

Official Timeline for PhD Students on an Assistantship

During the First Semester you should...

- Declare Advisor (there is a form for this—see Kay)
- In consultation with Graduate Coordinator and/or Advisor, determine the courses you should be enrolling in for spring. During these discussions, you should work in concert with your advisor to think about your doctoral exam fields, courses that might fit said fields, and disciplines you should pursue cognate coursework in
- Enroll in three (3) graduate courses, including Historiography if you did not take this course (or its equivalent) at the MA level
- NOT take a Research Seminar
- Determine a feasible plan to demonstrate foreign language competence; if you are confident about your language ability, you should take the language exam this semester
- If you have not already done so, join all relevant historical organizations—AHA, OAH (for Americanists), chronological/theoretical/geographical/methodological organizations, etc. Grad student rates are often dirt cheap, so take advantage of them
- Begin thinking about the topic for your spring research seminar

During the Second Semester you should...

- Enroll in three (3) graduate courses, including a Research Seminar
- Start formulating the outlines of a possible dissertation
- Talk to potential PhD exam committee members; ascertain whether they are willing to serve and define the exact parameters of the field
- Once everyone on your PhD exam committee has agreed to serve, formally declare your PhD exam committee/fields and secure GPC approval of said committee (there is a form for this—see Kay)
- Stay abreast of cognate requirements
- Take the language exam if you did not pass the exam in fall, or if you have not taken the exam yet
- Work with your advisor to determine your summer goals, with an eye toward developing your dissertation topic at more length

During the Third Semester you should...

- Enroll in three classes; a second research seminar is recommended for doctoral students, so this might be a good semester to enroll in one. For this second research seminar, think about securing internal/external funding to visit archives outside of the region. This will put you in a good position to write the prospectus quickly after you pass doctoral exams
 - Pass the language exam. If the language exam is not passed after three semesters and you are on an assistantship, you will lose the assistantship. Failing the language exam four times leads to automatic dismissal.
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- Have completed all cognate coursework to make it easier to find an outside discipline faculty member to “sign on” to the dissertation committee (see 4th semester timeline below for additional detail)
- Confirm that all graduate coursework requirements will have been met by the end of the spring semester

During the Fourth Semester you should...

- Enroll in three classes, including a second research seminar if one has not been completed already
- Complete an agreed-upon booklist for each of your doctoral exam fields. Each faculty member approaches doctoral exams differently, so do not assume a “one size fits all” approach. Talk to your committee members early and often to ensure that everyone is on the same page
- Have a clear sense of your dissertation topic, the methodology you will employ in studying this topic, the historiographical question you are trying to resolve, the larger significance (i.e., the analytical payoff) of your topic, and your tentative argument
- Declare your doctoral dissertation committee, including the member from an outside discipline and an outside (i.e., non-Kent State) historian, and secure GPC approval of said committee (there is a form for this—see Kay)
- Have determined, in concert with each member of your PhD exam committee, the faculty member’s availability for summer meetings during your doctoral exam studying. Soliciting their advice on how best to study is highly recommended as well
- Finish your coursework!

During the Summer before your 3rd year in the program you should....

- Study for your doctoral exams.
- Apply any theoretical/methodological/historiographical insights from your studying for exams to your prospective dissertation. It is often helpful to keep a small notebook full of ideas, leads, and suggestions. While you are mainly preoccupied with studying at this time, keeping a notebook will enable you to return to the dissertation preparation when exams are over and the work of drafting a prospectus begins

During the Fifth Semester you should...

- Take (and pass!) your doctoral exams
 - Allot some time post-exams to breathe, relax, unwind
 - Meet with your advisor for a post-exam debriefing.
 - Meet with your advisor, along with other dissertation committee members, and receive their wisdom/guidance/advice before commencing work on the prospectus in earnest
 - Devote time and energy into figuring out what archives you still need to visit for your dissertation research, what collections said archives have that you need to
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examine, how you will fund these trips (get advice from committee members on possible fellowships/travel grants as well as do your own research), and when you will take them. **Conducting some research at archives late in the 5th semester and over the break should be a priority so that you can get a head start on the prospectus.**

--Start to work on the prospectus

During the Sixth Semester you should...

--Enroll in Dissertation I hours in your advisor's section

--Defend your prospectus, gain the support of your dissertation committee as well as the GPC, and formally file it with the College. An oral defense of the prospectus in front of your dissertation committee is required before you can submit the prospectus to the GPC

--Continue visiting archives, when possible, and keep on exploring the relevant secondary literature for your topic, etc. Maintaining consistent progress on the dissertation, no matter how minor, is key.

--Start to develop a syllabus for one of the survey courses since you will be teaching as an independent instructor next year

During the Summer between your 3rd and 4th years you should

--Work on the dissertation

--Enroll in Dissertation I hours in your advisor's section (note: you will have to pay the registration fee for these hours. Currently this rate is around \$3,000). After the summer, you should continuously enroll in Dissertation II hours in your advisor's section (at a much cheaper rate) until you graduate

--Begin thinking about presenting your work at professional conferences; speak to your advisor and other committee members about this

--Begin thinking about submitting your work to a peer-reviewed journal; again, speak to your advisor and other committee members about possible publication venues, which chapter you should use, etc.

