specific conditions, generally a clarified written portion, and/or an oral exam, within 30 days of the receipt of the grade to convert the grade to a passing grade. Students may retake one failed field within one year; if a student fails two fields or receives conditional passes on all three fields, the entire exam must be repeated at the next regular sitting. Students receive only this one additional chance to pass the exams.

Dissertation Field Exam

Each student must determine a focused area of study related to their first field in which to take a dissertation field exam. In co-operation with faculty, students must develop a reading list for the dissertation field exam. The purpose of the exam is to determine that the student has a well-developed dissertation idea and enough mastery of the relevant literature to complete the dissertation. Students are strongly advised to work with several faculty members in preparation for the dissertation exam.

The Dissertation Proposal

Upon passing preliminary examinations, the student will be admitted to doctoral candidacy by the Graduate College. Students are required to form a proposal committee comprised of at least three faculty members (a minimum of three from the Department), and eventually a dissertation committee of five faculty members (with at least one from outside the Department).

The dissertation proposal will contain an analysis of the relevant literature, the theoretical issues to be addressed, the evidence to be used, the methods of analysis, and a statement of the anticipated

significance of the research project. Students will not be authorized to proceed with dissertation research until their proposal has been approved.

Working with his or her chosen committee, the student is expected to submit a dissertation proposal within **six months** of passing preliminary exams. Students achieve ABD status when all graduation requirements are completed except for a successfully defended, formatted, and approved dissertation.

Failure to complete and successfully defend a dissertation proposal in the allocated time may have consequences for a student's eligibility for financial support as well as his/her standing in the program.

Institutional Research Board (IRB): Before beginning any research involving human subjects, students must complete University required Institutional Research Board training and obtain research protocol approval or exemption. A copy of IRB approval will be filed with the Department office.

The Dissertation

A dissertation is a substantial piece of original research that argues a specific thesis. Students are expected to make a significant contribution to political science with their work.

Graduation requirements are fulfilled when the student has successfully defended the completed dissertation before the committee and conform to other requirements of the Graduate College. For information on the Graduate College's requirements, students should refer to the [Graduate College Thesis Manual](#).

The Graduate College requires that students must defend their dissertation and complete the program within 7 years of entry.

Annual Reviews

Students are regularly evaluated and are encouraged to participate in and keep abreast of their evaluations. At the end of every spring semester the DGS, in consultation with the faculty, conducts a review of the student's progress in the program to date, based on a variety of performance indicators that may include academic progress and earned grades, seminar papers, and research interests.

In addition to feedback from the student's advisor and professors for whom the student works, the review will consider a self-assessment in which the student may provide evidence of their progress, completion of milestones, student strengths, and weaknesses.

The results of this review will be kept in the student's academic file, and students are encouraged to meet with the DGS to discuss their review and progress. The results of the review also will be referenced when funding placement decisions are made.

Assistantships and Other Financial Aid

As of Spring 2017, decisions about financial aid are to be made on an annual basis rather than on a semester basis. This means that students will be guaranteed any aid for the entire year. Teaching assistant (TA) assignments will continue to be made on a semester-by-semester basis. Decisions about financial aid are made by the Department faculty. Every spring semester, the faculty will meet to determine financial aid for graduate students. Each semester, the Graduate Office provides forms to continuing students to state their preferences for the following semester's TA assignments. Every effort is made to take these preferences into account with consideration of Department budget constraints, faculty requests, scheduling, and other Department priorities.

Advanced PhD students may be invited to teach their own courses as circumstances arise. The Department Head and the DGS make the final assignments in such cases. Students are rarely funded for

more than four years. Renewals of assistantships are contingent on Departmental needs, the student's timely progress in the program, quality of scholarship, and satisfactory performance of assistantship duties.

