

Graduate Student Handbook
Gender and Women's Studies

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Introduction

Welcome to the doctoral program in Gender and Women's Studies (GWS) at the University of Kentucky (UK)!

This handbook is intended to provide graduate students with important information about the program, including advising, course requirements, and the qualifying exam and dissertation process. It contains important policies - from both the GWS Department and the Graduate School - that students must follow. There also is helpful information about funding opportunities and resources for graduate students. Our hope is that this handbook provides students with the information and resources they need to navigate doctoral studies in GWS, and to complete the program requirements in ways that maximize their professional development, career goals, interests, and personal well-being.

GWS graduate students are responsible for reading, understanding, and following all of the policies in this handbook. In addition, all UK graduate students must follow the rules and policies of the Graduate School. Graduate School rules apply in all cases except where GWS is allowed to have more specific or stricter rules. Any changes to the Graduate School rules will apply to students even if they are not yet listed in this handbook.

If you have questions about anything in this handbook, please talk with your advisor and/or the GWS Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Dr. Jenn Hunt.

Coursework

The GWS PhD program is designed to be a full-time, residential program. Students are expected to enroll in 9 credit hours (full-time status; the minimum hours to be considered so by the Graduate School) each semester before qualifying exams or thesis writing. You may not exceed 12 credit hours, except with special permission from the Graduate School.

While students work on their qualifying exams and dissertations, they must enroll in GWS 767 (dissertation residency credits). Two credits of GWS 767 are considered to be full-time. Students may not take other courses at the same time as GWS 767 without special permission from the Graduate School.

The minimum number of credits required for the PhD is 40 credits, consisting of 36 hours of coursework and 4 dissertation residency credits.

Coursework Requirements (36 credits minimum, taken prior to qualifying exams)

The GWS Ph.D. program includes required coursework and specialized coursework. Students should consult with their advisors/committee chairs before registering for courses.

Required Coursework

The purposes of the required coursework are (1) to familiarize students with fundamental concepts, theories and frameworks for feminist inquiry, and (2) to familiarize students with different approaches to inquiry and research in gender and women's studies.

All students must complete

- A two course sequence of GWS 640 (History of Feminist Thought) and GWS 650 (Feminist Theory).
- Two courses in methods/skills training: GWS 630 (Feminist Research Methods) and a second GWS or approved methods/skills course. The second course may be taken in another department. Students also are required to complete an additional "skills" course or training, as explained below.
- Two GWS topical seminars offered as GWS 600 or GWS 700.

Students who have previously taken comparable graduate work for course credit at another institution may be exempted from some of the course and skills requirements. Exemptions must be approved by the student's advisory committee and committee chair. The committee chair must petition the DGS for approval of the course exemption(s).

Specialized Coursework

The purposes of the specialized phase of the Ph.D. program are to provide the student with (1) in-depth familiarity with a major field of specialization, (2) familiarity with other fields of study related to GWS and their major field, and (3) sufficient preparation for the qualifying exam and doctoral dissertation proposal. Specialized coursework may be taken in GWS and/or other fields.

Students will determine their specialized coursework in conjunction with their advisor/committee chair and committee. These courses will be recorded on the GWS Program of Study form, which is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Department Manager.

Committees may require students to complete additional coursework beyond the required 36 hours in preparation for qualifying exams and dissertation research.

Independent Studies

In an independent study, a student works with a faculty member to learn about an area or topic about which there is not an existing course. There is a program limit of 6 credits total of independent studies. No variable credit independent studies are permitted. If students take more than one independent study, they should be taken with different faculty members; however, exceptions may be granted by a student's dissertation advisory committee.

Additional Skill Requirement

Students are required to learn an advanced skill IN ADDITION TO the second methods course. The word, "skill," is defined broadly in this context and refers to something that a student needs to know in order to complete their planned dissertation work. Additional skills can include survey methodology, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, archival or oral history methods, critical theory, cultural studies, literary criticism, semiotics, computer or web programming, or foreign languages needed for research.

The additional skill requirement can be fulfilled in many ways, including traditional coursework, independent studies, workshops, pre-conference training sessions, and more. Each student's committee chair is responsible for verifying that the student has completed the additional skill requirement.

Dissertation Residency Credit (GWS 767, 4 credits minimum)

GWS 767 allows graduate students to hold full-time status as students while working on their qualifying exams and dissertations. Students enroll in 2 credits of GWS 767 per semester. Students cannot enroll in other courses while taking 767 credits without special permission from the Graduate School (see next section).

Students who are working on their qualifying exams ***should only enroll in 767 if they reasonably expect to complete their oral exams during that semester.*** If a student enrolls in 767 but does not pass the oral component of their qualifying exam by the end of the semester, they will have to retroactively drop 767, which can create problems related to financial aid and/or visa status.

Each semester that students are enrolled in GWS 767, they must meet with their advisors/committee chairs to determine the work that should be completed in order to make progress toward their degree. This plan should be indicated on the GWS 767 Goals form, which should be submitted to the department manager by the end of the first week of each semester.

At the end of each semester, advisors/committee chairs will evaluate the students' work based on the specified goals and submit a grade of Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U). If a student earns a grade of Unsatisfactory in two semesters, they will be dismissed from the GWS doctoral program.

Incomplete Grades

Graduate students are strongly encouraged to complete all required work for their courses during the semester in which they are enrolled in those courses. However, students can request an incomplete (grade of "I") if extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergencies) prevent them from finishing their assignments by the end of the semester.

A student seeking an incomplete grade should talk with the course instructor. If the instructor agrees to the incomplete, the student and instructor need to fill out the Incomplete Form for GWS. Both parties should retain a copy of the form, and a copy should be sent to the GWS Department Manager.

Consistent with University of Kentucky policy (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/incomplete-i-grades>),

[Incomplete grades] shall be conferred only when there is a reasonable possibility that the student can complete the work within the allowable period of time for removal of an I grade and that a passing grade will result from completion of the work. ... An I grade shall not be conferred when the student's reason for incompleteness is unsatisfactory to the Instructor of Record. A grade of I must be replaced by a regular final letter grade not later than 12 months from the end of the academic term in which the I grade was awarded or prior to the student's graduation, whichever occurs first.

Although University policy allows up to 12 months to resolve an Incomplete grade, students and instructors will set an individualized deadline. The department encourages students to resolve incompletes as quickly as possible.

Requests to extend the 12 month period must be approved by the Graduate School by submitting this form:

https://gradschool.uky.edu/sites/gradschool.uky.edu/files/Forms/StudentForms/IncompleteExtended_9-18-20.pdf. Extensions will only be granted under exceptional circumstances, and only one semester of additional time will be given.

Consistent with UK policy, any incomplete that is not resolved within the allotted time will be replaced with a failing grade (E).

Having multiple grades of I, especially if they occur in different semesters, may negatively impact evaluations of graduate students' progress toward their degree.

