# Doctoral Program Handbook
# Department of Government and Politics
# University of Maryland, College Park

November 3, 2026

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## Program Requirements

### I. Required Courses

Students must complete 14 total courses (42 credit hours; 898 credits are not applicable) and a minimum of 12 dissertation research credit hours (GVPT 899)[1] to complete the doctoral degree. The required coursework includes:

***For students entering in Fall 2024 or later:***

1. GVPT 622 – Quantitative Methods for Political Science
2. GVPT 722 – Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Science
3. Specialized Major and Minor Field courses – a minimum of four courses per field (five courses for Political Methodology); requirements vary by field (see below)

***For students who entered the Ph.D. program in Fall 2023 or earlier:***

1. GVPT 622 – Quantitative Methods for Political Science
2. GVPT 700[2] – Scope and Method of Political Science
3. One of the following courses[3] – GVPT 831 (Formal Theories of Politics); GVPT 741 (Ancient Political Theory); GVPT 742 (Modern Political Theory); or GVPT 743 (Contemporary Political Theory)
4. Specialized Major and Minor Field courses – a minimum of four courses per field (five courses for Political Methodology); requirements vary by field (see below)

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[1] The UMD registrar automatically registers students that have advanced to doctoral candidacy for six credits of GVPT 899 (doctoral dissertation research) each semester.

[2] The GVPT 700 requirement is waived for cohorts entering in Fall 2020 or later. Students may need additional electives to ensure completion of 42 credit hours.

[3] For cohorts Fall 2023 and earlier, this requirement may be satisfied with GVPT722 (methods minors may need additional elective to ensure completion of 42 credit hours) or another course approved by the student's advisor and the DGS.

## Specialized Fields of Study

Each doctoral field of study contains its own body of literature, reflects different theoretical perspectives, and requires customized substantive and methodological knowledge. Students must identify two fields – one major field and one minor field – in which they will pursue an integrated program of study and take the appropriate comprehensive examination.[3] The major field represents a broadly defined body of knowledge, and must be one of the following:

- American Politics
- International Relations
- Comparative Politics

In addition to the fields listed above, students may select a minor field in Political Methodology, or pursue in-depth knowledge in a more narrowly focused, self-designed field. Students that seek to design their own minor field must request approval from the Director of Graduate Studies by March 1st in the spring semester of their second year (see, Self-Designed Minor Proposal Form). Students will need to provide a description of the self-designed minor and proposed coursework (minimum of 4 courses). Additionally, students must identify three faculty members who will serve as the comprehensive examination committee, including one designated as the lead advisor for the self-designed minor.[4] The lead advisor will be responsible for coordinating the development of the comprehensive exam questions. To take a comprehensive exam for a self-designed minor, students must submit a completed Self-Designed Field Exam Request form to the DGS (gvptdgs@umd.edu). A self-designed minor field must be more substantial than just a subfield within the student's major field (e.g., American Politics students may not design a minor field studying the U.S. Congress). For example, students have created second fields in political psychology.

## American Politics (minimum of four courses)

Major & Minor Field Required Courses (taken during the first year):

- GVPT 770 – Seminar in American Political Institutions
- GVPT 771 – Seminar in American Political Behavior

Core Electives (strongly recommended in preparation for the comprehensive exam):

- GVPT 873 – Seminar in Legislatures and Legislation

[3] At least two courses in each field must be taken at the University of Maryland.
[4] At least two faculty members must be in GVPT.

- GVPT 828O – Seminar on Public Opinion
- GVPT 828B – Seminar on Race and Ethnic Politics

Other Common Electives (offered based on field priorities and student demand):

- GVPT 868L – Seminar in State & Local Politics
- GVPT 870 – Seminar in Interest Group Politics in the United States
- GVPT 874 – Seminar in Political Parties and Politics
- GVPT 878J – Seminar in Judicial Politics in the United States

**International Relations (minimum of four courses)**

***For students entering in Fall 2026 or later:***

Major & Minor Field Required Courses:

- GVPT 708A/GVPT701 – International Relations Theory
- GVPT808B/GVPT801 – Conflict in World Politics
- GVPT761 International Political Economy
- GVPT803 Seminar in International Political Organization

Other Common Electives (offered based on field priorities and student demand):

- GVPT 808P – Seminar in Domestic Political Institutions
- GVPT 808N – Seminar in Non-Violent Resistance
- GVPT 889B – Seminar in International Relations Theory and East Asia

***For students who entered the Ph.D. program in Fall 2025 or earlier:***

Major & Minor Field Required Courses:

- GVPT 708A – Seminar in International Relations Theory

Core Electives (strongly recommended in preparation for the comprehensive exam):

- GVPT 761 – Seminar in International Political Economy
- GVPT 803 – Seminar in International Political Organization
- GVPT 808B – Seminar in Conflict and World Politics

Other Common Electives (offered based on field priorities and student demand):

- GVPT 808P – Seminar in Domestic Political Institutions
- GVPT 808N – Seminar in Non-Violent Resistance