--Share the syllabus for your upcoming class with your advisor and committee members and take account of their feedback

During your Seventh Semester you should...

--Focus your energies on teaching

--Steal away whatever time you can in order to make progress on the dissertation

--Enroll in your advisor's Dissertation II section for fifteen (15) hours

--Apply for fellowships, travel grants, and the like

During your Eighth Semester you should...

--If you taught in semester 7, use the insights you gleaned from teaching and apply them to your syllabus, lectures, and approach to teaching. Except in cases of dire classroom catastrophe, do not reinvent the wheel. Tweak, modify, improve, but avoid a wholesale reconstruction of the class

- Keep on working on the dissertation
- Apply for the University Fellowship
- Apply for external fellowships, travel grants, and the like

Henceforth...

- Work on the dissertation, taking care to share draft chapters with your entire committee. (Some may not wish to read the dissertation until the very end. This is fine—make sure that you work this out with each committee member beforehand.)
- Teach, particularly if you can develop new preps, but make sure that teaching does not get in the way of progress on the dissertation
- Be active presenting your work at professional conferences, with preference given to national conferences
- Make connections at conferences. Meet faculty who work in fields related to your dissertation, grad students who are your peers, and acquisitions editors for major presses. Take advantage of professional networking opportunities offered by major organizations and conferences
- Submit manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals. Work hard on revisions. Get something published in a peer-review journal before you go on the job market.

Going on the Academic Job Market

- Let committee members know the spring before you go on the market
 - Share updated syllabi, cv, and full dissertation with committee members by end of July so that they can write updated letters. Earlier is actually better as faculty are busy on their own research in summer
 - Create an Interfolio account so that faculty can upload a general letter there; if some want to provide a more specific letter for a particular job, they can do so, but this way you have the letters in hand before you start searching in earnest
 - Jobs start to appear in late summer and will continue to pop up until late fall. Check the main job sites regularly
 - Provide ample notice to committee members before requesting letters if you do not have an Interfolio account—at least two weeks before the deadline
 - Even if you have an Interfolio account, provide letter writers with a regularly updated list of schools to which you will be applying; this way, they will be able to share any insights they may have about a job, contact friends they might have on the faculties of the places to which you are applying, and write letters tailored to specific jobs
 - Do not apply to everything. Focus on jobs in your demonstrable area of research/teaching expertise. Otherwise you are wasting your time and money.
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Official Timeline for PhD Students *not* on an Assistantship

Doctoral students not on assistantship are generally guided by the timelines established by University Policy, although there are a few important exceptions to this.

University Timelines and Requirements:

- 1). At least 30 credit hours of coursework beyond the MA must be completed by doctoral students.
- 2). To maintain one's status as a degree-seeking student, one must enroll in at least one graduate credit per calendar year. Failure to register in a graduate credit course in three consecutive terms (with summer counting as an academic term) will have been considered to have withdrawn from Kent State University.
- 3). Doctoral students must pass their doctoral exams within four years of first enrollment—for example, a doctoral student not on an assistantship who is admitted in the Fall of 2019 would have to pass her/his exams by the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester.
- 4). Upon the successful completion of doctoral exams, a doctoral student will register for 30 Dissertation I hours. This is accomplished by enrolling in two consecutive semesters of 15 Dissertation I hours. Upon exhausting Dissertation I hours, doctoral students will continuously register for Dissertation II hours until the dissertation is defended.
- 5). Doctoral students should complete their dissertations within five years of passing their doctoral exams.
- 6). Doctoral students who enter a PhD program with an MA in hand have nine years to complete all of the requirements for the doctoral degree.

Department of History Timelines and Requirements for Doctoral Students Not on Assistantship

- 1). The foreign language exam must be completed before a doctoral student can attempt her/his candidacy exams. Doctoral students only have four attempts to pass
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a language exam; failure on the fourth attempt will result in automatic dismissal from the program.

2). A student's PhD exam committee should be in place at least a calendar year before a student attempts to pass her/his doctoral candidacy exams. (Students should fill out a doctoral fields form and secure the required signatures of faculty members to meet this requirement.)

3). A prospective dissertation committee should be in place before a student takes her/his doctoral exams. (Students should fill out the Declaration of Committee form and secure the requisite signatures to meet this requirement.)

4). Since doctoral students not on assistantship may proceed through coursework at a slower pace than their peers holding assistantships, the expectation that a doctoral student should declare an advisor within their first semester does not necessarily apply. Nevertheless, doctoral students not on an assistantship should declare an advisor as soon as possible.

5). Like their peers on assistantship, doctoral students not on assistantship are expected to defend their doctoral prospectuses no later than one semester after the semester in which they pass their doctoral candidacy exams.