Tuition Coverage from Assistantships

Graduate assistantships and UK fellowships include tuition for up to 12 credits of coursework or 2 dissertation residency credits per semester. Approval from the Graduate School is required to enroll in more than 12 credits of coursework or to enroll in coursework while enrolled in dissertation residency credits.

Please note that the Graduate School will not cover tuition for courses that are unrelated to your degree (e.g., recreational courses, like photography or fencing).

Students who want to enroll in "overload" courses must submit a request to the DGS prior to the first day of the semester. The request must include the student's name, Student ID number, year in the program and GPA, requested overload course (name, number, section), and a justification

for why the student needs to take the course. Common justifications include the student's committee is requiring them to take the course, the student needs the course to complete a graduate certificate program, and the course is required for the student's assistantship. Overload requests will be sent to the College and Graduate School, which ultimately decides whether to approve the request.

Student Fees

Graduate assistantships cover most mandatory student fees; however, international students still have to pay an international student fee. For students taking regular coursework, the Student Health Fee, which provides access to on-campus student health, will be automatically added to your account and covered by your assistantship.

However, *for students who are enrolled in GWS 767, coverage is not automatic.* During the first week of the semester, students in GWS 767 must contact Student Accounts (<https://www.uky.edu/studentaccount/contact-us>) to add the Student Health Fee to your account. Once it is added to your account, the fee will be covered by your assistantship.

Sample Timeline for GWS Doctoral Program

Important note: This timeline is only an illustration of the required course hours. Many students will take longer than 4 years to complete their degree.

Year	Coursework	Milestones and Progress toward Degree
1	9 hours per semester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GWS 630, 640, 650 ● 2 additional GWS seminars ● Second methods course or other seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with initial advisor ● (Potentially) form advisory committee in 2nd semester
2	9 hours per semester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Second methods if needed ● Seminars in GWS or other departments ● Advanced skill or language 	Form and meet with advisory committee by end of 3 rd semester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify area of focus for qualifying exams and dissertation
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Additional courses as directed by advisory committee ● Advanced skill if needed ● GWS 767 (once you start qualifying exams) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Qualifying exams (written & oral) ● Write and defend dissertation proposal within 6 months
4+	GWS 767	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work on dissertation research ● Write and defend dissertation

Advising

Advising and mentoring are important contributors to the success of graduate students. Good advising is a collaborative process between advisors and advisees that is based on clear communication and clear expectations. It is important to recognize that people have different relationship and working styles and that different types of scholarship may require different amounts of contact. Thus, there are many models for effective advising and mentoring relationships. In this document, we outline recommended practices for both graduate advisors and graduate advisees in the UK Department of Gender and Women's Studies (GWS).

Overall Advising Procedures:

Initial Advising: When students enter the GWS program, they are assigned an initial advisor, taking into account students' areas of interest. The initial advisor is responsible for all aspects of advisement until students select their dissertation advisor. Students should meet with their initial advisors, at minimum, before registering for courses each semester.

In addition, **the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** provides initial advising on policies and procedures for new graduate students. Students can contact the DGS with any questions and concerns or when seeking general advice.

Advisor Selection: Once students establish the direction of their scholarship, they formally select an advisor who will guide their dissertation work. Advisors should be selected on the basis of both expertise and working relationship with the student. Students must formally select an advisor as well as an advisory committee by the end of their third semester in the program. This is done by electronically filing the Formation of an Advisory Committee form, which can be found on the Graduate School website.

Advisory Committee: Successful graduate advising is a collective endeavor that involves the participation of a student's Advisory Committee. Committees consist of four (or more) individuals: the advisor, two other members of the Graduate Faculty from GWS, and one member of the Graduate Faculty from outside of GWS. If a student's advisor is not a full member of the Graduate Faculty (generally, someone with tenure), another member of the Advisory Committee who is a full member will need to serve as a co-chair. In rare cases, a student may have a committee member from another university with specialized expertise related to the student's dissertation topic. All committee members must be approved by the Graduate School. All members of advisory committees are expected to take an active role in students' academic progress by, at minimum, reading and commenting on theses and dissertations, participating in qualifying exams and defenses, and offering any other guidance and feedback sought by the student.

Recommendations for Graduate Advisors and Advisees

Effective advisor-advisee relationships can take different forms and styles but should adhere to some basic guidelines.

Roles and Responsibilities for Graduate Advisors and Advisees:

Graduate advisors should:

- Serve as both intellectual advisors and professional mentors to their students.

- Maintain regular communication with students to ensure that they are on track and aware of key steps and deadlines, and meet with advisees a minimum of once per semester (more often is beneficial).
- Meet with students prior to priority registration to discuss course selection.
- Advise students on matters such as research practices, dissertation design, ethics, grant writing, and manuscript preparation and publication.
- Provide timely feedback on student work, and clearly communicate their timeline for returning feedback to students.
- Monitor students' progress in coursework, research, and teaching, and provide feedback on the student's performance in end-of-year evaluations and (for advanced students) GWS 767 evaluations.
- Understand university and department policies related to graduate students, including policies for international students.
- Assist students with finding and applying for fellowships and grants.
- Help students plan and prepare for future employment, including identifying resources related to academic or non-academic positions.
- Help advisees engage in the larger professional community (e.g., conference presentations, workshops, networking opportunities) and mentor students on professional expectations and norms.
- Be aware that many students do not know the "unspoken rules" and expectations of academia and work with advisees to develop this knowledge.
- Assist students with problems that may arise in their academic program.
- Be supportive of students as individuals and, when necessary, direct students to university resources to support them through challenges.
- Interact with students in a respectful and professional manner and maintain a high level of overall professionalism.
- Work with students for preparing plans for summer research activities.
- Ensure that advisees are formally supported (either by themselves or another faculty member) when the advisor is on sabbatical or research leave.

Graduate advisees should:

- Maintain regular communication with their advisor and meet a minimum of once per semester (more often is beneficial).
- Keep their advisor informed of progress, important information (e.g., travel, employment, outside sources of funding), and issues that may impact the student's ability to fulfill obligations or make progress towards their degree.
- Discuss course selection and progress to degree with their advisor.

- Work with their advisor to create an agreed upon timeline for reaching program milestones and maintaining timely progress toward degree. Students in 767 need to develop a plan for each semester in conjunction with their advisor by the end of the first week of each semester. The plan should be submitted to the Department Manager using the GWS 767 Goals Form.
- Inform themselves about, and comply with, department, Graduate School, and university policies, requirements, and deadlines regarding the degree program, research activities, and financial support. Students should seek clarification from their advisor, the DGS, or the department manager when needed.
- Respond to and make constructive use of feedback from their advisor.
- Provide advisors with adequate notice for requests such as letters of recommendation (usually a minimum of two weeks' notice), and be aware of limits to requests for time and resources made to faculty and staff.
- Explore opportunities for professional engagement and development, in consultation with their advisor.
- Interact with their advisor in a respectful and professional manner and maintain a high level of overall professionalism.