- GVPT 889B – Seminar in International Relations Theory and East Asia

**Comparative Politics (minimum of four courses)**

***For students entering in Fall 2023 or later:***

Major & Minor Field Required Courses:

- Twelve credits of GVPT 888; common course offerings include:
  (a) GVPT 888A/B – Seminar in Authoritarianism/Democratization
  (b) GVPT 888D – Seminar in the Political Economy of Development
  (c) GVPT 888I – Seminar in the Politics of Identity
  (d) GVPT 888P – Seminar in Comparative Political Institutions

***For students who entered the Ph.D. program in Fall 2022 or earlier:***

Major & Minor Field Required Courses:

- GVPT 780 – Seminar in the Comparative Study of Politics

Core Electives (strongly recommended in preparation for the comprehensive exam):

- GVPT 888A/B – Seminar in Authoritarianism/Democratization
- GVPT 888P – Seminar in Comparative Political Institutions
- GVPT 888I – Seminar in the Politics of Identity

Other Common Electives (offered based on field priorities and student demand):

- GVPT 888C – Seminar in the Political Economy of Democratic Institutions
- GVPT 888A – Seminar in African Politics

**Political Methodology (minor field only; minimum of five courses and 15 credit hours)**

Required Courses:

- GVPT 722 – Advanced Quantitative Methods in Political Science

Core Electives (strongly recommended):

- GVPT 729A – Advanced Maximum Likelihood Estimation

Other Common Electives:

- GVPT 729B – Applied Social Data Science
- GVPT729C – Causal Inference
- GVPT 729M – Multilevel Analysis
- GVPT 718Q – Qualitative and Multi-Method Research
- GVPT 831 – Formal Theories of Politics
- GVPT 834 – Game Theory
- Courses in other UMD departments (SURV), & D.C.-area universities[4]
- Courses through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR)[5]

**Important Course Requirement & Registration Notes**

- The faculty subfield chair and the DGS must approve of courses outside of the standard GVPT field offerings (ideally before a student enrolls in the course).
- Students may take up to 12 hours of directed readings (GVPT 849) as a part of the doctoral program. Before registering for such readings, students must obtain the approval of the faculty member who will supervise the readings. A statement of the planned readings program and the graded assignments must be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies one week prior to the start of the semester.
- Students may request DGS permission to take courses from other UMD departments or universities in the Washington, D.C. area through the D.C. Consortium. Please note that DGS signature is required on the D.C. Consortium paperwork.
- Students must take a minimum of 30 credits at UMD. Students may petition the Director of Graduate Studies to transfer up to 12 credits from another program to satisfy coursework requirements in the UMD GVPT Ph.D. program (see, Petition for Transfer Credit).[6]
- Registration is mandatory every Fall and Spring semester until the degree is conferred. Students who have completed coursework, but not yet Advanced to Candidacy, will register for Pre-Candidacy research credits (GVPT 898).
- All students who accept a Graduate Assistantship must be registered and have full-time status (see, Registration Policies).
- Students in their first and second year are expected to take three courses (nine credits) per semester. Students wanting to take fewer than three courses must discuss their plan with their

[4] Students must first obtain approval from the Methods Field Chair and DGS for course credit approval.

[5] Students must petition the Methods Field Chair and DGS for course credit approval. The course content must include an assessment and be equivalent to that of GVPT doctoral courses, including the requisite credit hours (see, Graduate Catalog).

[6] Coursework can be no older than four years from admission into the program with a grade of B or better. A syllabus for each course must be included with that request.

advisor and notify the DGS. If approved for fewer than three courses, students will need to enroll in at least one credit of 898 pre-candidacy research with their advisor.

- Students have the option to audit graduate courses, but this should be done in consultation with the instructor, and is subject to availability of spaces in the course. Audited courses do not generate graduate units and cannot be used in calculating full-time or part-time status. Audited courses cannot be used to satisfy program requirements.
- Students in their third year (and beyond) that no longer need to take three courses (nine credits) per semester, but have not reached candidacy, should enroll in up to eight credits of 898 pre-candidacy research; registering for nine credits (as opposed to eight) will significantly increase your mandatory student fees (see, Graduate Tuition & Fees).
- Students who have reached candidacy will be automatically registered for six credits of dissertation research hours (GVPT 899) each semester.
- Graduate Assistants who take courses in the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (JPSM) must submit a request for a differential tuition waiver during the semester they take the course (see, JPSM Tuition Policy). *Failure to do so will result in additional tuition expenses that will not be covered by the department or tuition remission*.
- Students may petition the DGS and the Political Methodology Field Chair for a waiver of the course requirement for GVPT 622 and/or 722. To receive the waiver, the student must demonstrate sufficient mastery of the course content through a written examination and documentation of prior graduate coursework. The written exam will be created by the DGS (in consultation with the Field Chair and the most recent course instructor) and administered by the Field Chair.

## II. Comprehensive Examinations

Students must successfully pass (at the Ph.D. level) two comprehensive examinations, one in each of their Major and Minor Fields. The department administers exams in all fields in early January and early August each year. Students must submit an application for each exam cycle; the Coordinator of Graduate Studies will announce the exam dates and application deadline.

