



Gender & Women's Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

PhD Program Handbook

2023-2024

Department of Gender and Women's Studies

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

Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Pernille Ipsen

dgs@gws.wisc.edu

3307 Sterling Hall

Graduate Program Manager

Dr. Susan Nelson

susan.nelson@wisc.edu

3321 Sterling Hall

Last updated: February 2024

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 been working toward a PhD program for nearly a decade, and we are thrilled to welcome our first class. 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

Table of Contents

Welcome	i
Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison.....	1
<i>How to Use This Handbook.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Who to Contact for Questions.....</i>	<i>2</i>
Department & Program Overview.....	3
<i>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>How to Get Involved.....</i>	<i>5</i>
In Our Discipline	5
In Our Program/Department.....	6
On Campus & In the Community	6
Getting Started as a Graduate Student.....	7
<i>New Graduate Student Checklist.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>In Our Program</i>	<i>7</i>
Advising & Mentoring.....	8
<i>Finding & Selecting an Advisor.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Changing Your Advisor.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Advising Compact.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Mentoring Networks.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Degree Requirements.....	10
<i>Master’s Degree.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Requirements	11
Master’s Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines	11
<i>Doctoral Degree.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Requirements	11
Committee	13
Preliminary Exam	14
Dissertation & Final Oral Exam/Defense	15
Sample Course Schedule	17

Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines.....	18
Enrollment Requirements.....	18
Academic Exception Petitions.....	19
Satisfactory Academic Progress.....	20
<i>Definition.....</i>	20
<i>Not Meeting Academic Expectations.....</i>	21
Personal Conduct Expectations.....	22
<i>Professional Conduct.....</i>	22
<i>Academic Misconduct.....</i>	22
<i>Non-Academic Misconduct.....</i>	22
<i>Research Misconduct.....</i>	23
<i>Hostile and Intimidating Behavior (Bullying).....</i>	23
<i>Grievance Process.....</i>	24
<i>Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards.....</i>	24
Incident Reporting.....	25
Funding, Employment, and Finances.....	25
<i>Guaranteed Funding.....</i>	26
<i>Additional Policies & Resources.....</i>	26
Professional Development.....	26
<i>On Campus.....</i>	27
<i>In Our Program/Department.....</i>	27
<i>In Our Discipline.....</i>	28

Navigating Policy and Resources at UW-Madison

This handbook is one of many sources to consult as you become familiar with the policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms of graduate education at UW-Madison:



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.

Who to Contact for Questions

Many of your questions about how to meet expectations and thrive as a graduate student will be answered by the various sources of policies, procedures, requirements, resources, and norms listed above. Several key positions in this department and on campus are ready to answer your remaining questions:

Graduate Program Manager

The GWS Graduate Program Manager is Susan Nelson. The Graduate Program Manager serves as a point person for program policy and procedures and can answer many of your questions. Graduate Program Managers are 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 anything in this handbook. You will find Susan in 3321 Sterling Hall or at susan.nelson@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 2023-24, the DGS is Dr. Pernille Ipsen. The DGS chairs the Graduate Committee, which handles matters such as the PhD curriculum, graduate student funds requests, approval of concentration plans, and appeals for an extension of a deadline. You can find Pernille in 3307 Sterling Hall or at dgs@gws.wisc.edu.

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* (guide.wisc.edu/graduate). Simply navigate to the "Major/Degree" tab, click on PhD in Gender & Women's Studies, and look for the contact information box on the right side.

Department Administrator

The Gender & Women's Studies Department Administrator is Jamie Gratrix. Jamie can assist with any questions related to office assignments and keys, benefits, payroll, appointment letters, and other issues related to human resources. Jamie can be found in 3409 Sterling Hall or reached via email 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 via email at nina.valeo.cooke@wisc.edu.