Priorities for graduate student funding:

1. First and second year students who were promised aid from time of admission and who are making satisfactory progress in their coursework
2. Third and fourth year students who are making satisfactory progress toward taking preliminary examinations
3. First through fourth year students who were not promised aid at time of admission but whose performance in the program warrants support
4. Students who are beyond their eighth semester and who are making satisfactory progress in the program (Departmental need for teaching can be taken into account).
5. Students who are beyond their eighth semester and who are not making satisfactory progress in the program, for example,
 - a. Not having taken preliminary examinations
 - b. Having taken prelims but not having defended a dissertation proposal
 - c. Students who are ABD but who are not making reasonable progress toward defending their dissertation

Satisfactory progress includes:

- Three graduate courses per semester until preliminary examinations are passed.
- Completion of preliminary exams by the end of the seventh semester
- Maintaining a minimum of 3.5 GPA with no grades below "B"
- Defending a dissertation proposal within six months after passing preliminary examinations.
- For ABD students, satisfactory progress is measured by reports from the dissertation committee submitted every semester.

International students who were promised aid from time of admission and who are making satisfactory progress may need to receive 50% funding

The Department encourages students to apply for travel funding to help defray travel costs to present papers and conduct sited dissertation research. Travel funds are available from the Department, the college, the campus and from outside grants. See The Graduate [College's Funding Overview](#) and [The Graduate Student Council](#) website.

Academic Integrity

The Department fully supports the University's commitment "to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, administrators—share responsibility of insuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists" (UIC Graduate Study Catalog). We expect and encourage our students (and faculty and staff) to review the rules and strive to achieve the goals specified in the University's "Guidelines Regarding Academic Integrity" (<http://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/graduate-study/graduate-study/>). Please note that the university maintains strict standards regarding academic integrity and does not tolerate misconduct by students, faculty or staff. Students can find specifications regarding the University's academic standards and the consequences for violating such standards in the above specified "Guidelines" and in the "Student Disciplinary Policy" handbook available online at <http://dos.uic.edu/conductforstudents.html>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How do I get an advisor?

A: For all new students, the DGS serves as an advisor during their first year in the program. Selection of an academic advisor can be based on multiple criteria such as compatibility of academic interests, similarity in worldview and approach, or positive inter-personal relationships. Come to the Departmental welcome reception for new students, and come to Department events after. Take courses from multiple people to get a feel for different approaches and personalities. Meeting faculty early on will help ease you into finding an advisor. Faculty members are here for you. Take advantage of their office hours!

Q: Which courses should I take to prepare for a subfield exam?

A: Read the relevant section of the Handbook carefully. It provides guidance on course selection. You need to ensure that your course selection covers as much of the subfield as possible. Meet with each member of the subfield early. A good strategy is to take courses with each of the subfield faculty who will expose you to different approaches, theories and ways of thinking. It will also help you to develop a relationship with the people preparing your exam and to learn about their standards and expectations.

Q: How do I prepare for exams?

A: First, during the semester prior to taking the exams, meet with the subfield faculty. They will assess your status and provide advice. Second, secure copies of syllabi for all the subfield courses that you have taken as well as the subfield's reading list. These will give you the material that you need to cover. Third, get an exam group going. Preparing for exams as a team has many advantages: 1) you can to some extent divide labor; 2) you benefit from the ideas and perspectives that others bring to the field; 3) you have a support network who understands what you are experiencing. Fourth, take good, detailed notes in all of your classes, seminars, talks that you attend. Keep everything accessible and organized. Don't throw out notes or anything else from your classes.

Q: So, about those preliminary exams (colloquially called prelims or comps)... what can I expect?

A: Get a good night's sleep the night before. Come in early on the morning of the given date of your preliminary comprehensive exam. Bring your laptop or tablet, snacks, drinks, comfort music – or whatever helps you focus, and, most importantly, your notes. Do not submit pre-written answers; it is crucial that you read your question carefully and tailor your response to the question. Do not use the Internet in search of new information or in any way consult with others. Showcase your understanding of the material you have learned. You will have eight hours to draft your answer and send it to the Department Graduate Office and the committee; once you've passed it along, you are free to go.

Q: What happens when a course I need to take is not offered?

A: The Department does its best to provide subfield gateways and required gateway courses at least once every two years, but should a student need a course that is not being offered by the Department, the student should meet with the DGS to discuss a few options:

1. Wait for it to be offered by the Department
2. Take a course with another Department at UIC that offers a similar course
3. Utilize the [Metropolitan Exchange Program \(MEP\)](#)

These options should be discussed with your academic advisor, subfield members, and the DGS.