Doctoral field comprehensive exams in American Politics, International Relations, and Comparative Politics are open-book exams. Subfields may also require an oral component to the exam (currently, International Relations requires this). Test-takers must notify on the exam application whether they wish to take the written exam over two vs. three days:

*Two-day Comprehensive Exam:*
If you opt for the two-day schedule (on Wednesday/Thursday of the announced exam week), you will receive the full comprehensive exam at 8:00am on the first day and you must submit all of your answers

by 4:30pm on the second day. You must submit an honor pledge that you did not communicate with anyone else about the exam.

*Three-day Comprehensive Exam:*
If you opt for the three-day schedule, you may choose to take the exam on either Monday-Wednesday or Wednesday-Friday of the announced exam week. You will complete one question per day, and you may spend no more than eight hours on the question each day. You must submit the answer to your first chosen question by 11:59pm on day #1. You will work on, and submit, the second question on day #2 and the third question on day #3. (Please note: whether you will see the entire exam on day #1, or some subset of the exam each day, will be subject to the discretion of the subfield that creates your exam.) Lastly, you must submit an honor pledge that you did not spend more than eight hours working on each exam question, that you only worked on one question per day, and that you did not communicate with anyone else about the exam.

Students who do not pass either written examination at the Ph.D. level on the first attempt may take one or both examinations a second time. A second failure to pass at the Ph.D. level will result in termination of the student's doctoral program.

For those students with a minor field in Political Methodology, the comprehensive exam consists of an original research paper, or a replication and extension of a previously published study, with an oral defense at the discretion of the committee. The expectation is that a passing paper can credibly be submitted to a peer-reviewed political science journal. Submission of the methods exam papers is open twice a year, and papers will be accepted during the months of January and August. Exceptions to this timing will only be made in limited circumstances and in consultation with the Methods field chair and DGS. The process for completing the exam requirements include:

- First, the student identifies a topic and solicits a committee consisting of an exam chair from the Methods field, and two other faculty members. The student can consult the chair of the Methods field on the composition of the committee.
- The student contacts the DGS to request a review of completion of other methods requirements and upon a successful review completes the GVPT application for the comprehensive exam/Methods paper submission cycle (the application is circulated by the CGS in September and February) .
- The student prepares an abstract for the proposed paper that provides details on the proposed topic with special attention to the features that relate to the methodological aspects of the paper (i.e., it must be clear what makes the paper a fit with the Political Methodology field as

opposed to one of the substantive fields, and what the novel methodological contribution of the paper is).

- The student circulates the abstract to the committee and confirms with each member of the committee that they approve the topic and are available to serve on the committee.
- In writing the paper, the student can consult with their committee for guidance. The student should seek the advice of their committee on their readiness to submit the paper.
- The student submits the paper to the CGS (by January 31 for the winter comp exam/Methods paper submission cycle or August 31 for the summer cycle) who sends the paper and a grade-sheet to the committee chair and the other members of the committee with a request for a written evaluation.
- The committee chair collects the written evaluations from the other committee members. If the paper passes the requirement outright, the chair will return a summary of the evaluation, including the comments to the CGS. The CGS will inform the student of the outcome and will share the comments.
- If the paper requires revisions and/or an oral review, the committee chair will notify the student and will copy the CGS. If the committee decides that an oral exam is required, the student schedules a two-hour time block for the oral exam. Note that after the oral exam, the committee may recommend further revisions to the paper before granting a grade of pass at the Ph.D. level. Once revisions and/or the oral review have been completed and the paper passes the requirement, the chair will return a summary of the evaluation, including the comments to the CGS. The CGS will inform the student of the outcome and will share the comments.
- The committee chair also notifies the chair of the Methods field if the paper is passed. The chair of the Methods field uploads papers that have passed the requirement in the repository of sample papers, which is available to all graduate students in the program.
- Note: Students may use the same general research project to produce two separate papers to satisfy the Political Methodology comprehensive exam requirement and the research paper requirement (see below). The two papers may build on the same research project and have some overlap, but they should clearly constitute two separate and distinct stand-alone papers.

## III. Research Paper Requirement

All doctoral students must complete a faculty-reviewed research paper prior to advancing to candidacy. The paper's size and quality must be competent and credible as potential for submission to a peer-reviewed political science journal (perhaps with further revisions). The procedure for accepting the research paper mimics that of refereed journals. The paper can be an extension of a seminar paper,

can represent a new project, or be related to the student's Ph.D. dissertation. Alternatively, students may satisfy this requirement by publishing a solo-authored article, written after joining the program, in a refereed political science journal (subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies).