Communications Administrator

The GWS Communications Administrator is Lyddia Ruch-Doll. Lyddia maintains the departmental website and social media platforms. Lyddia can assist with updates to your graduate student listing on our website, including photos. Lyddia's office is in 3409 Sterling Hall and her email is lyddia.ruchdoll@wisc.edu

Purchasing/Finance Coordinator

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

Faculty Advisor

Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor before entering the PhD program. Your faculty advisor(s) will be a key source of guidance for your academic development. Further definition can be found here: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232. Guidelines for finding, changing, and working with your advisor can be found in the Advising & Mentoring section below.

A list of GWS faculty can be found at: <https://gws.wisc.edu/people/faculty-lecturer-directory/>

The name and contact information of your faculty advisor can be found on your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under "Academic Progress" and then "Advisors."

Graduate School Services

For general inquiries and graduate student services from the Graduate School, see the operations and front desk contact information on this contact page: grad.wisc.edu/contacts.

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, 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 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. Only through research excellence can we understand the past, reveal and explain the present, and advocate for a better future. We share an investment in the centrality of feminist thought and of gender as a category of analysis. 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, and 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, but rather, as we share our expertise with our students, our own perspectives and claims are transformed.

The Department has many uniquely attractive features. The faculty represent a balance between the humanities and social sciences, with health and biology represented as well. Students are expected to undertake interdisciplinary training, including the completion of a concentration outside the department. They will gain interdisciplinary teaching experience through serving as a teaching assistant (TA) in one of our introductory courses: Gen&WS 101, 102, 103, or 200. Upon completion of the PhD, students will be prepared to teach introductory interdisciplinary courses in gender, sexuality, and women's studies, as well as more specialized upper-level courses.

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 axes of identity and inequality, we use an intersectional approach, acknowledging that the effects of multiple identities are not merely additive. Our work frequently centers the experiences of people on the social margins, 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 analysis explores 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, frequently born of personal identity, 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, Asian American Studies, and African American 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. This involvement often enhances your academic, professional, and personal growth through developing advanced leadership, communication, and collaboration skills. It also provides opportunity for professional networking.

In Our Discipline

The major professional organization in our field is the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), which holds an annual conference. That conference provides an opportunity for students to present scholarly papers and network with their peers across the nation.

In addition, there is a professional organization(s) associated with your concentration. Consult with your faculty advisor about which organization(s) would be best for you to affiliate with.

In Our Department

In GWS, the Department Committee includes all faculty, staff, and graduate students. Meetings of the Department Committee are held on the first Wednesday of each month, and students are welcome (but not required) to attend.

Students can also become members of any of several other committees in the Department. These include

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

To request to serve on a committee, email the Department Chair by September 1. Students may want to postpone involvement in a committee until their third year or later, given the more intense coursework requirements in the first two years. Whether planning a career inside academia or elsewhere, committee membership is good experience, and it adds a credential on your curriculum vita (cv).

Department research colloquia are organized by the [Center for Research on Gender and Women](#) and held on the fourth Wednesday of each month and occasionally at other times. Graduate students are expected to attend as part of their intellectual development.

On Campus & In the Community

The Wisconsin Idea is the principle that education should influence and improve people's lives beyond the university classroom. For more than 100 years, this idea has guided the university's work. You will find a list of ways to engage in campus and local community life at:

The Graduate School's Current Student Page
grad.wisc.edu/current-students

If you are a student actively involved in leadership and service activities, consider nominating yourself for membership in the following honor society:

Edward Alexander Bouchet Graduate Honor Society

grad.wisc.edu/diversity/bouchet

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 this [page](#) for new graduate students. In addition to a checklist for all new graduate students, the page includes sections with additional steps to take if you are a new international student, student with a disability, student veteran, student with children, or student with funding.

In Our Program

Gender and Women's Studies provides a New Graduate Student Orientation meeting during the week before classes start in September. You will be notified about the exact date and time, which vary from year to year.

