



PhD Program Handbook

2024-2025

Department of Gender and Women's Studies

Reference this handbook to learn about the unique policies, requirements, procedures, resources, and norms for graduate students in the PhD Program in Gender and Women's Studies.

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Chair's Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Gender and Women's Studies (GWS)! We are delighted that you have joined our community of scholars and teachers. As you already know, GWS is a vibrant and influential field of scholarship devoted to explicating the significance and experience of gender and sexuality in the past and present, in the United States, and around the world. GWS scholars document the experiences of women; demonstrate the influences of gender on society; examine the meanings of gendered experiences and representation; contribute to human rights policies concerning women, gender, and sexuality; and analyze the dynamics and significance of major social movements. We look forward to working with you over the next few years as you find your own path into the field and develop your contribution to it.

GWS at UW-Madison is especially vibrant at this moment. We have recently launched our new PhD program. We have experienced a recent growth spurt, and our new hires bring fresh insights and approaches to our faculty. We are deeply interdisciplinary, with significant expertise in the arts and humanities and in the social sciences. Our faculty received their terminal degrees in fourteen different disciplines, including Performance Studies, Political Science, History, Psychology, Art History, Global Health, and Gender and Women's Studies. Our varied training creates novel opportunities for productive collaboration and fresh perspectives on well-worn problems.

Graduate school can be intellectually exhilarating and challenging as you explore new ways to see the world and deploy new tools to understand it. You are also beginning a life-long relationship with a community of scholars who will support, nudge, cajole, and inspire you. Make good use of the resources around you—professors, classmates, librarians, and friends. We are here for you as you embark on this new chapter.

Forward!

Judith A. Houck
Professor and Chair
Gender and Women's Studies

Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with graduate education at UW-Madison.

Below is a chart of terms that will be referenced throughout the handbook:



How to Use This Handbook

Graduate students are responsible for knowing the information in this handbook, so please study it carefully and refer to it when you have questions. Since *administrative procedures can change over time*, you are required to follow the administrative *procedures and requirements* listed in the *most current handbook*. You must meet the *course requirements* listed in the handbook *during the semester in which you matriculated* in the program. You may petition the Graduate Committee to have specific requirement changes applied to your record.

Whom to Contact for Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student can be answered by reviewing the various policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms provided in this Handbook. The following GWS staff and faculty are also available to answer your questions:

Graduate Program Manager



The GWS Graduate Program Manager is Duachi Yang. The Graduate Program Manager serves as a point person for program policy and procedures. The Graduate Program Manager is well-versed in most elements of graduate education that extend beyond academic instruction in your program and will likely be your first stop for questions related to this handbook. You can find Duachi in 3321A Sterling Hall or at duachi.yang@wisc.edu

Director of Graduate Studies



The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is a faculty member designated to direct the graduate program's educational vision and structure. In 2024-25, the DGS is Professor Keisha Lindsay. The DGS chairs the Graduate Committee, which handles matters such as the PhD curriculum, graduate student funds requests, approval of concentration plans, and deadline extension appeals. You can find Professor Lindsay in 3311 Sterling Hall or at knlindsay@wisc.edu

The names and contact information of your Graduate Program Manager and Director of Graduate Studies can also be found on the GWS page in the [Graduate Guide](#). Look for the contact information box on the right side.

Department Administrator



The GWS Department Administrator is Jamie Gratrix. Jamie can assist with any questions about office assignments and keys, benefits, payroll, appointment letters, and other issues related to human resources. Jamie can be found in 3409 Sterling Hall or at jamie.gratrix@wisc.edu.

Academic Program Director



The GWS Academic Program Director is Nina Valeo Cooke. Nina oversees the department's course planning, schedules, evaluations, and assessment. Nina can be reached at nina.valeo.cooke@wisc.edu.

Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor before entering the PhD program. Your faculty advisor is a key source of guidance for your academic development.

Guidelines for finding, changing, and working with your advisor can be found in the [Advising & Mentoring](#) section below.

The name and contact information of your faculty advisor can be found at [MyUW](#) by clicking on the “Academic Navigator” widget and then “Advisors”. If you don’t see the “Academic Navigator” widget, you can search for it at the search bar at the top of the MyUW page.

A general list of GWS faculty can be found at:

<https://gws.wisc.edu/people/faculty-lecturer-directory/>

Financial and Operations Coordinator



The GWS Finance Operations Coordinator is Joslyn Mink. Joslyn can help with purchasing related questions to support conference travel and/or research expenses. Joslyn can be found in 3409 Sterling Hall or at joslyn.mink@wisc.edu.

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the [operations and front desk contact information](#).

Department & Program Overview

The Department of Gender & Women's Studies provides an institutional home and an intellectual community to develop and disseminate knowledge about gender, sexuality, and women through an analysis of texts, social and cultural practices, and social institutions - both local and global as well as historical and contemporary. We explore the diverse empirical realities and creative meanings of gender, sexuality, and the lives of women, including their representations in the arts, culture, and history in a global perspective. We examine the structures of inequality and the movements for social change, especially attuned to the intersections of gender with other dimensions of difference and inequality such as race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, and national origin. Through our scholarship, teaching and outreach, we engage our communities, our state, and the world with a commitment to social justice.