For unpublished papers, the student should consult their advisor in the development and execution of this research paper. Once a student's advisor has indicated support for submitting the paper for review, the student should email the paper to the field chair in their primary field and note their faculty advisor (who will be excluded from being considered as a reviewer). Students and field chairs should copy the Director of Graduate Studies on all email communications. The field chair will then select two faculty members in the field to review the paper and offer suggestions for revisions, following a similar process to that of a journal review. The faculty reviewers will return their reviews to the field chair who will email the student with the results of their review and reviewers' report. The possible outcomes are acceptance without revision, rejection, or request for revision and resubmission. Most often, students should expect to revise the paper and resubmit it to the field chair for a second (and final) review.[7] The student should send their revised paper along with a revisions memo to the field chair, who will send these to the faculty reviewers. The two reviewers will review the revised paper and return their second-round reviews to the field chair. Lastly, the field chair will make a final determination whether the submitted paper successfully satisfies the research paper requirement and notify the student via email (copying the DGS)

## IV. Dissertation Prospectus Defense & Advancement to Candidacy

The doctoral dissertation is a monograph-length work that reflects original research, demonstrating the student's ability to generate original scholarly knowledge. Although students will commonly not begin full-time work on the dissertation until after completion of coursework and examinations, they should explore possible research ideas and projects throughout their doctoral program.[8]

Students should meet with their mentorship committee (a pre-prospectus meeting) to discuss their idea or multiple ideas for the dissertation, usually within six months of passing the primary field

[7] Students should follow professional practice and submit a memo that details how they revised the paper in light of the faculty reviewers' comments from the first round of review.

[8] In rare cases where a student wishes to write a dissertation in a field that they did not take the comp exam for, students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the new field before being allowed to defend a prospectus. This can be done in one of two ways: (1) take and pass the comprehensive exam in the new field, or (2) take and pass the core courses in the new field. In addition, the student should discuss their plans with their faculty advisors and DGS.

comprehensive exam. Students should write a short description of their proposed project(s) and submit a copy of the prospectus planning memo to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies.

In the initial stages of dissertation work, students must submit and defend a dissertation prospectus before a student-selected faculty committee.[9] The committee must meet with the student and approve the prospectus. At the defense, faculty will offer guidance and feedback to help the student transition from prospectus to full dissertation. At least four committee members must be in attendance for the defense of the dissertation prospectus.[10]

Students that have successfully passed the dissertation prospectus defense (along with coursework, comprehensive exams, the research paper requirement, and removing all "Incomplete" grades) are eligible to formally advance to doctoral candidacy (i.e., designated as a Ph.D. Candidate). The graduate school requires that students advance to candidacy within five years following admission to the doctoral program. Students are encouraged to do so by their 4th year in the program.

**Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy – Important Documentation**

- **Coursework documentation** – Submit the following form to document your completed coursework (see, Listing of Coursework for ABD Status).
- **Prospectus planning memo** – Submit the following memo to the Director of Graduate Studies at least 30 days prior to the dissertation prospectus defense (see, Prospectus Defense Planning Memo).
- **Prospectus defense approval** – The dissertation committee chair should submit this form to the Director of Graduate Studies following a successful prospectus defense (see, Prospectus Defense Sign-Off Sheet).
- **Application for advancement to candidacy** – Once you have completed all candidacy requirements, submit the required form to formally apply for doctoral candidacy (see, Application for Advancement to Candidacy).
- **Request for time extension** – Students must submit the following form prior to timing out of the program (either pre- or post-candidacy). Extensions are reserved for exceptional circumstances; requests should include an explanation, a plan of completion, and a letter of support from the student's advisor (see, Request for Time Extension**).**

## V. Final Dissertation Defense

[9] Students should form the committee in consultation with their primary advisor.

[10] The DGS may approve of a dissertation prospectus defense with only three committee members in attendance in limited situations.

The culmination of a student's doctoral program is a formal oral defense of the dissertation before a full committee of five voting faculty members. The Committee must include a minimum of five members of the Graduate Faculty, at least three of whom must be Full Members.[11] The committee must include a chair, and a Dean's Representative faculty member affiliated with a UMD department other than GVPT. The Dean's Representative may not be a non-tenured or Emeritus faculty member.The Dean's Representative may be one of the five voting members. Alternatively, the Dean's Representative may not be a voting member of the Committee. Whether the Dean's Representative votes or not is a decision made by the student, primary advisor, and the Dean's Representative. Committees that have a non-voting Dean's Representative must have at least six members (five voting members and the non-voting Dean's Representative.)

Students may request that the Director of Graduate Studies appoint faculty affiliated with other institutions and professional-track faculty at UMD to serve as "Special" and "Associate" members of the graduate faculty, respectively, for renewable five-year terms. Once they have been approved by GVPT, Special and Associate members may serve as (non-full) voting members of the dissertation committee (see, Graduate Faculty Appointments).

Prior to the formal scheduled dissertation defense, students must formally nominate their committee for approval by the graduate school and registrar. Students and their advisors should submit the committee nomination form **at least six weeks** prior to the scheduled defense (see, Committee Nomination Form). At this time, students should also apply for graduation.

After formal approval of the dissertation committee, the registrar will automatically send the electronic Report of the Examining Committee (REC) form to the committee three business days prior to the scheduled defense. The graduate school requires that students successfully defend and submit the dissertation within four years after advancing to doctoral candidacy.