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

For course registration for the first semester, see the Sample Course Schedule in this Handbook and consult with your faculty advisor and the Graduate Program Manager. The Graduate Program Manager can 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

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

The Graduate School's definition of an advisor can be found here:

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232. 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" section below for further information on building your committee). Other roles for your advisor may include assisting with course selection and planning your academic path, and helping you identify possible research mentors, committee members, and research and employment opportunities.

Both the student and advisor are responsible for making their expectations clear to each other. Be sure to discuss this with your advisor. See the "Advising Compact" below for further information about a 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, based on the advisors you requested in your application and the agreement of an advisor to work with you.

Your advisor should be a faculty member in the program whose expertise and research interests match closely with those that you intend to acquire. To learn more about the faculty in GWS, consider consulting the following sources:

- Our program website (gws.wisc.edu)
- Faculty publications
- Students currently in a prospective advisor's group

Additionally, you should have a discussion with a prospective advisor. Below are some questions to consider asking in this discussion, though it is not a complete list. You should spend some time identifying what is most important to you in your graduate training and ask questions accordingly.

Possible Questions to Ask of Prospective Advisors

1. What dissertation projects would be available to me if I were to work with you?
2. How 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 prospective advisor to seek the change. The prospective advisor must agree to accept you as an advisee, and the prospective advisor has a right to refuse.

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

Every graduate student must have an advisor or else 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 by looking in your Student Center on MyUW (my.wisc.edu) under “Academic Progress” and then “Advisors.”

Advising Compact

The faculty advisor serves a dual role: first, to assist the student in acquiring the highest possible level of knowledge and competence in the field; and second, to chair the committee that will determine whether the student has performed acceptably at each of their degree milestones. The chair or co-chair of the committee must be Graduate Faculty from the GWS Department. Advisors play a role in tracking a student’s

progress toward degree completion, assisting with course selection and academic planning, and helping students identify possible research mentors, committee members, and opportunities.

Primary advisors and advisees in GWS are expected to:

- Early each semester: touch base on deadlines, seminars the student is taking, other work and any questions or concerns.
- Meet about once a month in the academic year.
- Respond to each other's e-mails within a week during the contracted work periods.
- Feedback on draft of dissertation: Students can expect that their advisor gives them feedback on drafts of their dissertation in a timely manner. Timelines and deadlines for the work on a dissertation should be decided on together well in advance.
- Letters of recommendation: If a faculty member agrees to write a letter of recommendation, they must meet the deadline. The student 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).

Mentoring Networks

The University's Center for Teaching, Mentoring, and Learning offers extensive resources for mentoring as well as teaching, <https://ctlm.wisc.edu/>.

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, students in the Gender & Women's Studies PhD program may earn a Master's degree along the way to the PhD or, if they decide to leave the

program, they may earn a Master's degree if they complete the requirements described below. Students are responsible for being aware of the following requirements to complete the MA degree.

Requirements

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

- Complete 30 credits of graduate coursework with an average GPA of 3.0 or better
- Complete the four core courses:
 - Gen&WS 800 (Research Methods)
 - Gen&WS 810 (GWS: Emergence and Transformation)
 - Gen&WS 830 (Contemporary Theorizing)
 - Gen&WS 860 (Pedagogy)
- Complete the qualifying paper and defend it successfully

For further details, see the PhD degree requirements below.

Master's Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete your master's degree, including deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward the degree: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/masters-guide.

Doctoral Degree

All students in the PhD program in Gender & Women's Studies are responsible for being knowledgeable about the following requirements to complete the degree.

Requirements

For all current requirements to complete your degree (e.g., credits, courses, milestones, and learning outcomes/goals) see the GWS page in the *Graduate Guide*. Navigate to guide.wisc.edu/graduate, then select "Degrees/Majors," PhD in Gender and Women's Studies, and then "Requirements" from the navigation bar on the right side. You will be taken to a subsection of your program's *Guide* page that contains all official requirements for your degree. Similarly, see "Policies" from the navigation bar of your

program's page to learn about policies affecting these requirements (e.g., prior coursework, probation, credits per term allowed, time constraints, grievances and appeals, etc.). 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.