We strive to support and produce first-rate and innovative scholarship on the assumption that research excellence is a key means to understand the past, reveal and explain the present, and advocate for a better future. We share an investment in the centrality of gender as a category of analysis as well as in feminist, queer, and trans theorizing. Committed to interdisciplinarity, we believe that multiple theoretical and methodological approaches can serve to illuminate shared problems in new ways and provide pathways toward their resolution.

We embrace the power of education as a way to shape the future. We see the classroom as a potent site for the production of self-knowledge. We also demand that students look through and beyond their own perspectives to understand the lives of other people across different locations, times, sexes, genders, sexualities, races, cultures, religions, and disability statuses. We believe that education does not flow in just one direction. Instead, sharing our expertise with our students allows our own perspectives and claims to be transformed.

The Department has many uniquely attractive features. The faculty represent a balance between the humanities and social sciences along with health and the biological sciences. Students are expected to undertake interdisciplinary training, including the completion of a concentration outside the department. Upon completion of the PhD, students will be prepared to teach introductory interdisciplinary courses in gender, sexuality, and women's studies.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are cornerstones of our scholarship, teaching, and departmental practice in Gender and Women's Studies. Our research highlights and analyzes various dimensions of diversity, including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and social class. As we explore these arenas of identity and inequality, we critically deploy an intersectional approach which acknowledges that the effects of multiple axes of oppression and/or privilege are not merely additive. Our work frequently centers the experiences of people on the social margins by highlighting the complexity and vibrancy of diverse communities. It also examines the social, economic, and cultural forces that further disenfranchise marginalized communities.

We bring our commitment to diversity into our classrooms. Our syllabi highlight diverse perspectives and our analyses explore how power is unequally distributed along lines of identity. We encourage students to share their varied experiences and perspectives and to ask questions of themselves and others. In order to excel in a multicultural world, our students must engage with people of varied backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences.

Our belief in the value of diversity is also central to our recruiting practices. We have sought to attract faculty, students, and staff with diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and identities; in large part, we have succeeded. Our community is diverse in many aspects, including in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and disability.

As a department, we have built upon our differences to create an inclusive, welcoming community. Community is always a work-in-progress and we are committed to nurturing

a culture of respect forged through mutual understanding. Much of our effort around diversity, equity, and inclusion is led by our Accessibility, Climate, and Diversity Committee (ACDC).

Our particular clusters of scholarly expertise have made the Department of Gender and Women's Studies a unique place to study. We have particular strengths at the intersection of GWS and Disability Studies, LGBTQ+ Studies, Health, and Visual Culture, Art, and Performance Studies.

How to Get Involved

As a graduate student at UW-Madison, you have a multitude of opportunities to become involved on campus and in your academic discipline. Such involvement is key to developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides important opportunities for professional networking.

In Our Department

The department's official meeting time is on Wednesdays from 1:30-3:00 pm. You are expected to keep this time open. Committee meetings, department research colloquia, and more are held during this time.

Department Committees

There are various committees within GWS, one of which is the Department Committee. This committee includes all faculty, staff, and graduate students. The Department Committee meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month. Graduate students are especially welcome to attend.

Graduate students, in their third year or beyond, are also encouraged to become members of several other committees in the Department. These include:

- Graduate Committee
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Research Committee
- Alumni Relations Committee

If you are interested in serving on one of these additional committees, please email the Department Chair by September 1. Whether planning a career inside academia or

elsewhere, committee membership is a valuable experience that signals your professionalism to future employers.

Department Research Colloquia

Department research colloquia are organized by the [Center for Research on Gender and Women](#). They are generally held on the fourth Wednesday of each month. You are expected to attend the Colloquia as part of your intellectual development.

In Our Discipline

The major professional organization in our field is the [National Women's Studies Association \(NWSA\)](#). The NWSA's annual conference provides an opportunity for you to present scholarly papers and network with your peers from across the nation.

There are also a number of professional organization(s) associated with your specific concentration. Consult with your faculty advisor about which of these organization(s) is best for you to affiliate with.

On Campus & In the Community

The [Wisconsin Idea](#), the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom, has guided the UW-Madison community for more than 100 years. You can find a list of ways to engage in campus and local community life from the [Graduate School's current student webpage](#).

If you are a student actively involved in leadership and service activities, consider nominating yourself for membership in the [Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society](#).

Getting Started as a Graduate Student

This section guides you through important steps to take as you begin your journey as a graduate student at UW-Madison.

New Graduate Student Checklist

Be sure to review all steps listed on the [Graduate School's New Student webpage](#).

In addition to a checklist for all new graduate students, the New Student webpage includes sections with additional steps to take if you are a new international student, a student with a disability, a student veteran, a student with children, and/or a student with funding.

In Our Program

Gender and Women's Studies provides a New Graduate Student Orientation during the week before the start of classes in September. You will be notified about the exact date and time, which varies from year to year. All new PhD students are required to attend the department's New Graduate Student Orientation.

You will be assigned desk space in one of the shared GWS graduate student offices in Sterling Hall.

For first semester course registration, see the [Sample Course Schedule](#) in this Handbook and consult with your faculty advisor and the Graduate Program Manager.