Procedures for Developing and Maintaining Effective Advising Relationships

To help ensure a successful relationship, the department suggests that advisees and advisors should discuss the following points:

At the start of the advising relationship

- Expectations about meeting schedule and frequency.
- Acceptable/expected means of communication (email, text, phone, etc.) and expected frequency of communication.
- Program and degree requirements (e.g., timing of committee formation and other program milestones) and a tentative timeline for completing them.
- Tentative advisee career goals and recommended activities to support reaching those goals.
- Expectations for the advising relationship, including the advisor's supervisory model or style.
- Expectations about timing (e.g., how far in advance does the advisee need to request a recommendation? How quickly will the advisor provide feedback on written work?). Please note that, although it is helpful to discuss general timeframes, timeframes for specific requests may vary depending on other constraints (e.g., time of year), so it is helpful to discuss timeframes for specific requests on an ongoing basis.
- Students who have co-advisors should discuss these issues with both advisors.

Throughout the advising relationship

- Hold regularly scheduled meetings on a timeline that is appropriate for the advisee's stage in the program and the nature of their research or scholarship.
- Discuss expectations regarding what the advisee and the advisor will each do to prepare for meetings.
- Discuss updates to the advisee's career goals and how that should impact their program activities.
- Review progress toward degree at least every semester and, if necessary, update the student's timeline for completion of degree requirements.
- Provide members of the Advisory committee and the DGS with progress updates at least annually.

Accountability for advising meetings

- Students will be asked to report whether they met with their advisor as part of their progress reports.
- Advisors will be asked to report whether they met with their advisees as part of GWS 767 and year-end evaluations.
- Ensuring that advisement meetings occur at least once per semester (more often is beneficial) is the joint responsibility of advisors and advisees, and either party can initiate such meetings. If issues related to lack of interaction emerge, either party can follow the procedures for addressing and resolving advising issues (section below).

Other Important Sources of Mentoring

Some key sources of additional mentoring, guidance, and professional development are:

- **The DGS:** Graduate students can always approach the DGS with questions and concerns or when seeking general advice. The DGS will be able to direct them to the appropriate person if they cannot answer the students' question or concern. The DGS handles all administrative issues related to the graduate studies: admission of the students, rules of enrollment for funded students, overload credit hours or overload work hours permission, late add/drop, application for degree, application for exit exam, expediting documentation related to teaching assistantships and fellowships, and applications for graduate student conference travel support.
- **The Teaching Assistant Coordinator (TAC):** The TAC directly supervises and advises department Teaching Assistants in all aspects of their instruction: pre-teaching orientations, preparation, delivery, and assessment of the instruction, professional development as educators, as well as any issues that may arise related to teaching and communicating with students.
- Students' Advisory Committees (once formed)
- Professional development workshops from the Graduate School
- The Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

- NWSA and other professional organization mentoring programs and workshops
- For international students, International Student and Scholar Services at the International Center
- GWS Graduate Student Organization and more advanced graduate students

Changing Advisors or Committee Members

There are several reasons why a student may want or need to consider changing or adding advisors or committee members, such as changes in a student's research interests and/or professional direction, faculty retirements, or problems in an advisor-advisee relationship. A student wishing to change or add advisors or committee members should consult with their advisor and the DGS. Changes in advisor or committee members can occur at any point prior to the qualifying exams. After qualifying exams, changes generally are only made under extenuating circumstances. Changes in committee memberships must be submitted to and approved by the Graduate School, and all committee members must be informed about any changes.

Procedure for Addressing and Resolving Advising Issues

Establishing clear communication and setting clear expectations can prevent many problems that arise in the advising process. If an issue does arise, we encourage the advisor and advisee to attempt to resolve the matter together informally. If the issue cannot be resolved, they should arrange to speak with the DGS, and, if needed, the Department Chair. If a student has an advising issue that cannot be resolved within the department, they should contact the Arts & Sciences Associate Dean for Graduate Studies (<https://www.as.uky.edu/deans-office>).

Qualifying Exams

A student must complete a minimum of 36 hours of coursework with a GPA of 3.0 or higher to be eligible for the qualifying exam. Students and committees should complete the "Checklist for Qualifying Exams" (following) to ensure that they do not miss any steps in the process.

A reading list for the qualifying exam will be prepared by the student with the advice and consent of their committee. Students should prepare reading lists for the qualifying exam no later than three months before the exam date.

The written component of the exam shall consist of take-home exams in three parts. The exam will consist of one section of questions on Feminist Theory/Thought, one section of questions on GWS topics and methods, and one section of questions on the student's substantive major area of focus. Each part will contain 2-4 questions, as specified by the committee. Exams may or may not contain choice of question and/or required questions. The written exam parts will be administered concurrently. Students will have three weeks to complete the written exam.

The qualifying exam is constructed by the chair of a student's PhD committee in consultation with other committee members. Committee members will submit questions to the Committee Chair who will construct the final exams. In general, each committee member is expected to submit one question per part/area.

Following the written exams, a student must pass an oral examination. The oral examination must be scheduled to be completed within one month of submitting the written exams. Students must pass both parts of the exam (written and oral). See the section on oral exam format to learn how the oral exam should be conducted. Students will be informed no later than the end of the oral examination whether they have passed or failed the written and oral components of the examination.

Students should consult the graduate school schedule for the official date for completion of exams (written and oral) in order to qualify for completion in a given semester. Student must apply to the Graduate School to take the exam and notify the GWS department manager of the date and time for the oral exam **prior to beginning the written exam.**

Students who fail the qualifying exam must retake the entire exam (both written and oral) within the time frame specified by the Graduate School. If students choose to retake the exam, the composition of the entire committee must remain the same. Students who fail the qualifying exam twice will automatically be dismissed from the program. Specifically, if a student fails the initial oral defense, their committee will determine the conditions to be met before another examination may be given. The minimum time between examinations is four months and the maximum time is one year after the first examination.

GWS doctoral students generally take their qualifying exams in their third year in the program. The Graduate School states that the exam must be taken within five years of entry into the program.

Checklist for Qualifying Exams

Student Responsibilities

- **Ensure that your advisory committee has been approved by the Graduate School.**

Submit the “Advisory Committee Formation” form on the Graduate School webpage: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. If the membership of your committee has changed, submit a “Doctoral Advisory Committee Modification Request” on the same page. Forward your official approval to Michelle Del Toro.

- **Confirm that you have met coursework requirements.**

You must complete all of the courses on your Program of Study form, and have earned a minimum of 36 credits (if you entered without a MA) or 18 credits (if you entered with a MA). You must resolve any incomplete (“I”) or satisfactory (“S”) grades before taking your qualifying exam.

- **Work with your Chair and advisory committee to compile your reading list.**

The reading list must be approved by all committee members.

- **Select dates and times for the written and oral exams.**

Students should work with their Chairs and committees to select dates and times for the written exam. The written exam is three weeks long. Please notify Michelle Del Toro of the dates and times for your written exam.