Qualifying Paper

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

Reading Committee

A student's qualifying paper will be supervised by a committee, comprising their advisor and two other members. This committee will advise and evaluate satisfactory progress, evaluate the qualifying paper, and sign a degree warrant. For general guidance from the Graduate School on the role and composition of committees as well as an online tool to determine if your committee meets minimum requirements, see the following policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201.

Your faculty advisor chairs your committee and provides individualized guidance on how to select committee members. Your committee will consist of three faculty (two in addition to your advisor). You may have a co-chair or member of the committee who is a faculty affiliate in GWS, if that person's expertise is important in the area of the paper.

Committee membership must be agreed upon by the student and the faculty advisor.

Form & 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 electives. (2) The paper may be a report of empirical research conducted in the first two years of 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, counting references, tables, and figures.

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

Procedures

It is recommended that students complete the qualifying paper by May of their second year. This process includes submitting the paper to the three-person faculty committee and defending the paper orally at a meeting of the committee.

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 (mostly) outside GWS. The concentration may be in a traditional discipline (e.g., History or Political Science) or an interdisciplinary area (e.g., Gender and Health, or LGBTQ+ Studies). With the concentration, students will have expanded options on the academic job market, and they will learn research methods and content that will be useful for their dissertation and research beyond that.

Requirements for the approved disciplinary and interdisciplinary concentrations may be found here, <https://gws.wisc.edu/graduate/phd-program-concentrations/>. Another option is for the student to propose an individualized concentration.

The student must submit a written plan for their concentration and have it approved by their advisor and the Graduate Committee by the end of Fall semester of their second year in the program. Two GWS elective courses may be counted toward the concentration provided that they form a coherent part of it.

It is recommended that all courses for the concentration be completed at least by December of the fourth year in the program.

Teaching Expectations

To give PhD students the best possible preparation to teach, and to enhance their credentials when they are on the job market, students must complete the following requirements.

1. All students must TA for a minimum of 2 semesters.

2. All students will have the opportunity to serve as a Lecturer in charge of their own course for one semester.
3. All students will have the opportunity to TA for an online course during a summer term (currently we have 4 TA positions each summer).
4. Students will not teach during the first semester of their first year in the program. They will instead be supported by other means, including 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 Coordinator.

Doctoral Committee

Doctoral committees advise and evaluate satisfactory progress, administer preliminary and final oral examinations, evaluate a dissertation, and sign a degree warrant. For general guidance from The Graduate School on the role and composition of committees as well as an online tool to determine if your committee meets minimum requirements, see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201.

Your advisor chairs your committee and provides individualized guidance on how to select committee members. Your advisor must be a faculty member in Gender and Women's Studies; if you wish to have an advisor who is a faculty affiliate of Gender and Women's Studies, you must have a co-chair who is a GWS faculty member. Following Graduate School rules, your committee must have at least four members and one of them must be from a different department.

Preliminary Exam

After a student has satisfactorily written and defended their qualifying paper, they begin preparing for their 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, which is on feminist theory
- A general exam in the concentration field
- A specialty exam individualized to the student's area of specialization for the dissertation

The reading list for the breadth/core exam will be provided by the faculty committee managing the prelims that year. The list will begin with the readings in the core course in feminist theory, augmented with additional readings.

For the general exam in the concentration, the reading list will be provided by the advisor(s).

The reading list for the specialty exam will be developed jointly by the student and the advisor.

The length of the reading lists for the concentration exam and the specialty exam will vary somewhat 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.

The prelim exam will be given twice a year, once in May and once in August. It is recommended that students take their prelims at least by the summer following their third year in the program. To remain in good standing in the program, the student must pass prelims by December of the fourth year in the program.