*Remote Participation at the Dissertation Defense*: As of this writing, the graduate school requires students to obtain approval prior to a dissertation defense for a committee member to participate remotely; failure to do so will likely nullify the defense. The graduate school only accepts compelling arguments to grant such requests; it is highly unlikely that the student, committee chair, or the Dean's Representative will be allowed to participate remotely (Remote Defense Request).

**Important Reminders**

[11] Emeritus faculty retain their status as full members of the graduate faculty for five years following retirement, and then subject to reappointment every five years thereafter. Full faculty members who leave the university retain this status for one year following their departure.

- Consult the Doctoral Degree Completion Checklist to confirm that you satisfied all graduation requirements.
- It is the student's responsibility to ask the Coordinator of Graduate Studies to reserve a room for the dissertation defense.
- Pay attention to all academic deadlines, especially those concerning graduation and submitting the final dissertation and corresponding electronic publication form (see, Academic Deadlines).
- In addition to maintaining continuous registration, students must register for at least one credit of GVPT 899 during the term in which they graduate. There is one exception to this rule: It is possible to defend (and submit) an approved dissertation after the posted deadline for graduation in a given term and still avoid having to register during the next term if you complete all degree requirements prior to the official start of the next term. For example, students who apply for Spring graduation but do not meet the Spring graduation deadlines for completion of the dissertation (and thus will not formally graduate in the Spring) will not have to register during the Summer session if they finish all degree requirements before the end of the Spring semester (see, Graduate School Policy on Application for Graduation).
- Students who graduate during the Summer session (but do not complete the dissertation before the end of the Spring semester) only need to register for one credit of GVPT 899 during Summer Session I.
    - Note: International students may be required by International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) to register during the Summer Session (I vs. II) based on the date that they actually defend the dissertation. Please consult your ISSS advisor for your individual visa requirements.

## External (non-UMD) Grant Applications

Applications for external grants normally require approval from the Office of Research Administration. Approval requests should be submitted to Jessica Houchens (houchens@umd.edu) , GVPT Assistant Director of Administrative Services, **at least two (2) weeks in advance** of the grant application deadline. Late submissions are not accepted.

## Mentoring Guidelines & Expectations

Upon entering the doctoral program, the Director of Graduate Studies will assign students a faculty mentor. The assigned mentor will serve as a resource for students as they acclimate to the department and doctoral studies. This might include discussions on such topics as course selection, degree requirements, professional goals, and time management. The mentor will also help the student to

build a mentorship committee of three faculty members. A student's initial mentor and mentorship committee may, or may not, serve as the eventual dissertation advisor or on the dissertation committee. It is totally acceptable for a student to change their primary mentor.

Students in their second or third year in the doctoral program must meet with their mentorship committee at the beginning of the Fall semester. It is acceptable for second-year students to meet with their mentor and one additional faculty member; third-year students should meet with the entire three-person committee. Faculty are aware that they are supposed to participate in mentorship meetings, but students should take the lead in forming the committee and scheduling the meeting. Mentorship meetings are a valuable opportunity for students to have time with faculty to talk about the student's research, progress in the doctoral program, and professional development. The meeting will be successful if students engage, ask tough questions, and are open to feedback. Faculty will report on the substance of the meeting to the Graduate Studies Committee. Before the meeting, students should submit their CV and unofficial transcript to each member of the mentorship committee.

Faculty play a crucial role in graduate student development through mentoring. This is a multifaceted process involving teaching, but also modeling and guiding students in the profession.

> *...while advising is a short-term process where the focus is on giving information and guidance to the learner, mentoring is a more intricate, long-term, one-on-one relationship that goes well beyond simply providing information. True mentoring is a complex process between professor and college adult learner that supports a mutual enhancement of critically reflective and independent thinking.* (Galbraith, 2003)

**Faculty Mentoring Expectations**

*Clear communication is essential for successful mentoring*. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- Be responsive. Faculty need to respond in a timely (e.g., two business days under normal circumstances) and consistent manner to graduate students. Faculty should clearly communicate with students about what they regard as timely responsiveness.
- Ongoing communication. Conversations about the profession, research, and teaching goals are iterative and will change over time. As the mentoring relationship develops, have clear and frequent—every semester, if not more frequent—conversations about mutual expectations.
- Reflect on mentoring. Faculty should reflect on their own experiences with their mentors and what works for them as a mentor. Consider these questions: What kind of mentoring did you receive, and what did you find most (or least) useful about it? What mentoring activities helped you to progress to your degree? What mentorship activities were most useful in preparing you for academia?

- Mentoring networks. Help students to build a mentoring network consisting of multiple faculty members, perhaps both within and outside of the University of Maryland. Mentors are often ideally suited for different purposes; some can provide research- or field-specific expertise while others may offer more general professional guidance. These networks may offer students with a diverse set of perspectives and professional advice.
- Statement of Mutual Expectations. Discuss with your Graduate Assistant the expectations when serving as a research or teaching assistant. Document these expectations by completing a Statement of Mutual Expectations every semester.