The oral exam is conducted by all members of your committee and lasts up to two hours. It must occur within one month of the day the written exam is completed. Students should work with their Chairs to schedule the oral exam, and determine a format (in person, virtual, or hybrid) that works for the student and all committee members. Once a date and time is determined, contact Michelle Del Toro to schedule a room. Even if your exam is online, you need to notify Michelle of the date and time.

- **Submit the Request to Schedule the Qualifying Examination form to the Graduate School.**

The Request to Schedule the Oral Qualifying Examination must be submitted to the graduate school at least two weeks prior to the date of the examination, but it is best to do it when you schedule the written exam. The form can be completed at: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. In the comments box, you need to state the format (in person, virtual, hybrid) of the exam.

- **Begin and end exam on agreed upon start and end date and time.**

Make sure you have discussed with your chair who will send you the exam and to whom you should return the exam to once you have completed it. You must send a copy of your completed exam to Michelle Del Toro.

- **Determine how each committee member will receive the written exam.**

Student should ask each committee member whether an electronic copy or hard copy is preferable. If committee members prefer hard copies, it is the student's responsibility to make copies and provide these to the committee member(s).

□ **Take the oral exam.**

In the oral examination, faculty members typically ask students to expand on and clarify their answers from the written portion of the exam. Students must pass both parts of the exam (written and oral) to pass their qualifying exams. Students will be informed no later than the end of the oral examination whether they have passed or failed the written and oral components of the examination. If students fail their qualifying exam, they may attempt it one more time.

Advisory Committee Chair Responsibilities

□ **Confirm that students have met coursework requirements.**

Students must complete all of the courses on their Program of Study forms, and have earned a minimum of 36 credits (if they entered without a MA) or 18 credits (if they entered with a MA). They must resolve any incomplete ("I") or satisfactory ("S") grades before taking their qualifying exam.

□ **Work with the student and advisory committee to compile the reading list.**

□ **Work with the student to determine dates and times for the written and oral exams and the format of the oral exam, and decide who will send the exam questions to the student.**

□ **Work with the committee to write questions for the written exam.**

If you have questions or need more information, please ask the DGS. Be sure to insert the highlighted information into the Qualifying Exams Instructions Template, and send it to the student along with the exam questions.

□ **Coordinate the committee's evaluation of the written exam.**

□ **On the day of the oral exam, print the exam card for committee members to sign.**

You should receive the exam card from the Graduate School 2-3 days before the exam. If you have not received it 2 days before the exam, contact the DGS ASAP. After the exam card is signed, inform the DGS that it is completed and place it in the DGS's mailbox. The DGS will sign it and give it to Michelle Del Toro to forward the Graduate School. The exam card must be submitted within 10 days of the exam.

Dissertation

A student's dissertation is expected to be a work of original scholarship which adds to the field's body of knowledge and demonstrates maturity in research. It is written under the direction of the student's Committee Chair and the Advisory Committee. Students should use the Checklist for Doctoral Dissertations (following) to ensure that they do not miss any steps in the process.

Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus should include the following components:

- Statement describing the dissertation project and what it aims to accomplish.
- Discussion of the significance and contribution of the project in the context of relevant literature.
- Discussion of pertinent theoretical and/or methodological approaches.
- Bibliography

Students will prepare and defend the dissertation prospectus after passing their qualifying examinations. The dissertation prospectus must be defended in front of the entire advisory committee. At the prospectus defense, the advisory committee is required to vote on whether the student has 1) passed, 2) passed with revisions, or 3) not passed. Majority vote decides the outcome. If a student receives a pass with revisions, they have one opportunity to revise and defend the dissertation proposal within 3 calendar months. If the revised prospectus does not merit a majority vote of pass, the student will be dismissed from the program. There is no appeal process after not passing a revised prospectus defense.

The prospectus must be defended *within 6 months of passing the qualifying exam*. In cases where the deadline for a proposal defense falls during the summer, the proposal defense needs to occur no later than the first 3 weeks of the fall semester. In order to be considered for an exemption to the 6 month rule, the student and the chair of the advisory committee are required to submit a petition at least 1 month before the 6 month deadline for the proposal defense to the DGS. This request will be reviewed by the DGS and the graduate committee. The petition must include a formal letter from the student discussing why an exemption is necessary and a letter of endorsement from the chair of the dissertation advisory committee supporting the exemption request. If granted, the exemption provides a 3 month extension. A student may only apply for an exemption once.

Dissertation Research

While writing their dissertation, students should register for GWS 767 (Dissertation Residency Credit). At the beginning of each semester, a student should communicate with their advisor about the expectations and timeline for progress during the semester. These plans should be recorded on the GWS 767 Goals Form. Copies of this form should be kept by the student and the advisor and submitted to the department manager.

Students' progress on their dissertation will be assessed each semester by the committee chair in their written evaluation of GWS 767. The student will receive a grade of S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) in each term in which the student is enrolled in GWS 767. A student who receives a U for dissertation residency credit (GWS 767) is not making good progress toward their degree. Lack of good progress will result in a review by the DGS in consultation with the Graduate Committee and dissertation advisor for possible dismissal from the program. A

student who receives 2 grades of U in GWS 767 will automatically be dismissed from the program.

Each student must meet with their dissertation committee at least once per year until the student has successfully defended their dissertation in order to evaluate their progress. It is the student's responsibility to maintain consistent communication with their advisor and advisory committee in order to assure that satisfactory progress is being made on the dissertation.

The procedures for undertaking and writing dissertations are outlined in the Graduate School's Manual for Theses and Dissertations. Dissertations must be complete in all ways before the Final Examination can be scheduled. Students should be aware that their dissertation will be submitted in an electronic format.

Dissertation Final Exam (Defense)

After the student submits their dissertation, a final oral examination (defense) for the dissertation will be conducted by the members of the student's advisory committee. In addition, the Graduate School will appoint an outside examiner from another department to read the student's dissertation and participate in the final exam. See the Checklist for Doctoral Dissertations for more information about preparing for the dissertation defense, submitting the final dissertation to the graduate school, and applying for graduation. Please note that the process includes several time-sensitive deadlines for submitting forms to the Graduate School and the University. Also, see the section on oral exam format to learn how the exam should be conducted.

**Checklist for Doctoral Dissertations
Gender and Women's Studies, Revised 9-16-2021**

Note: Students must pass their qualifying exams before formally beginning the dissertation process.

- **Once you and your advisor have agreed upon a direction for your dissertation, you need to write a prospectus (proposal) for your planned work.**

Your prospectus should include a) a description of the dissertation project and its aims, b) a discussion of the significance and contribution of the project to the relevant field(s), c) a review of the relevant literature(s), d) a discussion of the theoretical and/or methodological approaches you plan to use, and e) a list of references. For more information on the prospectus, please see the GWS Graduate Handbook.

- **Schedule a dissertation proposal defense.**

The dissertation prospectus must be defended in front of your entire advisory committee *within 6 months of passing the qualifying exam*. If that date is during the summer, then you must defend within 3 weeks of the beginning of the following semester. Please notify Michelle Del Toro of the date, time, and location of your defense.