The Graduate Program Manager can also provide information about your sources of support for the first year, which may be in the form of a fellowship, teaching assistantship (TA), or project assistantship (PA).

Advising, Mentoring, and Teaching

Advising relationships are a central part of academia and are important to the experience and development of students and faculty members alike.

The Graduate School's [definition of an advisor can be found here](#). Your faculty advisor has two main roles:

- 1) to assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field and
- 2) to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed at an acceptable level in each of your degree milestones (see "[Degree Requirements](#)" for further information on building your committee).

Your advisor's other roles may include assisting with course selection and planning your academic path as well as helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research and employment opportunities.

You and your advisor are responsible for setting clear expectations for each other. Be sure to discuss these expectations with your advisor. Please see the PhD Program's "[Advising Compact](#)" for further information about the tool we use in this program to formalize advising expectations.

Finding & Selecting an Advisor

You will be paired with a faculty advisor before you enter the program. Your advisor will be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and research interests closely match your own. Please note that if your GWS faculty advisor moves to a different department on campus and subsequently becomes a GWS affiliate, they can continue to serve as your advisor. To learn more about the GWS faculty members' research interests and expertise, please consult the following sources:

- [Our program website](#)
- Faculty publications

All new students entering the program should schedule a time to meet with their advisor. Below is a list of questions to consider asking your advisor once you have spent some time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training:

Questions to Ask Your Advisor

1. What dissertation projects do your students typically work on?
2. Would these projects expose me to a variety of different approaches?
3. How frequently would we meet?
4. What is your philosophy regarding the amount of guidance the advisor should provide to a student during preparation of the dissertation proposal, dissertation, and so on?
5. Do you include your graduate students in professional activities that will familiarize them with their field of interest/research, such as reviewing manuscripts and meeting with visiting speakers?
6. How long do you think it should take me to get my degree?
7. What are your former graduate students (if any) doing now?
8. What is your general philosophy of graduate training and what goals do you have for your graduate students?

Changing Your Advisor

Because the advisor-student relationship is one of mutual agreement, it may be terminated by either party. If you decide that you would prefer working with a different faculty advisor, discuss this with your potential new advisor to seek the change. The potential new advisor must agree to accept you as an advisee. The potential new advisor also has the right to refuse your request.

If you change your advisor, you must notify your Graduate Program Manager in writing and follow any related procedures.

Every graduate student must have an advisor or they may be suspended from graduate study at UW-Madison by the Graduate School. Be sure to follow procedures to re-select a new advisor (described above) prior to finalizing the termination of your current advising relationship. You can confirm that the name of your advisor has been updated in the official record from [MyUW](#)'s "Academic Navigator" widget and then "Advisors". If you don't see the "Academic Navigator" widget, you can search for it at the search bar at the top of the MyUW page.

Advising Compact

The faculty advisor serves a dual role:

- first, to assist you in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field and
- second, to chair the committee that will determine whether you have performed acceptably at each of your degree milestones. The chair of your committee must have graduate faculty status and be a member of the GWS Department. Your GWS advisor is responsible for assisting you in meeting the PhD program requirements and milestones. You can view our policy on [Satisfactory Academic Progress here](#).

Advisors play a role in tracking your progress toward degree completion, assisting with course selection and academic planning, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and opportunities.

Advisors *and* advisees in GWS are expected to:

- Touch base, early each semester, regarding deadlines, seminars, and any other academic questions or concerns.
- Meet about once a month in the academic year.
- Respond to each other's emails within a week during the contracted work periods
- Provide feedback on dissertation drafts: You can expect that your advisor will give you feedback on drafts of your dissertation in a timely manner. Timelines and deadlines for the work on a dissertation should be decided on together well in advance.
- Write letters of recommendation: If a faculty member agrees to write a letter of recommendation for you, they must meet the deadline. You should, in turn, request the letter in advance (six weeks is preferable), and submit materials to the faculty member no later than three weeks before the letter is due (unless another time frame is agreed upon).

Teaching Expectations

To give you the best possible preparation to teach, and to enhance your credentials when you are on the job market, you must complete the following requirements:

1. All students must serve as a TA (teaching assistant) for a minimum of 2 semesters in GWS.
2. All students will have the opportunity to serve as a TA for an online GWS course during a summer term (currently we have 4 TA positions each summer).
3. You will not teach during the first semester of your first year in the program. You will instead be supported by other means, such as University and CGRS Fellowships and PA positions funded by GWS.

TA assignments will be made by the Academic Program Manager in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Manager.

GWS Teaching Compact

Teaching introductory lectures is the primary source of funding in the PhD program and an important part of PhD students' training. In GWS we very much value teaching and pride ourselves on excelling at it. We also strive to mentor students to become excellent teachers with strong teaching portfolios and to support instructors in their roles as mentors and leaders of teaching teams. To this end, the department has devised the following teaching guidelines:

Instructors are expected to -

- Share weekly learning objectives
- Assign volumes and levels of readings appropriate for undergraduates
- “Walk” teaching assistants (TAs) through a typical discussion section
- “Walk” TAs through key components of the CANVAS course page
- Provide TAs with lesson planning resources
- Share expectations and guidelines about grading, extensions, artificial intelligence, and other assessment-related matters
- Clarify how power/authority is split between lecturer and TAs and among TAs (i.e. who is in charge of what)
- Specify what course materials TAs can/cannot modify (syllabi, CANVAS course page, learning outcomes, quizzes, handouts, course policies, etc.)
- Provide TAs with a detailed breakdown (grading, office hours, attending lectures, etc.) of how they should expect to allocate their 20-hour work week
- Observe TAs in a discussion section no later than week 7 of the semester
- Provide TAs with written feedback on their teaching by the end of the semester
- Provide written guidelines and procedures for addressing conflicts/complaints about lecturer, TAs, and/or enrolled students
- Share rules on [mandated reporting at UW](#)

Teaching Assistants are expected to -

- Attend all lectures in person (or watch lectures in select cases when doing so is part of a University approved accommodation)
- Teach assigned discussion sections in person
- Teach assigned discussion sections using a prepared lesson plan
- Prepare and utilize lesson plans that explicitly engage with and “unpack” the content of the instructor’s lectures as well as the assigned readings, films, and other materials
- Attend weekly teaching team meetings during contracted work periods (including the week before teaching starts)
- Hold weekly office hours
- Be familiar with and prepared to work in CANVAS
- Grade in a timely manner (typically 1-2 week maximum “turn around”) using the rubric or guidance provided by the lead instructor
- Respond to student, supervisor, and fellow TA emails in a timely manner (typically within 48 working hours)
- Be familiar with university sick leave policies
- Communicate all sick leave to supervisor and department administration
- Work 20 hours per week (on average)

- Ask questions and seek help from the lead instructor and/or fellow TAs when confused or unclear
- Be prepared to teach students with diverse learning styles and from diverse academic, socio-economic, and geographic backgrounds
- Empathetically engage with students and maintain appropriate, professional student-teacher boundaries

Mentoring Networks

The [University's Center for Teaching, Mentoring, and Learning](#) offers extensive resources for mentoring as well as teaching.

In addition to a formal advisor, you are encouraged to develop a broad network of individuals who can provide academic and professional mentorship during and beyond your time as a graduate student. Peer and faculty networks are equally important for the advancement of your academic and professional career.

Degree Requirements

Master's Degree

The Department of Gender and Women's Studies does not offer a stand-alone MA degree. Nevertheless, you can earn a Master's degree along the way to the PhD. Or, if you decide to leave the program, you may earn a Master's degree if you complete the requirements described below. You are responsible for being aware of the following requirements to complete the MA degree.

Requirements

To earn a Master's degree in GWS, you must:

- Complete 30 credits of graduate coursework with an average GPA of 3.0 or better
- Complete the five core courses:
 - Gen&WS 800 (Research Methods)
 - Gen&WS 810 (GWS: Emergence and Transformation)
 - Gen&WS 830 (Contemporary Theorizing)
 - Gen&WS 840 (Pedagogy)
 - Gen&WS 860 (Professional Development Seminar)

- Complete and successfully defend the qualifying paper

Master's Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School also has a list of deadlines and other requirements that you must meet in order to [complete your master's degree](#). Please familiarize yourself with these deadlines and requirements as you make progress towards your degree.

Doctoral Degree

You are responsible for completing the following requirements in order to obtain your Doctoral degree.

Course Requirements

All of the current requirements for completing your degree (e.g., credits, courses, milestones, and learning outcomes/goals) are available the [GWS GUIDE Requirements section](#). The "Policies" from the navigation bar of your program's page provides information on policies affecting these requirements (e.g., prior coursework, probation, credits per term allowed, time constraints, grievances and appeals, etc.). Please note that when you look at the Guide to learn about program requirements, you will be viewing the current year's version. To find past versions of program requirements, see the [Guide Archive](#) and search for your program and the year you would like to reference.

Advanced Electives

To show that you have gained in-depth knowledge about gender, women's and sexuality studies, you are required to take 9 credits of advanced elective courses numbered 700 and above. These courses should be listed in or cross-listed with GWS. No more than two advanced elective courses can count toward your concentration. Please consult with your advisor, the Graduate Program Manager, and/or the DGS about other courses, not listed below, that may qualify as advanced electives:

Gen&WS/Engl 737: Feminist Theory And Criticism

Gen&WS/Curric 760: Sex/Gender-Related Issues In Curriculum And Instruction

Gen&WS/EPS 805: Gender Issues in International Educational Policy

Gen&WS/Journ 828: Gender and Sexuality in Mass Communication

Gen&WS 880: Proseminar in Graduate Gender and Women's Studies
Gen&WS/C&E Soc/Soc 904: Sociological Perspectives on Gender
Gen&WS/Anthro 920: Anthropology of Gender
Gen&WS/Psych 932: Psychology of Women and Gender
Gen&WS/Pol Sci 933: Feminist Political Theory
Gen&WS/History 938: History of Sexuality
Gen&WS 950: Seminar: Topics in Gender and Women's Studies

Minor

The Graduate School requires a breadth component called a doctoral minor. In GWS, the minor requirement will typically be fulfilled by the concentration. This translates, in Graduate School lingo, to the "Option B" distributed minor. More information about the Graduate School's minor options is available [here](#).

In order to use your GWS concentration to fulfill the Graduate School minor requirement, please declare a distributed minor in [MyGradPortal](#) → Add a Program → Select the minor/certificate. You will need to declare your minor before the Graduate Program Manager can request your preliminary exam warrant.