*Share your experiences.* Discuss your own career trajectory and research projects and how you have overcome barriers or challenges. Share information about faculty duties beyond research and teaching, such as professional service, directing a lab or research assistants, applying for and managing grants, and participating in professional conferences.

*Treat students with respect.* Graduate students should be treated as junior scholars in the profession. Faculty should not ask students to do work outside of the profession for them (e.g., babysitting, house-sitting, etc.) that would blur professional boundaries. Keep in mind that faculty are in a relative position of power over graduate students, and thus they should maintain professional boundaries accordingly.

*Know university policies and resources.* Faculty should have a basic knowledge of the program requirements and resources available at the university, such as university counseling services. Some pertinent policies and resources include:

- Counseling Center
- Teaching and Learning Center
- GVPT Degree Requirements (see this handbook)
    - GVPT Field Requirements
    - GVPT Mentoring & Degree Timeline
- GVPT Resources and Forms (see this handbook)
- Graduate School Policies
- Doctoral Degree Policies
    - Graduate Faculty Membership

*Understand challenges related to diversity.* Students from underrepresented groups face a number of additional challenges in graduate school and in the academy more generally. Faculty should actively

seek to understand these experiences. A number of scholars have written publicly about this through outlets like *PS: Political Science* and the Duck of Minerva blog. Some of these challenges may include:

- Serving as a designated spokesperson. Students from underrepresented groups are often called on to speak from the perspective of their identity group. Students should be encouraged to share experience and perspectives as they desire, but not required to be a spokesperson. Faculty should avoid asking such students to repeatedly share along these lines.
- Feelings of Isolation. Students from underrepresented groups often experience greater feelings of isolation. Faculty can work to create a welcoming environment for these students by engaging with them about their interests and inviting conversations about the profession.

*Topics to avoid when giving advice.* Some topics are outside the purview of the profession. Faculty should avoid giving advice on topics such as reproduction and family formation (when to have children), marriage and domestic relationships, physical appearance, and issues related to sexual orientation. Mentors may share their own experiences in this area if asked directly by a student.

*Long-term planning and managing time.* Faculty can assist with long-term planning for student research and professional goals. See below for a sample scheduling aid, which may include data collection targets, fieldwork dates, conference presentations, chapter drafts, etc. Faculty can also help graduate students to more effectively balance their work time week-to-week by recommending time management resources and reminding students that there are diminishing returns to overworking.

*Coauthorship with Graduate Students*. Coauthorship with graduate students is encouraged; it offers students valuable, firsthand experience on the practice of professional publishing. When working with graduate student research assistants, set clear expectations upfront regarding whether or not the student can expect to be named as a coauthor on the research project.

**Student Resources and Responsibilities**

*Do your part to facilitate a productive mentor-mentee relationship*. Students should approach the mentoring relationship as a professional:

- Respect your mentor's time. Arrive on time and prepared for meetings. Students that fail to show up for meetings signal a lack of seriousness and professionalism.
- Be respectful. Just as mentors have a responsibility to treat their mentees with respect, students must also interact with faculty in a respectful and professional manner.
- Take the initiative. Stay in touch with your mentor and schedule regular meetings. It is incumbent on the student to seek out the guidance necessary to succeed in the doctoral program.

- Respond to feedback in a constructive manner. It is essential that students recognize that mentors offer constructive criticism to improve their work; it represents engagement. Students should welcome such feedback with an open mind.
- Address any issues that arise with respect to the mentoring relationship as soon as possible with the primary mentor and/or with the Director of Graduate Studies.
    - *It is completely acceptable to change your primary mentor/advisor*; students don't need to continue working with a faculty mentor that is no longer the best person for the job. Students should speak with the Director of Graduate Studies if they would like to make a change to their primary mentor/advisor; the DGS will help to facilitate this change.
- Take care of both your professional and mental health. The university and graduate school offer various mental health resources that you may consult (see, e.g., the Graduate Academic Counselor). The department will support the need to take leave for physical, mental, and parental needs.

The table below – Sample Student Timeline – presents a generic template to map out a student's completion of program milestones and select individualized goals. This general timeline may vary across fields and individual students.

# Sample Student Timeline

| Year | Coursework | Progress Toward Requirements | Dissertation | Paperwork |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 1** | Core seminars, electives, & methods classes | | | |
| **Year 2** | Core seminars, electives, & methods classes | Spring: discuss possible Research Paper ideas with mentor, begin work on this paper<br><br>Summer: Take 1st comp | | Apply to take comps |
| **Year 3** | Fall: Core seminars, electives, & methods classes | Winter: take 2nd comp<br><br>Fall: identify probable dissertation chair<br><br>Spring: pre-prospectus meeting with committee<br><br>Spring: complete your Research Paper and present in the departmental conference<br><br>Summer: defend prospectus | | Apply to take comps |
| **Year 4** | No courses required | Fall: defend prospectus<br><br>Summer/Fall/Spring: begin applying for research and dissertation grants | Fall/Spring: Revisit dissertation plans with primary advisor. Update timeline to completion<br><br>Fall/Spring: Dissertation research | Paperwork for prosp/candidacy application |
| **Year 5/6** | No courses required | | Fall: Dissertation research/Dissertation chapters drafted<br><br>Spring: Defend dissertation | Committee nomination form (6 weeks from defense)<br><br>Report of Committee form (2 weeks from defense)<br><br>Graduation form |