- **Discuss the format for feedback with committee members.**

You should ask each member of your committee (other than your advisor) whether they would like to see drafts of individual chapters, wait to see a draft of the complete dissertation, or use some other format for feedback.

- **Enroll in GWS 767 every semester while you are working on your dissertation.**

During this period, you need to meet with your advisor at the beginning of each semester to complete the GWS 767 Goals Form and submit a progress report to your advisor at the end of every semester. If you want/need to make any changes to the project plan approved in your prospectus, you should discuss those changes with your advisory committee *before implementing them*.

When your dissertation is near completion...

- **Ensure that your current advisory committee has been approved by the Graduate School.**

If the membership of your committee has changed, submit a "Doctoral Advisory Committee Modification Request" form on the Graduate School webpage: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gs/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. Forward your official approval to Michelle Del Toro.

- **Identify the relevant Graduate School deadlines for your desired graduation semester.**

There are two key deadlines:

- a) Every semester, the Graduate School has a final date to submit the Notification of Intent to Schedule the Final Examination (NOTIF) form to graduate that semester. You can find those dates here: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates>
- b) You must submit the NOTIF form *at least 8 weeks prior to your desired defense date*.

You must submit your NOTIF form by the **EARLIER** of these 2 dates!

- **Submit your NOTIF form to the Graduate School before the above deadline.**

The form can be found at:

https://iris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gS/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm. After the Graduate School approves this form, they will conduct an audit of your coursework and appoint an external examiner for your defense.

You must have completed a minimum of two semesters of residency following your qualifying exams and have sent a complete draft of your dissertation to your advisor before submitting the NOTIF form. In the comments box, you need to state the format (in person, virtual, hybrid) of the exam.

- **Submit an application for your degree via myUK by the deadline for the semester in which you wish to graduate.**

You can find the form in the myUK portal: <https://myuk.uky.edu/irj/portal>. Click on Student Services / myRecords / Graduate Degree Application. You can find the deadlines for degree applications for each semester here: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates>. If you submitted a degree application for a previous semester, but did not graduate, you must complete a new degree application for the current semester.

- **Ensure that your Chair and the majority of your advisory committee has seen a *complete* draft of your dissertation and believes that it is ready to defend.**
- **Ensure that your dissertation is formatted consistently with the Graduate School dissertation standards.**

You can find these standards at:

<https://gradschool.uky.edu/electronic-dissertation-preparation>

- **In conjunction with your advisor, schedule a date and time and determine a format (in person, virtual, or hybrid) for your dissertation defense.**

The dissertation must be defended in front of the entire advisory committee, including your external examiner, and all members must agree to the format. The final examination must take place no later than 8 days prior to the last day of classes of the semester in which you expect to graduate. Final examinations may only be scheduled when classes are in session (fall, spring, or summer sessions). You can find the deadlines for scheduling final examinations here: <https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates>. Please notify Michelle Del Toro of the date, time, and location of your defense.

- **Submit the Request for Final Doctoral Examination form to the Graduate School at least two weeks before your defense.**

It's best to submit it as soon as you know the date, time, and location. The form can be found at: https://ris.uky.edu/cfdocs/gS/DoctoralCommittee/Selection_Screen.cfm.

- **Distribute your dissertation to your committee, including the external examiner, at least two weeks before your defense.**

Be sure to check with your committee members about whether they prefer electronic or paper copies.

- **Defend your dissertation.**

Following your defense, your committee and the DGS will sign an exam card and submit it to the Graduate School.

- **Complete any/all revisions requested by your advisory committee.**

- **Complete the Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) Approval Form, and have it signed by your advisor and the DGS.**

The form can be found here:

https://gradschool.uky.edu/sites/gradschool.uky.edu/files/Forms/StudentForms/2019-2020/ETDApprovalForm_1.pdf

- **Electronically submit your revised dissertation and the signed ETD approval form to the Graduate School via the UKnowledge repository *within 60 days of your defense or by the final day to submit dissertation for formal review in your desired semester of graduation.***

Instructions for submission can be found here:

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=uknowledge_docs. There is a required fee for dissertation submission.

You can find the final date to submit for formal review for each semester here:

<https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates>.

Within 2-3 days of submission, the Graduate School will review your dissertation and check the format to ensure that it meets all requirements. *Note:* The last few weeks of the semester are peak periods for dissertation submission, so it is best to submit your dissertation as soon as possible so that the final version can be accepted by the semester deadline.

- **Make any final edits from the formal review and electronically submit the final version of your dissertation via UKnowledge repository *by the final day to submit final revised dissertations in your desired semester of graduation.***

You can find the final date for submission for each semester here:

<https://gradschool.uky.edu/key-dates>.

Oral Exam Format

Oral exams – the oral component of qualifying exams and dissertation defenses – may use in-person, virtual, or hybrid formats. In the absence of health or travel concerns, in-person oral exams are encouraged. However, the choice of format belongs to the student, Committee Chair, and committee members. All committee members must agree to the chosen format.

When students apply to the Graduate School to take their qualifying and dissertation exams, they must specify the format of the exam in the comments fields. Forms that do not indicate a format will not be approved. Students *must* consult with their committees on format and ensure that all committee members agree to the format *before* applying for their exams.

If exams will be virtual or hybrid, the student and Committee Chair must ensure that the exam meets the technical requirements specified by the Graduate School, as provided below.

Technical Requirements

In cases where departments or programs allow any level of virtual participation, from one virtual member to a fully virtual event, they must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Prior to any oral exam, the student and Committee Chair coordinate with other committee members regarding the protocol for the exam.
2. All participants must join using university-adopted videoconferencing tools that allow for fully interactive audio and video communications along with screen-sharing capabilities, which must be maintained throughout the examination and any related discussion.
3. The use of audio-only communications is not permitted.
4. Participation merely by viewing a recording of the oral examination is specifically prohibited.
5. All members of the committee, on- or off-site, must participate in the final evaluation of the examination or defense; provisions must be made to record their votes and collect their signatures as necessary using the system approved by the Graduate School. This must be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible, but within 7 days of the exam.
6. The Committee Chair, or another non-student designee, shall be the host of the virtual meeting. A co-host may be assigned so that the event will not be interrupted by technical difficulties. The host should mute all participants (or ask participants to mute themselves) and ask the student to share their screen, if a presentation is involved, in order to make the presentation visible to all attendees. The host must also ensure that appropriate security precautions are taken to prevent any interruptions of the event.
7. Following any public portion of the defense, the host shall ask all non-committee members to leave the meeting, or the host may manually remove them. In programs where the defense has both a public and a private portion, the committee may then continue the event as outlined in their program protocols.

8. Once the committee has completed the examination of the student, the host shall place the student into the waiting room (or have the committee members use a breakout room) so the committee can conduct their deliberations in private.