Transfer Course Policy

You may count up to 9 non-UW-Madison graduate-level credits as transfer credits. Credit for transfer courses will be determined in consultation with your committee chair and the DGS, who will review relevant syllabi. Please note that no transfer credits will be granted for core, required GWS courses.

Concentration

A unique feature of the University of Wisconsin-Madison's PhD program in Gender & Women's Studies is that all students must complete a 15-credit concentration largely composed of courses outside GWS. The concentration may be in a traditional discipline (e.g., History or Political Science) or an interdisciplinary area (e.g., Health or LGBTQ+ Studies). Pursuing a concentration provides you with the specific research methods and content that are essential for producing an intellectually rigorous dissertation as well as succeeding on the job market.

Requirements for approved disciplinary and [interdisciplinary concentrations may be found here](#).

You must submit a written plan for your concentration and have it approved by your advisor and the Graduate Committee by the end of Fall semester of your second year in the program. No more than two advanced elective courses may be counted toward your concentration.

The department recommends that all concentration courses be completed by December of your fourth year in the program.

Sample Course Schedule

The grid below shows an example of a typical PhD course schedule. The core courses, 800, 810, 830, 840, and 860, must be taken by all PhD students. Some core courses are offered only every other year, so your particular sequence might, for example, involve reversing some of the courses in Years 1 and 2. In addition, you must take 9 credits (3 courses) of advanced elective courses in GWS. You may double count 2 courses as both a GWS advanced elective and a concentration course.

Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
Fall	Cr	Spring	Cr	Fall	Cr	Spring	Cr	Fall	Cr	Spring	Cr
GWS 810: Emergence	3	GWS 800: Research Methods	3			GWS 830: Theory	3				
GWS 840: Pedagogy	3	GWS 860: Prof Dev	1	GWS elective	3	GWS elective	3				
Directed research or GWS elective	2-3	Directed research or GWS elective	3	Directed research or elective	3	Directed Research or elective	2-3	Directed research (prelim study)	1	Directed research (prelim study)	1
		Conc Course	1-3	Conc Course	2-3			Conc Course	3	Conc Course	3
Total Credits	8-9		8-10		8-9		8-9		4		4

The department requires that all GWS core courses be completed by December of your third year in the program and that all concentration courses be completed by December of your fourth year in the program.

A list of all courses in Gender and Women's Studies is available via [the UW Course Search and Enroll app](#).

Graduate Student Colloquium

In the fall semester of your second year of the PhD program, you are required to present components of your work-in-progress qualifying paper (see below for details) at a department colloquium. These components include but are not limited to, a clear thesis statement, a specific rationale regarding why the project matters, a relevant literature review, and appropriate research methods. This colloquium provides an informal space for you to present and receive feedback on your ideas from your advisor as well as other graduate students and faculty. The colloquium is also an opportunity for the department to come together to share and recognize the great work being done by our graduate students.

Preliminary key dates for the fall colloquium are (more specific dates will follow):

1. Early October (no later): meet with your advisor to discuss your plans for your research memo and slides ([see further guidelines](#)).
2. Mid-October: submit your research memo to the Colloquium Box folder.
3. The Colloquium will be scheduled for the second half of October.

Qualifying Paper

Students seeking a PhD in Gender and Women's Studies must write and defend a qualifying paper.

Reading Committee

Your qualifying paper will be supervised by a committee composed of your advisor and two other faculty members. This committee will advise and formally evaluate your qualifying paper.

Your advisor chairs your committee and provides individualized guidance on how to select committee members. Your committee will consist of three faculty members (two, in addition to your advisor).

You may have a co-chair or member of the committee who is a faculty affiliate of GWS, if that person's expertise is important in the area of the paper. Committee membership should be agreed upon by both you and your faculty advisor.

Form and Content

The qualifying paper should be written in an approved scholarly style corresponding to the area of your concentration. Examples include MLA style and APA style. Your advisor can provide guidance on the appropriate style for your area.

Two alternatives are possible for the topic and content. (1) The paper may be a substantial revision of a paper written for one of the GWS core courses or advanced electives. (2) The paper may be a report of empirical research conducted in your first two years in the program. If done well, the qualifying paper may serve as the basis for a publishable journal article. The qualifying paper should be between 8,000 and 12,000 words (roughly 30-50 pages long), including references, tables, and figures.

Your advisor will provide guidance on selecting a topic. Your topic may be part of a research agenda that eventually becomes your dissertation or it may explore a significantly different subject.

Procedures

The department requires that you complete your qualifying paper by May of your second year. This process includes submitting your paper and defending your paper orally to your three-person committee.

The approximately 60-minute oral defense of the qualifying paper will involve:

- Student's presentation (approx 15 minutes) of paper's main findings
- Student's response to committee members' suggestions/ questions re the paper

Please note that should you leave the PhD program with only an MA, you must complete your qualifying paper, successfully defend your paper, and have your committee sign a degree warrant. The [Graduate School provides information](#) on the role and composition of committees and [this online tool](#) can help to determine if your committee meets minimum requirements.

Preliminary Exam

After satisfactorily writing and defending your qualifying paper, you will start preparing for your preliminary examination.