## Other Useful Resources

**Current Personnel (AY 25-26)**

Department Chair: Antoine Banks
Associate Chair: Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham
Director of Graduate Studies: Kristina Miler
Director of Admissions & Placement: Ernesto Calvo
Coordinator of Graduate Studies: Karmin Cortes
Director of Undergraduate Studies: Patrick Wohlfarth
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Chair: Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham
Subfield Chairs:

American Politics – Janelle Wong
Comparative Politics – Calvert Jones
International Relations – David Cunningham
Political Methodology – Johanna Birnir

**Graduate Assistantship Policies** – Students who are funded as Graduate Assistants (GA) must comply with all graduate school policies (see, Graduate Assistantship Policies).

*Research and Teaching Assistant Assignments.* Students will receive their individual GA assignments every semester. The assignment process includes the following steps: (1) Based on the list of RA/TA positions that must be filled in a given semester, students will submit their preferences on which assignments they most prefer; (2) Faculty will submit their preferences on the graduate students with whom they'd most prefer to work as their RA/TA (note: faculty are informed of which students have expressed a desire to work for their particular RA/TA role, but faculty do not receive students' preference rankings); and (3) The Director of Graduate Studies consider all of this information and draft an initial list of RA/TA assignments that balances program/department needs, student preferences, and faculty preferences.

Please note that GA assignments are subject to change. While students have contractual commitments to a GA position, there is no guarantee of a specific placement. Factors that are taken into account each semester include: teaching needs, faculty preferences (including outside grants), administrative needs, student preferences, and financial commitments of the department.

*Statement of Mutual Expectations.* Graduate assistants and their supervising faculty members must meet at the beginning of each semester and complete a Statement of Mutual Expectations (SME Template). Importantly, the SME agreement establishes the expectations and responsibilities for both graduate assistants and faculty members in the faculty-GA working relationship.

*Accessibility & Disability Workplace Accommodations for Graduate Assistants.* Graduate assistants in need of workplace accommodations due to accessibility concerns or disability must request the accommodation through the UMD Accessibility & Disability Services office (ADS Workplace Accommodations).

*Funding Extensions.* Students who receive external funding *from a source outside of the University of Maryland* may request (and will customarily receive) a commensurate extension of their GVPT funding commitment. Beginning with the cohort of students entering the doctoral program in Fall 2023 or later, those who receive funding from another unit at the University of Maryland (not funded by GVPT) may request up to a total of a one-year extension of their GVPT funding commitment. All funding extensions are granted only in Fall/Spring semester increments and are subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Studies and Department Chair. Appeals to this process may be made to the Directors of Graduate Studies.

**Information on ADS Accommodations** – Graduates with any issues related to accessibility and/or disability should contact the Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) office on campus. This can be relevant for graduate students that need accommodations related to timed exams, for example.

**Job Market Preparation & Placement** – The DGSs will hold an informational meeting twice a year about job market preparation. These meetings will cover the "job packet" materials and timeline for applying for academic jobs. The DGS will edit and comment on job market materials. Students will also have the opportunity to do 1 or more practice job talks in the department. The DGS is available for individual questions and discussions on the job application and interview process.

**Teaching Basics & Resources** – Students frequently begin teaching as a Teaching Assistant after their first year. The primary resource for new teachers is the Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC). Students and the faculty instructor are expected to maintain a professional relationship, including open communication, clarity for responsibilities, and meeting deadlines.

**Overload Requests** – Students who are on Graduate Assistantships in order to work additional hours (overload) during either the Fall or Spring semester must fill out an overload request form. This should be done well in advance of scheduling additional work as it can take up to three weeks to be approved by the Graduate School and Main Administration. A student on a graduate assistantship can work no more than 10 overload hours per week during the Fall or Spring semester. Students requesting overload approval should email the information listed below to GVPT's Business Coordinator (Terecita Maxey, tmaxey@umd.edu). Students will receive an overload request form to circulate to their advisor and the DGS for signature.

- Name
- UID
- Candidacy status
- Visa type, if applicable
- Confirm full-time registration status
- Overload supervisor name
- Overload duties: TA (include course), Grader (include course), RA (if external grant, provide grant name), Admin GA
- Overload start & end dates

**M.A. Degree Conferral** – You are eligible to apply for the M.A. degree (non-thesis option) once you have completed 30 credits (excluding GVPT898 credits & transfer credits) and have successfully passed one of the two required comprehensive exams.