The Committee Chair must have a secondary videoconferencing system available as a back-up in the case of technical difficulties. Cancellation of the examination should only occur in the case where both the primary and secondary back-up systems fail. If an examination must be rescheduled, it will be done without prejudice to the student. Since committee deliberations are an essential aspect of the examination, completing the examination and final discussion via email or other non-audiovisual means is not an option.

If the student or any committee member(s) have a disability that will be impacted by virtual participation, accommodations for participation must be provided.

Student Evaluation

Annual Evaluation of Graduate Students

All GWS graduate students will be evaluated by the faculty at the end of the spring semester. Prior to that meeting, each student will complete a year-end self-assessment about their activities, accomplishments, and progress toward their degree.

Good progress toward completion of degree is defined as:

- Successful completion of coursework approved by the advisory committee with a minimum 3.0 GPA for each semester under review, *and/or*
- Satisfactory progress toward the qualifying exams, dissertation proposal, and dissertation.

Lack of good progress will result in a review by the DGS and advisor (committee chair or initial advisor), in consultation with the Graduate Committee, for possible dismissal from the program.

Feedback

In the year-end evaluation meeting, the faculty will assign each student one of three evaluations. Students will be informed of their evaluation in writing.

Exemplary: The student is making excellent progress toward their degree in terms of coursework, scholarship, and completion of program milestones.

Satisfactory: The student is making satisfactory progress toward their degree in terms of coursework, scholarship, and completion of program milestones.

Unsatisfactory: The student is NOT making good progress toward their degree, as indicated by unsatisfactory grades (any grade of a C or below in a course), poor evaluations by course instructors, failure to complete courses as advised, lack of progress on scholarship, and/or lack of progress on program milestones. If students are evaluated as unsatisfactory, they may be placed on probationary status, and more than one unsatisfactory evaluation will lead to dismissal from the program.

Appeals Process

Appeals of academic evaluations and/or evaluations of performance in a graduate assistantship must be based on violations of a student's academic rights (e.g., being evaluated based on standards other than those provided to the student; <https://www.uky.edu/ombud/academic-rights-students>). If a graduate student believes their academic rights have been violated or they have been unfairly evaluated, they should use the following appeals process. The process for all appeals begins within the GWS Department, and most concerns can be resolved using the department process. However, if a student has gone through the entire department appeals process and their concern is not resolved, they may seek assistance from other UK offices (see below).

Please note that the appeals process does not apply to issues related to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation. Any graduate student who believes that they have experienced these issues should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity (<https://www.uky.edu/eoo/discrimination-harassment>).

Also, if an appeal involves an evaluator outside of the Gender and Women's Studies department (e.g., an instructor in another department), the graduate student should use the appeals process for that department. In that case, the graduate student should consult with their advisor, the GWS DGS, and/or the GWS Chair for advice and/or advocacy.

Department Process:

1. The first step of any appeal is for the student to schedule an informal meeting with person who evaluated their work. This person may be a course instructor, the student's advisor, or the supervisor of the student's TA or RA assignment. The student should meet with the evaluator to discuss the issue. The student may request that their advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) attend the meeting as well. If possible, the student should bring documentation to support their perspective.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the student should schedule a meeting with the DGS. After meeting with the student, the DGS may request a joint meeting with the student and evaluator to attempt to resolve the issue.
3. If the issue still has not been resolved, the student should schedule a meeting with the Chair of the Department. After meeting with the student, the Chair may request a joint meeting with the student and evaluator to attempt to resolve the issue.

If there is a conflict of interest within the department process, the student should skip that step and go to the next step in the process.

External Processes:

If a student's concern cannot be resolved through the department process, they may seek assistance from the following UK offices.

Issues Involving Academic Rights:

Students who have unresolved concerns related to potential violations of their academic rights, either in specific courses or in evaluations related to progress toward their degree, should contact Academic Ombud Services (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/>).

Issues Involving TA/RA Performance:

Expectations and evaluations for GWS graduate students are found in the GWS TA/RA Policy. Students who have unresolved concerns about performance evaluations for their assistantship should contact Human Resources (<https://www.uky.edu/hr/about/contact-hr>).

Other Resources:

Although they are not part of the appeals process, students may seek guidance from the Arts & Sciences Associate Dean for Graduate Education (<https://www.as.uky.edu/uk-graduate-students>) and/or from the Graduate School during an appeal. In addition, students may consult with Academic Ombud Services (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/>) as they go through the department process

Teaching and Research Assistantships

Graduate assistantships serve a dual role in graduate education. They are an important part of your education in which you learn about effective teaching and/or develop research skills. At the same time, they are a form of employment in which graduate students play important roles in providing high quality education to undergraduates and/or advancing scholarly knowledge.

Teaching assistantships (TAs) may take many forms, including grading assignments, helping instructors in the classroom, leading discussion sections, or teaching your own course. TA assignments are determined by department needs as well as each students' TA classification by the Graduate School (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/ta-types-teaching-credentials>). For international students, TA assignments also reflect the results of an English language screening assessment (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/ita-language-screenings>).

Time Commitment and Graduate Student Employment Policies

The time commitment for most TA and RA positions is 20 hours per week. It is important to realize that there is likely to be some variability in how many hours you work each week, based on the nature of the tasks that need to be done (e.g., whether there is grading in a particular week). However, if you are consistently working more than 20 hours per week, you should talk with your supervisor and the TA Coordinator about tailoring your responsibilities and/or strategizing about efficiency.

It is important to plan ahead for how you can handle your student responsibilities at the same time as your TA or RA responsibilities. For example, if you have a major paper due at the same time that you will be grading, you may want to complete that paper early.

TAs and RAs cannot be employed more than 20 hours per week without an overload exception that is approved by the student's advisor, the College, and the Graduate School. If graduate students will be an TA or RA in the fall semester and they are employed by the University during the summer, their summer appointment needs to end before their TA/RA appointment begins in order to not have an overlap in payroll or a delay in processing their TA/RA assignment for the fall.

General Expectations

As a graduate assistant, you need to meet the following expectations for professional behavior:

- You must be available for the entire period of your assistantship. The specific dates vary by semester, but generally you should expect to be available approximately one week before classes start (e.g., for orientation) through the date in which final grades are submitted.
- You need to be reliable and conscientiousness about completing your assigned duties in a timely manner.
- You must treat students, research participants, and your supervisor in a respectful and non-discriminatory manner.
- You should work with the Department Manager to arrange for any necessary materials (e.g., photocopies) for your assistantship.

Communication with Faculty Supervisor

- It is essential to maintain clear, ongoing communication with your faculty supervisor, as well as the TA Coordinator, throughout the period of the assistantship.
- You should meet with your supervisor before the semester to establish expectations. For example, are you expected to attend class sessions? To grade assignments or papers? To maintain the gradebook? To recruit participants for research?
- You also need to discuss the supervisor's expectations about turnaround time. For example, how quickly do papers need to be graded?
- You also should discuss how to handle any problems that may arise.