All three parts of the written exam are taken in a single week, Monday through Friday, with one or two essays for each part. The essay for one question should be between 2,500 and 3,000 words in length. After completion of the written portion of the prelim, the student will schedule a meeting of their committee for the oral portion of the exam.

The committee will determine whether the student passes or fails the exam or any portion of the exam. If the student fails on the first attempt, they may retake the exam one time only.

Dissertation & Final Oral Defense

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

Topic

Your dissertation should ask significant research questions that will advance the contributions of GWS scholarship to society. Students will create individualized research programs that match their specific interests and goals, and that harness the tools from their concentration. The dissertation topic should be drawn from the multidisciplinary perspectives and areas associated with gender studies and women's studies such as queer studies, transgender studies, sexuality studies, race and ethnicity studies, disability studies, area and global studies, cultural studies, postcolonial and transnational studies.

Your advisor can provide guidance on selecting your dissertation topic. If you find that your topic and/or mentoring needs no longer align with your advisor, see “Advising & Mentoring” section on how to change advisors. Note that your committee composition may or may not need to change as well in this scenario, depending upon your new advisor’s guidance.

Form & Content

Given the interdisciplinarity of our program and thematic concentrations, guidelines and expectations (research, readings, length, citation practices, components, and 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

To be eligible to proceed with a dissertation, you must have passed your preliminary exams, which advances you to dissertator status.

You will write a *dissertation proposal*, the form and content of which will vary depending on your area. Your advisor will provide guidance on these questions.

You will propose the dissertation at a meeting of your four-person committee. You should send committee members the proposal at least one week 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.

It is recommended that the proposal be written and defended by May of your fourth year in the program. After your committee has approved your proposal, you are authorized to proceed with the research for your dissertation and write it.

When you and your advisor believe that the *dissertation* is ready to defend, you will schedule a dissertation defense meeting with your four-person committee. You should send them the dissertation a minimum of two 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.

Sample Course Schedule

The grid below shows an example of a course schedule. The core courses are 800, 810, 830, 860, and 861, and they must be taken by all PhD students. Some core courses will be offered only every other year, so your particular sequence might, for example, reverse 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 elective and a concentration course. (Numbers in red are credits)

Year 1 Fall	Year 1 Spring	Year 2 Fall	Year 2 Spring	Year 3 Fall	Year 3 Spring
810: GWS, the Field (3)	800: Research Methods (3)		830: Theory (3)		
860: Pedagogy (3)	860: Prof Dev (1)	GWS elective (3)	GWS Elective (3)		
	Concentration course (3)	Concentration course (3)		Con. course (3)	Con. course (3)
Directed research or GWS Elective	Directed research or GWS elective	Directed research or elective	Directed research or elective	Directed research (prelim study)	Directed research (prelim study)
Credits 8-9	8-10	8-9	8-9	4	4

It is recommended that all GWS core courses be completed by December of the third year in the program, and that all concentration courses be completed by December of the fourth year.

A list of all courses in Gender and Women’s Studies can be found [here](#) via the UW Course Search and Enroll app.

Doctoral Degree Checklist: Timeline & Deadlines

The Graduate School maintains a list of steps to complete your doctoral degree, including deadlines and important things to know as you progress toward graduation: grad.wisc.edu/current-students/doctoral-guide. In addition to what is posted on this webpage from the Graduate School, you must meet all required steps of the program (outlined below).

Year	Semester	Coursework*	Scholarship	Other
Year 1	Fall	2 GWS core courses		
	Spring	GWS core courses Concentration course		
Year 2	Fall	GWS elective Concentration course		Submit concentration plan & gain approval by December
	Spring	GWS core course GWS elective	Complete qualifying paper & oral defense by May	Form 3-person faculty committee
Year 3	Fall	Concentration course		
	Spring	GWS elective or concentration course Study for prelims		Take prelim exam, summer following Year 3
Year 4	Fall		Begin work on dissertation proposal	
	Spring		Write and defend dissertation proposal by May	
Year 5	Fall		Dissertation research	
	Spring		Dissertation research, writing, and defense	

*Coursework sequences will vary depending on what is offered in a particular year.