The preliminary exam (prelim) has both a written portion and an oral portion. The written portion has a three-part structure:

- A breadth/core exam on GWS theory
- A general exam in the concentration field
- A specialty exam individualized to the student's area of specialization for the dissertation

Preliminary Examination Committee

Your preliminary examination will be supervised by a committee composed of a primary advisor and two other faculty members. Your primary advisor will chair your preliminary examination committee. Committee membership should be agreed upon by both you and your advisor.

The reading list for the breadth/core theory exam will be provided by the GWS Graduate Committee. The list will begin with readings from 830: Contemporary Theorizing in Gender and Women's Studies – the required theory seminar, augmented with additional readings. The two other exam lists will be developed by your advisor and the other two committee members.

Form and Content

The length of the reading lists for the concentration exam and the specialty exam will vary depending on the discipline or area and its traditions. For example, for a concentration in Political Science, the concentration exam might involve a reading list of 20 books and 30 journal articles. For the specialty exam, e.g., on gender and politics in the Middle East and North Africa, the reading list might include 10-12 books and 15 journal articles.

All three parts of the written exam are to be taken in a single week, Monday through Friday. Each part of the written exam consists of one or two essays. Each essay should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words in length. The written exam will be followed by an oral examination.

The approximately 60-minute oral defense portion of the preliminary examinations will involve a discussion, between the student and the preliminary exam committee, about how to use written exam responses to begin drafting a dissertation proposal.

Your committee will determine whether you pass or fail the exam or any portion of the exam. If you fail your preliminary examination, you may be offered a second opportunity

to pass it or may be dismissed from the program. The preliminary examination committee must inform the GWS Graduate Committee about your performance on the exam within two weeks.

The prelim exam will be given twice a year, once in May and once in December. The department requires that you take your preliminary examinations by May of your third year in the program. To remain in good standing in the program, you must pass your prelims by December of your fourth year in the program. A student who has not satisfied the preliminary examination requirement by December of their fourth year may be dropped from the program.

Dissertation & Final Oral Defense

The PhD degree requires the completion of a dissertation that comprises original scholarly work in the field of Gender and Women's Studies as well as a final oral defense.

Topic

Your dissertation should ask significant research questions that will advance GWS scholarship and research. Students will pursue individualized, independent research that matches their specific interests, goals, and research concentration. Your specific dissertation topic should be drawn from multidisciplinary perspectives and areas associated with gender studies and women's studies including but not limited to queer studies, transgender studies, sexuality studies, race and ethnicity studies, disability studies, area and global studies, cultural studies, and postcolonial and transnational studies.

The Graduate School provides additional guidelines to help you prepare for your dissertation. [You can access their guide at the bottom of this webpage.](#) They can also provide feedback on the format and submission related aspects of your dissertation. If you have any such questions, please contact The Graduate School at the following email - gsacserv@grad.wisc.edu.

Doctoral Committee

Your advisor, who serves as your doctoral chair, will provide guidance on selecting your dissertation topic. Your doctoral chair should be a faculty member in Gender and

Women's Studies. If you wish to have a chair who is a faculty affiliate in Gender and Women's Studies, you are required to have a co-chair who is a core GWS faculty member.

Your doctoral chair will also provide individualized guidance on how to select three additional committee members - one of whom should be from a different department. Committee membership should be agreed upon by both you and your advisor. The composition of your doctoral committee should also meet the Graduate School's [requirements](#). This [online tool](#) can help to determine if your committee meets minimum requirements.

If you find that your topic and/or mentoring needs no longer align with your chair's, see the "[Advising & Mentoring](#)" section of this handbook for guidance on how to change advisors. Please note that the overall composition of your committee may or may not need to change in this scenario, depending upon your new advisor's guidance.

Form and Content

Given the interdisciplinary, concentration-based nature of our program, guidelines and expectations (research, readings, length, citation practices, components, sections, etc.) for your dissertation will vary. Your advisor will work closely with you throughout your time in the program to ensure that you know what is expected of you.

Procedures

Once you have passed your preliminary exams and obtained dissertator status, you will be eligible to write a *dissertation proposal*, the form and content of which will vary depending on your specific research area. Your advisor will provide guidance on how to proceed with your proposal.

You will formally propose your dissertation at a meeting of your committee. You should send committee members your proposal at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting. You will explain and defend your ideas and receive input from the committee. At that meeting, the committee may authorize you to move forward with the dissertation or may request a revision of the proposal to address key issues.

The department requires that your proposal be written, defended, and formally approved by your committee by May of your fourth year in the program.

When you and your advisor believe that the dissertation is ready to be defended, your chair will schedule a dissertation defense meeting with you and your committee. You

should send them the dissertation a minimum of three weeks before the meeting. The outcome of the meeting may be approval of the dissertation, a request for minor revisions, or a request for major revisions.

Graduate School Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains [a doctoral guide](#) that includes deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward graduation.

Enrollment Requirements

You are responsible for following Graduate School policies related to course enrollment requirements and limitations. For more information, please see the links below:

[Adding / Dropping Courses](#)

[Auditing Courses](#)

[Canceling Enrollment](#)

[Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Dissertators](#)

[Enrollment Accountability](#)

[Minimum Enrollment Requirements](#)

Academic Exception Petitions

All requests for exceptions in the GWS PhD program should be submitted to the Graduate Committee.