Specific Expectations for TAs:

TAs have many important responsibilities to their students to ensure that they are receiving high quality, equitable instruction.

- You must be responsive to your students (e.g., replying to emails, timely return of assignments).
- You must follow all UK academic policies (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/>).
- You must follow FERPA rules to protect student information (<https://www.uky.edu/registrar/content/facultystaff-ferpa-privacy>).
- You must ensure that your class materials are accessible to all students (e.g., captioning videos, making sure handouts meet accessibility standards; for more information, see <https://www.uky.edu/udl/best-practices>.)
- You must provide required accommodations for students who are working with the Disability Resource Center (<https://www.uky.edu/DisabilityResourceCenter/>).
- You must uphold UK standards for academic integrity (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/academic-offense-information-0>). If you suspect plagiarism, you need to immediately report it to the course instructor or TA Coordinator.
- GWS TAs are required to attend regular meetings held by the GWS TA Coordinator.

For TAs who are Instructors of Record:

- All courses in Gender and Women's Studies are expected to use student-centered pedagogy (see Training & Resources below).
- You must provide students with a syllabus that includes all the required syllabus components (<https://www.uky.edu/ombud/course-syllabus>) by the first day of class. You should think about your syllabus as establishing a contract with your students in which you clearly describe the course requirements and policies. You should avoid major deviations from the syllabus, especially if they increase the expected workload.

- All approved courses have established learning objectives. Courses that fulfill UK core requirements have additional core learning objectives (https://www.uky.edu/ukcore/Course_Templates). You are responsible for designing your course in a manner that fulfills all learning objectives in a manner that can be assessed.
- You are responsible for ordering textbook(s), if applicable, with the University Bookstore (<https://uky.bncollege.com/shop/uky/home>).
- You must follow UK's Fair Use policies for copyrighted works (e.g., course texts; <https://www.uky.edu/copyright/facultyresources/fairuse>).
- You only cancel classes if it is unavoidable (e.g., due to illness). If you know that you will be missing class on a given day (e.g., for a conference), you should arrange for another TA to cover your class or provide the students with online material. Please report any cancelled classes to the TA Coordinator.
- You are responsible for submitting midterm and final grades before the deadlines. Late grade submission can cause major problems for students (e.g., jeopardizing graduation).
- If challenges or problems occur in class or with individual students, please discuss the situation with the TA Coordinator as soon as possible.

Specific Expectations for RAs

- All graduate students, including RAs, must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research training and engage in yearly refresher training (<https://www.research.uky.edu/responsible-conduct-research/getting-started>).
- All research activities must follow IRB guidelines for ethical research practice, including maintaining confidentiality for research participants (<https://www.research.uky.edu/office-research-integrity/uk-human-research-protection-program-questionsanswers>)

Expectations about How TAs and RAs Should be Treated

- As a TA or RA, you should be treated respectfully and equitably by your supervisor, students, and research participants.
- If you are not being treated respectfully, please discuss the situation with your supervisor (for student and research participant issues), with the TA Coordinator (for course instructor issues), or with the GWS Director of Graduate Studies or Department Chair (for research supervisor issues).

Concerns and Reporting

- As a TA or RA, you are a mandated reporter for Title IX violations. If a UK student or research participant discloses to you that they have experienced sexual misconduct or harassment, you are required to report it to the UK Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity (<https://www.uky.edu/eo/discrimination-harassment>).

- If you have concerns about the wellbeing of a particular student (e.g., mental health, ability to meet basic needs), you should file a report with the UK Center for Support and Intervention (<https://www.uky.edu/concern/>).
- If you believe a student is violating the UK Student Code of Conduct, you should file a report to the UK Office of Student Conduct (<https://www.uky.edu/studentconduct/>).

Training & Resources

There are many resources, both within and outside of the department, to help you succeed as a TA or RA!

For TAs:

- The Graduate School provides an orientation for all new TAs (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/orientation-new-graduate-teaching-assistants>), as well as many resources for TAs (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/resources-teaching-assistants>).
- The GWS TA Coordinator holds regular meetings to provide ongoing training and support for GWS TAs.
 - The TA Coordinator also maintains a Canvas site with syllabi and materials that can be used in GWS courses.
- GWS students who are TAs for the WRD (Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies) Department will receive training from that department, including a seminar about teaching writing and regular meetings with a teaching mentor.
- The Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) offers resources and workshops about teaching (<https://www.uky.edu/celt/>). They also provide one-on-one consultation about teaching issues and concerns.
- For helpful information about creating online and hybrid courses, see CELT's Teach Anywhere website (<https://teachanywhere.uky.edu/>).
- Graduate students who wish to further develop their teaching skills can earn a Graduate Certificate in College Teaching and Learning (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/graduate-certificate-college-teaching-learning>) and/or participate in the Preparing Future Faculty program (<https://gradschool.uky.edu/preparing-future-faculty>).

For RAs:

- The UK Office of Research provides a variety of resources and trainings for researchers (<https://www.research.uky.edu/resources>).

- The Office of Research Integrity oversees the Institutional Review Board (IRB). They provide consultation and training related to research with human participants (<https://www.research.uky.edu/office-research-integrity>).

Evaluation

- All TAs are evaluated once per semester.
 - For Instructions of Record and Discussion leaders (TA Types 1-3), evaluations consist of a class observation and/or review of course materials by a faculty member and TA Coordinator.
 - For Classroom TAs and Graders (TA Types 4), evaluations are conducted by the supervising instructor and TA Coordinator.
 - All TAs are encouraged to meet with the faculty evaluator to discuss their evaluation.
- UK collects Teacher Course Evaluations (TCEs) for all courses and discussion sections (TAs Types 1-3). TCEs can provide helpful information about students' views of a course, but also have significant limitations. TAs are encouraged to discuss their TCEs with the TA Coordinator and/or their advisor.
- If desired, instructors can ask CELT to collect midterm student feedback and/or conduct class observations (<https://www.uky.edu/celt/what-we-do/services>).
- RAs are evaluated by their supervisors. RAs are encouraged to meet with their supervisors to discuss their performance and evaluation.
- TAs or RAs who believe they have been evaluated unfairly should follow the GWS Graduate Student Appeals Process.
- Reappointments of all graduate assistantships are contingent on positive evaluations of performance.

Fellowships and Funding for Conference Travel and Research

GWS students are strongly encouraged to apply for funding, both inside and outside the University. Please note that most funding applications require personal statements and letters of recommendation. Be sure to identify and begin working on fellowship applications with enough time to write and receive feedback on your statements. Also, be sure to ask for letters of recommendation **at least 2-3 weeks before** the deadline for submission.

Fellowships

Fellowships fund students to work on their scholarship without TA or RA responsibilities. This dedicated time for scholarship can greatly facilitate students' progress toward their degrees, especially as they work on their dissertations. Fellowships also are considered prestigious markers of your academic achievement, intellectual acumen, and professional promise by future employers.