1. You will need to apply for graduation via Testudo (this will not affect your status as a Ph.D. student).

2. Complete an Approved Program Form and obtain your advisor's signature. Submit the completed form to gvptdgs@umd.edu (see, Approved Program Form).

3. Complete Certification of Scholarly Writing forms for two sole-authored whole papers. If submitting a course paper, it must be from a GVPT course. Submit the completed forms to gvptdgs@umd.edu (see, Certification of Scholarly Writing Form).

**Waiver of Regulation Form** – Any time you have a special request (i.e., waiver of mandatory fees or request for anything to be done retroactive), you must submit a petition form (see, Petition for Waiver of Regulation). For waivers of mandatory fees: if you will be away from the university and not making any demands on the university then you can apply for a waiver of payment of mandatory fees. This must be done every semester for which you are eligible. Please note: if you are defending the prospectus or defending the dissertation during this particular semester then you cannot petition for a waiver of fees. This should be done early as it takes at least six to eight weeks to clear.

**Request for a Leave of Absence** – Graduate students may request a Leave of Absence (which stops the time to degree clock) for up to two consecutive semesters for any of the following reasons: childbearing, adoption, illness, and dependent care (see, Request for Leave of Absence).

**Waiver of Continuous Registration** – Pre-Candidacy students who plan to be away from the University and do not plan to graduate nor make use of any University resources (libraries, labs, recreation facilities, faculty time, etc.) are eligible for waiver of continuous registration for up to two semesters. Doctoral candidates (students who are ABD) are not eligible (see, Petition for Waiver of Continuous Registration**).**

**Travel Support** – Graduate students may apply for funding support to offset the cost of traveling to and presenting at appropriate academic conferences:

- Goldhaber Travel Funds (matched with GVPT Funds)
- International Conference Student Support Award (ICSSA)
- GVPT Alumni Travel Grants
- Virginia Lee Lussier Travel Grants

**Goldhaber Funds** (requires department matching) – The Goldhaber Travel Grant is a matching grant and requires students to secure funding from an internal (departmental funding) or external source (sponsored award) prior to submitting an application. Effective fall 2025, students may receive Goldhaber Travel Funding once during their graduate education at UMD. In addition to the Graduate School's Goldhaber application form, students must also submit a GVPT Travel Grant application to request the departmental matching funds. A letter of support from the faculty advisor is required for the GVPT Travel Grant application. Both application forms and all supporting materials must be submitted before the travel dates (note: Goldhaber applications must be submitted to the Graduate School). Additionally, travel approval is required and must be requested via Concur prior to the travel dates (see details below).

Note: Students applying for Goldhaber matching funds may also apply for a GVPT Alumni Travel Grant.

**International Conference Award** – The International Conference Student Support Award (ICSSA) pays the registration fee for conferences located outside of the United States. The maximum award is $500. Applications and all supporting materials must be received in the Graduate School prior to the travel dates. You must also send a copy of your application to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Effective fall 2025, students may receive an ICSSA award once during their graduate education at UMD. Travel approval is required and must be requested via Concur prior to the travel dates (see details below).

Note: Students applying for an ICSSA award are eligible to apply for the Graduate School's Goldhaber award (and matching GVPT funds) and/or a GVPT Alumni Travel Grant.

**GVPT Alumni Travel Grants** – GVPT Alumni Travel Grants may be used to fund travel related to presenting original research at an academic conference. Recipients of this award will work with the GVPT Business Coordinator to arrange for payment of conference expenses up to $1,000. The funds will be made available as reimbursements or purchases made by the GVPT Business Coordinator on behalf of the student. The GVPT Travel Grant application and all supporting materials must be submitted before the travel dates. Additionally, travel approval is required and must be requested via Concur prior to the travel dates (see details below).

**Virginia Lee Lussier Travel Grants** – Virginia Lee Lussier Travel Grants provide funding for students studying international relations with a preference for students studying international conflict and resolution. The grants may be used to fund expenses associated with conference travel (applicants must be presenting at the conference) or other professional development or research opportunities. The funds will be made available as reimbursements or purchases made by the GVPT Business Coordinator on behalf of the student. The GVPT Travel Grant application and all supporting materials must be submitted before the travel dates. Additionally, travel approval is required and must be requested via Concur prior to the travel dates (see details below).

**Please note the following Department-specific requirements for all travel funds:**

- The university now uses SAP Concur for travel administration. Students are required to submit travel requests through Concur and follow all university rules and procedures with respect to travel authorization and expense reimbursement. Importantly, all **students must secure travel authorization prior to the trip dates** and then submit original receipts with an expense report after the trip.
- Travel funds are intended for students who are traveling to scholarly, scientific, or professional conferences to present papers.
- To receive travel funds, students must have either co-authored the paper with a faculty member or presented it elsewhere at another conference or workshop, with preference given to those presenting at GVPT Field workshops.

**Faculty-Student Consensual Relationship Policy** – The university has codified an official policy to govern consensual relationships between: (1) faculty and graduate students; and (2) undergraduate students and graduate students with supervisory (or instructional) authority (see, UMD Policy on Consensual Faculty-Student Relationships).