You may petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of any required course except core courses (see [Transfer Policy](#) for more details).

If you are petitioning for a deadline extension or waiver of any type, you must obtain an endorsement from your advisor. The Graduate Committee may ask your advisor for further information beyond what is written on the petition.

You may ask the Director of Graduate Studies or other faculty members for advice and/or to speak to the Graduate Committee on your behalf.

Keep in mind that some academic exceptions may, in addition, need to be approved by the Graduate School. For further information, contact the [Assistant Dean for Academic Services](#) and review the [Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures](#). If you have any questions about academic exceptions that need approval, you can also reach out to your Graduate Program Manager.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Whether you are making satisfactory academic progress as a graduate student at UW-Madison is determined by your program, the Graduate School, and your advisor. You may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress. Failing to maintain satisfactory academic progress can impact your academic standing (detailed below) or funding (consult your sources of funding, as applicable).

Graduate School Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

You are responsible for understanding the [Graduate School's satisfactory academic progress requirements](#).

Program Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy

The PhD program in GWS has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplements the Graduate School's related policies.

In order to meet our program's definition of satisfactory academic progress, you should:

1. Submit a written plan for your 15-credit concentration and have it approved by your advisor and the Graduate Committee by the end of Fall semester of your their second year in the program. Details about GWS concentration requirements are available [here](#) and from your advisor.

2. Submit your qualifying paper and complete your oral defense in May of your second year in the program.
3. Complete all required GWS core courses by December of your third year in the program.
4. Complete all courses for the concentration by December of your fourth year in the program.
5. Complete your preliminary exams by December of your fourth year in the program. Preliminary exams will be offered in May and December.
6. Complete and have your dissertation proposal approved by your faculty committee by May of your fourth year in the program.

Formal extension requests for any of the above deadlines will be considered by the Graduate Committee.

Failure to meet any of these deadlines may result in you being placed on probation or asked to leave the program.

Annual Review

Each student's progress is reviewed annually, in May, by the Graduate Committee. Annual reviews are based on information submitted by the student in consultation with their advisor. The Graduate Program Manager will email you, in March, with information regarding the annual review process as well as a relevant form for you and your advisor(s) to complete.

Not Meeting Academic Expectations

If you, at any other time, fail to achieve satisfactory progress as outlined in this handbook, you will be notified and given an opportunity to submit a response to the Graduate Committee within a set time period (typically 2 weeks). The Graduate Committee will review your response, within 2 weeks, and determine if further action is needed.

Further action might include: 1) being placed on probation for a semester and 2) having your case reviewed by the Graduate Committee, in consultation with your faculty advisor, following the probationary semester. If you are placed on probation you will not receive funding during the probationary period. If you are placed on probation you may ultimately be dismissed from the PhD program or allowed to continue based upon a review of your progress made during the probationary semester. If you wish to appeal any decision stemming from this probationary process, you can do so, within 2 weeks of

the date of the Graduate Committee's probationary decision letter, by 1) submitting a written response to the Department Chair and 2) requesting a hearing by the Graduate Committee.

Personal Conduct Expectations

Professional Conduct

The University's Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards maintains detailed guidance on student rights and responsibilities related to learning in a community that is safe and fosters integrity and accountability. You are responsible for keeping aware of their policies and procedures, [found on this page](#).

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapter 14. For further information on this law, what constitutes academic misconduct, and procedures related to academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Academic](#)

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Academic Misconduct Website](#)

[Academic Misconduct Flowchart](#)

Non-Academic Misconduct

Non-academic misconduct is governed by state law, UW System Administration Code Chapters 17 and 18. For further information on these laws, what constitutes non-academic misconduct, and procedures related to non-academic misconduct, see:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Misconduct, Non-Academic](#)

Office for Student Conduct and Community Standards

[Non-Academic Misconduct Website](#)

Universities of Wisconsin System (UWS)

[Chapter 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures](#)

[Chapter 18: Conduct on University Lands](#)

Research Misconduct

Graduate students are held to the same standards of responsible conduct of research as faculty and staff. Further information about these standards and related policies and procedures can be found at:

The Graduate School

[Academic Policies & Procedures: Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

[Research Policies](#)

Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying)

Hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB), sometimes referred to as “bullying,” is prohibited by university policy applicable to faculty, academic staff, and university staff. For further definitions, policies, and procedures related to HIB, see this [webpage](#). Students who feel they have been subject to HIB are encouraged to review the informal and formal options on the “Addressing HIB” tab of this website.

Grievance Process

Each college or program on campus has a grievance process that students can use to address additional concerns regarding their experience in the program. The GWS PhD program’s grievance process can be found in detail [here](#).

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

The Graduate Committee of Gender & Women’s Studies administers the regulations established by the faculty. The Committee makes sure that students are meeting the program expectations and imposes sanctions when appropriate. Faculty and faculty committees determine whether the quality of a student’s work and conduct are satisfactory, while the Graduate Committee determines whether the student is satisfying the academic requirements in a timely fashion and meeting program conduct expectations. Students who are falling behind academically or not meeting conduct

expectations are first warned, then put on probation, and then dropped from the program if they cannot complete the requirements or remedy their conduct. Their funding may also be terminated. Within boundaries set by the faculty, the Graduate Committee is authorized to take account of individual circumstances and problems and to grant extensions of deadlines and waivers of requirements as it deems fit.