Competitive fellowships at UK

[Dean's Competitive Fellowship](#)

[Presidential Fellowship](#)

Other fellowships are described on the [Graduate School webpage](#)

Fellowships from UK centers

[Center for Equality & Social Justice](#)

[Office for the Prevention & Study of Violence Against Women](#)

Fellowships from External Organizations

[National Women's Studies Association](#)

[List of nationally competitive fellowships](#)

Funds for Conference Travel and Research Expenses

Mini-grants are available to support graduate students who travel to present research at conferences and to help with expenses related to research (e.g., travel to visit archives or conduct field work, payments for research participants).

GWS Department funding

The GWS Department has two funds to support graduate student conference travel and research expenses, the Bonnie Cox fund and Block Grant funding. If money is available, the Department also provides some funding for summer research activity. Generally, there is an opportunity for students to submit proposals for these funds every semester. If you need conference or research funds and a call for proposals has not been announced, please talk with the DGS.

Mini-grants from UK centers

[Center for Equality & Social Justice](#): Funding for research

[Center for Humanities & Social Sciences](#): Funding for research and speakers

[Graduate Student Congress](#): Funding for conference travel

External Organizations

[National Women's Studies Association](#): Funding for conference travel

Many other professional organizations have mini-grants for student research and conference travel - be sure to check organizations related to your specific area of scholarship!

Professional Development and Other Resources

There are many resources available in the GWS Department, the University of Kentucky, and beyond that can help you thrive as a graduate student. We encourage you to take advantage of them!

GWS Department Resources: Information distributed by email

Speakers and colloquia

Department workshops, such as applying to conferences and writing for publication

College of Arts and Sciences

[Workshops for graduate students](#)

[Careers Beyond the Professoriate](#): Includes self-assessment tools and resources for pursuing non-academic careers

UK Resources for Graduate Education & Teaching

[Graduate School workshops & other resources](#): There are many good resources and programs offered by the Graduate School, including

- [Pathways](#): Provides resource recommendations based on your interests, goals, and stage of graduate school
- [GradDegree+ professional development](#)
- [Preparing Future Faculty program](#)
- [Imagine PhD](#): Career planning tool for students in the humanities and social sciences
- [Aurora by Beyond the Professoriate](#) (non-academic career tools)
- [Career Advisor](#)
- [Magna Digital Library \(20 Minute Mentor\)](#): Extensive video resources related to teaching and mentoring

[Center for Enhancing Learning and Teaching \(CELT\)](#)

[Teach Anywhere](#) (resources for online education)

[Disability Resource Center](#)

[International Center](#)

[Center for English as a Second Language](#)

[Graduate Student Congress](#)

[Center for Graduate and Professional Initiatives](#)

[UK Stuckert Career Center](#)

[UK Libraries Gender and Women's Studies Liaison](#)

Speakers & events throughout UK

UK Resources for Health and Well-being

[UK Student Well-being Resources](#): Includes many helpful links for other UK resources!

[University Health Center](#)

[Counseling Center](#)

[University Behavioral Health](#)

[Graduate Student Health Plan Information](#)

[Benefits and Plan Documents](#)

[Financial Wellness](#) (part of the Office for Student Success)

UK Resources for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

[Martin Luther King Center](#)

[Office of LGBTQ* Resources](#)

[International Center](#)

[Office for Institutional Diversity](#)

Resources Beyond UK

[National Women's Studies Association](#)

[Women and Gender Studies South](#) (formerly Southeastern Women's Studies Association)

[Duke University Feminist Theory Workshop](#)

[Kentucky Health Justice Network](#): Reproductive justice resources and advocacy

Policies and Forms

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and following all GWS and Graduate School rules and policies. **Please note:** Graduate School rules apply in all cases except where GWS is allowed to have more specific or stricter rules. Any changes to the Graduate School rules will apply to students even if they are not listed in this handbook. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are following the most current rules and policies of both the Graduate School and GWS.

GWS Department Policies and Forms

All policies & forms are found at <https://gws.as.uky.edu/phd-students>

[Advising policy](#)

[TA/RA policy](#)

[Appeals process](#)

Incomplete grades policy (note: will add link once approved)

[Program of Study form](#)

[GWS 767 Goals form](#)

[GWS 690 \(independent study\) contract](#)

Incomplete grade form (will add link once approved)

Year-end Self-Assessment form (will add link once posted)

[Checklist for qualifying exams](#)

[Checklist for doctoral dissertations](#)

College of Arts and Sciences Policies

See section on [Important Policies and Regulations](#)

Graduate School Policies and Forms

All Graduate School regulations for degrees can be found in the Graduate Bulletin at <http://bulletin.uky.edu/index.php>. Use the pull-down menu to view the current year's Graduate Bulletin.

Other important Graduate School policies (e.g., for graduate student travel) can be found at <https://gradschool.uky.edu/current-students>.

[Key dates for each semester](#) (e.g., deadlines for forms and oral exams)

[Graduate School forms for students in doctoral programs](#)

The Graduate School uses web-based submission for the following forms required for PhD students:

1. Advisory committee formation.
2. Request to schedule the Qualifying Examination.
3. Notification of Intent to Schedule the Final Examination.
4. Request for Final Examination

Please note that there are strict deadlines for submitting each of these forms. It is the graduate student's responsibility to check the current Graduate School [Bulletin](#) and/or [website](#) for these dates.

Master's Degree In GWS

The Graduate Program in GWS at UK is designed primarily for PhD students. We do not accept applicants for a Master's degree. We do, however, offer an MA Degree under two conditions:

1. For ongoing Ph.D. students, the Master's degree is recognized *en passante*, that is, after passing their written and oral qualifying examinations. Students who want their MA to be formally awarded by UK must complete an application for graduation (see the DGS or department manager for more information).
2. For students who are leaving the doctoral program prior to completion, an MA degree can be awarded if they meet the requirements of the Plan B option specified by the Graduate School. In essence, this option involves completing the required coursework for the PhD and passing the written and oral components of qualifying exams, referred to as Master's exams in this context.

The Plan B Master's degree includes 30 hours of coursework, including 2 courses in methods (GWS 630 plus an additional approved course), the 2 course sequence in Feminist Theory (GWS 640 and GWS 650), and 2 area seminars (from GWS 600 or GWS 700 topical areas). Plan B requires a written examination and oral defense. The written and oral examinations will be prepared by a committee of 3 GWS faculty members taking into consideration the coursework completed by the student. A student must pass both the written and oral examinations. Students who fail the Master's exam must retake the entire exam (both written and oral) within the time frame specified by the Graduate School rules. Students who fail the qualifying exam twice will automatically be dismissed from the program.

Plan B students must choose a committee of 3 GWS faculty members. The chair of the committee must have Full status in the Graduate School Faculty.

Plan B students must remain enrolled full time in the program until completion of the degree. The Chair of the student's committee must report to the DGS each semester in writing the student's progress toward degree. Lack of good progress will result in a review by the DGS in consultation with the Graduate Committee for possible dismissal from the program.