Enrollment Requirements

You are responsible for following Graduate School policies related to course enrollment requirements and limitations:

Adding / Dropping Courses

grad.wisc.edu/documents/add-drop

Auditing Courses

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1224

Canceling Enrollment

grad.wisc.edu/documents/canceling-enrollment

Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Dissertators

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1204

Enrollment Accountability

grad.wisc.edu/documents/enrollment-accountability

Minimum Enrollment Requirements

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

Academic Exception Petitions

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

The student may petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of any required course. The basis for such a waiver is evidence of previous work of the same level and content to be determined by the committee in consultation with the faculty member currently responsible for the course concerned. A requirement that is completed by waiver carries no credit toward the Graduate School's credit requirements nor toward the program's credit requirement for the degree.

A student petitioning for a deadline extension or waiver of any type must obtain an endorsement from their advisor. The Graduate Committee may ask the advisor for further information beyond that written on the petition.

Students may ask the Director of Graduate Studies or other faculty members to advise them, to speak to the Graduate Committee on their behalf, or to endorse their petitions.

Keep in mind that some academic exceptions may, in addition, need to be approved by the Graduate School. For further information about this, contact the Director of Academic Services and see the following webpage:
grad.wisc.edu/documents/exceptions

A student who fails the Preliminary Examination may be offered a second opportunity to pass it or may be dismissed from the program. Petitions of a decision by the Thesis/Dissertation Committee must be made to the Graduate Committee within two weeks or they will be final. The Graduate Committee will make the final decision regarding a petition.

A student who has not satisfied the preliminary examination requirement by December of their fourth year in the program will be dropped from the program, except by appeal in writing to the Graduate Committee, which will make the final decision.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Your continuation as a graduate student at UW-Madison is at the discretion of your program, the Graduate School, and your faculty advisor. Any student may be placed on probation or dismissed from the Graduate School for not maintaining satisfactory academic progress, and this can impact your academic standing (detailed below), financial aid (see this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1040), or funding (consult your sources of funding, as applicable). Our program has its own definition of satisfactory academic progress and related procedures that supplement Graduate School policy, as described in this section.

Definition

Information about how the Graduate School determines satisfactory academic progress can be found at this policy page: policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1218. In addition to the Graduate School's monitoring of satisfactory academic progress, this program regularly reviews the satisfactory academic progress of its students, defined as the following:

1. All required GWS core courses must be completed by December of the third year in the program.
2. Students will form a three-person faculty advisory committee by the time they submit their qualifying paper in May of their second year. This committee may be reconfigured later if appropriate for the dissertation.

3. Students will submit a written plan for their 15-credit concentration and have it approved by their advisor and the Graduate Committee by the end of Fall semester of their second year in the program. (Details on the concentration are given in a separate document.)
4. All courses for the concentration must be completed by December of the fourth year in the program.
5. The preliminary exam will be offered in May and August each summer. The preliminary exam must be successfully completed by December of the fourth year.
6. A dissertation proposal must be successfully approved by a faculty committee by May of the fourth year.

Formal requests for an extension of a deadline will be considered by the Graduate Committee but are not guaranteed.

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

At an Open Executive Committee meeting in April each year, the Graduate Committee will make a recommendation regarding whether each student is making satisfactory progress, and the faculty will vote on whether to approve.