Q: How do I register for the Metropolitan Exchange Program?

A: First, you should contact the instructor at the other institution to get permission to join the class. Then contact the MEP coordinator at UIC who will guide you in terms of the process. This should take place at least a month before the start of the term so that there is time to complete the paperwork and get you registered.

Q: When can I ask for an incomplete in a course, and what does it mean?

A: Incompletes should be given rarely, and should never be given when students have completed all assignments for the class. They work against the student's progress, can negatively affect a review for funding, and may result in a student's unsatisfactory standing to remain in the program. If an incomplete is granted, you should establish a clear and precise agreement with your professor about new due dates and the implications for your grade. You are responsible for ensuring that you do not miss those dates and for staying on top of the situation as your incomplete goes through the system. Be sure to stay in communication with instructors about any incompletes. If possible, avoid incompletes altogether.

Q: How are decisions about financial aid made?

A: Each year, the University determines our budget. Within the constraints of that budget, we make every effort to provide assistance to every graduate student equitably based on the amount of aid previously given, the time the student has been in the program, the work the student has done for the Department and beyond, and the student's progress in the program. Decisions about financial aid are made by the faculty.

Q: How many semesters of financial aid does the Department provide?

A: The Department tries to guarantee up to eight semesters of financial aid to students whose performance meets the standards of the program, contingent upon Departmental funding.

Q: My financial situation changed, what do I do?

A: Set up an appointment to discuss the situation with the DGS. The Department will try to assist you to the best of our abilities.

Q: Who decides how student awards and mini-grants are given?

A: The graduate studies committee, which consists of several faculty members, makes the evaluation. The committee membership changes every year.

Q: What are my responsibilities as a graduate student?

A: Remember that you represent the Department and your fellow graduate students; respect fellow graduate students, faculty, and staff; conduct yourself with professionalism; be flexible in and responsible for your own experience. Above all, expand your horizons and learn.

Q: I've completed my coursework, passed my prelims, and passed my dissertation proposal. Do I have to keep registering as a student?

A: Yes, read about the requirements to apply for [zero hour registration](#) through the Graduate College. Exceptions in the case of exigent circumstances may be made through the Graduate College.

Q: What resources does the campus have to help me adjust?

A: Adjusting to graduate life can be difficult for everyone; many successful students make use of resources on campus to help them adjust.

1. Activities: the campus provides movies, music, and sporting events for free. Check out [Life at UIC](#) for more info.
2. Become part of the UIC community, volunteer or use the Pop Up Pantry ([The Wellness Center](#)), and check out [other resources](#) including the [UIC Counseling Center](#).
3. Know where to chill. Student Center East has a commuter lounge (Suite 245) and a food court, and C-Stop locations in the Behavioral Sciences Building are ready to help with your technological needs (check out the [campus map](#)).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**The UIC Graduate College Catalog <http://www.uic.edu/gcat/index.shtml>**

This document is updated every 2 years and contains important Graduate College rules, graduation requirements, examination and time to degree deadlines, and minimum GPA requirements. Violations of Graduate College rules may result in dismissal from the program.

The UIC Graduate College Home Page <http://grad.uic.edu/>

This web page contains information about registration, graduation, financial aid, diversity, PHD dissertation approval procedure and time to degree. All Graduate College regulations are strictly enforced. It is helpful to become familiar with the Graduate College's website and the relevant documents posted there.

The Political Science Department Home Page <http://pols.las.uic.edu/>

This web page contains information specific to our program including forms, Department news and links to other helpful sites.

Political Science in the Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.uic.edu/gcat/colleges-schools/liberal-arts-sciences/pols/phd/>

This document provides a succinct summary of the Ph.D. program.

***Everything in this handbook is intended to be consistent with the rules of the Department's Ph.D. program and rules of the Graduate College as specified in the above pages. In the event of any inconsistency the graduate school catalog shall always take precedence over this handbook. ***