In addition to the Department's disciplinary actions, the Office of Student Assistance and Support may also have grounds to issue one or more of the following:

- Reprimand
- Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Restitution
- A zero or failing grade on an assignment or exam
- A lower grade or failure in the course
- Removal from course
- Enrollment restrictions in a course/program
- Conditions/terms of continuing as a student

Incident Reporting (Hate, Bias, Sexual Assault, Hazing, Students of Concern, Bullying)

The Office of Student Assistance and Support maintains [this portal](#) to report incidents of hate, bias, sexual assault, hazing, dating/domestic violence, stalking, missing students, and students displaying other concerning behaviors at UW-Madison.

As noted above in "Personal Conduct Expectations," students who feel they have been subjected to hostile or intimidating behavior (i.e., bullying) are encouraged to review the informal and formal options for addressing this behavior (including filing complaints when desired) [from this webpage](#).

Funding, Employment, and Finances

"Funding" is a term used to describe university employment or support to cover some or all of your costs of graduate education. It varies in kind, amount, and level of guarantee.

The Graduate School maintains policies related to graduate student funding and employment:

[Maximum Levels of Appointments](#)

[Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees](#)

[Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants](#)

[Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments](#)

Guaranteed Funding

The Department of Gender and Women's Studies guarantees five years of funding for PhD students. This five-year funding timeline applies or is in effect whether funding comes from GWS or another unit on campus. Each student accepted into the PhD program in Gender & Women's Studies will be given guaranteed funding (salary and tuition remission) at the 50% level, conditional on the student remaining in good standing. This guarantee refers to the 9 months of the academic year. The department will, in addition, do its best to provide summer support.

The above funding may come in any combination of internal fellowships (e.g., University Fellowship, Graduate Research Scholars Fellowship), Teaching Assistantships, Project Assistantships, Research Assistantships, and external fellowships for which you apply (e.g., National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, AAUW Dissertation Fellowship).

GWS may provide additional fellowships throughout the year. Information about these fellowships will be posted on the GWS main webpage and [funding page](#) if and when they become available.

The Graduate School also has its own fellowships, which you can peruse [here](#), as well as an [external fellowship database](#) hosted by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

[UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection](#)

Additional Policies & Resources

[Graduate School Policy: Residence for Tuition Purposes](#)

[Employee Disability Resources](#)

[Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures \(GAPP\)](#)

Professional Development

When you participate in professional development, you build skills to succeed academically and professionally. GWS recommends the following professional development activities. Required professional development activities are detailed in the [Degree Requirements](#) section above and the [In Our Department](#) section below.

On Campus

DiscoverPD

The Graduate School utilizes [DiscoverPD](#) to develop and curate a wide variety of resources for professional development, including a tool to assess your skills, set goals, and create a plan with recommended activities on campus (e.g., the popular “Individual Development Plan” or IDP) as well as programming to help you explore careers, prepare for a job search, build your network and learn from alumni, manage projects, communicate about your research, and much more.

DiscoverPD helps master’s and doctoral students at UW-Madison advance their academic and professional goals with customized recommendations based on a skills self-assessment. The 400+ professional development recommendations available in the DiscoverPD database are available in a range of formats to best meet your diverse needs, including in-person, virtual, asynchronous, and synchronous opportunities.

GradConnections Newsletter

The Graduate School communicates professional development opportunities through an e-newsletter, [GradConnections](#), that all graduate students receive at their wisc.edu email. Graduate students in traditional graduate degree programs receive the newsletter weekly during the academic year and every other week in the summer. Graduate students in online degree programs receive the newsletter every other week during the academic year and monthly during the summer.

In Our Department

Numerous opportunities for professional development are also available in the GWS. These opportunities include:

- Taking Gen&WS 860, the required professional development course for PhD students.

- Attending the Center for Research on Gender and Women's (CRGW) [Colloquium Series](#). These talks by distinguished scholars offer opportunities for forging professional networks and research collaborations. PhD students are expected to regularly attend the Colloquium Series.
- Participating in Departmental governance (see the section above on [How to Get Involved](#)).
- Obtaining teaching experience. GWS's policy on [Teaching Expectations](#) provides students with extensive opportunities for fine-tuning their pedagogical skills.
- Participating in conferences. The [UW System Women's and Gender Studies Consortium](#) sponsors an annual conference in April. This, along with other regional and national conferences offer students invaluable opportunities to present their research.
- Utilizing research, travel, and/or conference funds. The Department provides each incoming graduate student with funds to help subsidize research, travel, and/or conference expenses. The specific amount of these funds is stipulated in your offer letter.

In Our Discipline

The [National Women's Studies Association \(NWSA\)](#), established in 1977, is the major professional organization in our field. The annual conference in November presents excellent opportunities for graduate students to gain experience presenting their research and to develop a network of colleagues across the nation. Student memberships are available.

Your advisor will give you information about joining professional organizations and attending professional conferences that are relevant for your specific scholarly concentration.