Not Meeting Academic Expectations

Student progress will be reviewed each year at an Open Executive Committee meeting in April, based on recommendations from the Graduate Committee in collaboration with the faculty advisor. If the faculty find at this annual meeting or at any other time that a student has failed to achieve satisfactory progress in the academic expectations set in this handbook, the student will be notified and given an opportunity to submit a response within a set time period (typically 2 weeks). The Graduate Committee will review the response within 2 weeks and determine if further action is needed. Students may be dismissed from the program. Students may, alternatively, be placed on probation for one semester and then reviewed by the Graduate Committee, in consultation with the faculty advisor, following the probationary semester. Students on probation will not receive funding. Students placed on probation may be dismissed or allowed to continue based upon review of progress made during the probationary semester. If a student wishes to appeal any decision stemming from this review process, they can do so within 2 weeks of the date of the decision letter through submitting a letter to the Chair and requesting a new 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 at the following page: conduct.students.wisc.edu

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
grad.wisc.edu/documents/misconduct-academic

Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards

Academic Misconduct Website
conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct

Academic Misconduct Flowchart
conduct.students.wisc.edu/documents/academic-misconduct-flow-chart

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
grad.wisc.edu/documents/misconduct-nonacademic

Office for Student Conduct and Community Standards

Non-Academic Misconduct Website
conduct.students.wisc.edu/nonacademic-misconduct

University of Wisconsin System (UWS)

Chapter 17: Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures
docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/17

Chapter 18: Conduct on University Lands
docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/18

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
grad.wisc.edu/documents/responsible-conduct-of-research

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

Research Policies
research.wisc.edu/compliance-policy

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 definition, policy, and procedures related to HIB see: hr.wisc.edu/hib. 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 other concerns regarding their experience in the program. This program's grievance process can be found detailed at: <https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/gender-womens-studies/gender-womens-studies-phd/#text>

Process and Sanctions for Violations of Conduct Standards

The Graduate Committee of Gender & Women's Studies administers the regulations established by the faculty. It 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.

In addition to the Department's disciplinary actions, the Dean of Students Office 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 Dean of Students Office maintains a 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:

Dean of Students Incident Reporting

doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue

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) at:

Human Resources Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Website

hr.wisc.edu/hib

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

grad.wisc.edu/documents/maximum-levels-of-appointments

Concurrent Appointments for Fellows/Trainees

grad.wisc.edu/documents/concurrent-appointments

Enrollment Requirements for Graduate Assistants

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1208

Eligibility for Summer RA, TA, PA, and LSA Appointments

policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-5089

Guaranteed Funding

Each student accepted into the PhD program in Gender & Women's Studies will be given 5 years of 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, in addition, will do its best to provide support in the summer.

This 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).

The Graduate School maintains an external fellowship database.

[External Fellowship Database](#)

grad.wisc.edu/funding/external-fellowship-database

UW-Madison Libraries Grants Information Collection

library.wisc.edu/memorial/collections/grants-information-collection

Additional Policies & Resources

Graduate School Policy: Residence for Tuition Purposes

grad.wisc.edu/documents/residence-for-tuition-purposes

Employee Disability Resources

employeedisabilities.wisc.edu

Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (GAPP)

hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp

Professional Development

When you participate in professional development, you build skills needed to succeed academically and thrive in your career. The following are professional development

activities that we recommend for your consideration. Required professional development will be detailed in “Degree Requirements” above.

On Campus

The Graduate School develops and curates 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. All of this can be found at:

Professional Development from the Graduate School

grad.wisc.edu/professional-development

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 available in the Department.

- Gen&WS 861 is a professional development course.
- PhD students are expected to attend all colloquia in the Department’s colloquium series. These talks by distinguished scholars offer opportunities for professional development in research.
- Participation in Departmental governance provides an opportunity for professional development (see the section above on “How to Get Involved”).

- GWS policy on Teaching Expectations provides students with extensive opportunities for professional development in teaching.
- The UW System Women's and Gender Studies Consortium sponsors an annual conference in April. This conference offers an opportunity for students to present their research.
- The Department provides each incoming graduate student research expenses or travel to conferences funds. The amount will be stated in your offer letter.

In Our Discipline

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

Your advisor will give you information about the professional societies that are relevant to your concentration, and you may begin to attend those conferences as well.

