

# Department of History Graduate Student Handbook 2020-21

Updated 2020 08 07

## Contents

Important Dates 2020-21.....	2
Program Regulations.....	3
Admission Requirements .....	3
Course Work.....	3
Satisfactory Progress .....	4
Course Deadlines .....	6
M.A. in History.....	7
History Cognate/Thesis Proposal Form .....	8
M.A. in History Timeline.....	9
M.A. in Public History .....	12
M.A. in Public History Timeline .....	12
Ph.D. in History.....	13
Language Requirement .....	13
Comprehensive Exams .....	13
Comprehensive Examination Fields Form.....	14
Oral Examination .....	15-16
Dissertation Proposal and Defense.....	18-20
Doctoral Progression.....	21
Ph.D. Dissertation.....	21
Ph.D. Annual Meetings.....	22
Thesis Examination and Public Lecture.....	22

## Important Dates 2020-21

(See also School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) [Important Dates](#))

1 Sep 2020	Beginning of Fall Term
1 Sep	Hilborn Doctoral Completion Award due to department
8 Sep	History Department Graduate Student Orientation
10 Sep	Fall Term classes begin
Mid-Sept	SSHRC and CGS Doctoral applications due to the department
Late Sep/Early PhD annual meetings (for year 3 and above)	
Oct	
12 Oct	Thanksgiving Holiday
2-8 Nov	Fall Reading Week
2 Nov	Comprehensive Exams: Major field historiographical essay due (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
12 Nov	Final date to submit Ph.D. thesis to SGPS for Fall Term defense
11 Nov	Comprehensive Exams: 1 <sup>st</sup> minor field take-home exam due (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
15 Nov	M.A. Cognate / Thesis proposals due, with supervisors selected; deadline to declare 1-year or 2-year M.A. option (M.A. History); deadline to declare 4-term option (M.A. Public History)
20 Nov	Comprehensive Exams: 2 <sup>nd</sup> minor field take-home exam due (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
Late Nov – Dec	Comprehensive Exams: Oral exams (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
1 Dec	SSHRC CGS Master's applications due
Early Dec	Registration for Winter Term courses 4
Dec	Fall Term classes end
31 Dec	End of Fall Term
1 Jan 2021	Beginning of Winter Term
6 Jan	Winter Term classes begin
15 Jan	Comprehensive Exam field and supervisor selection form due (1 <sup>st</sup> year Ph.D.s)
29 Jan	OGS applications due
1 Feb	Admission applications due (incoming M.A. and Ph.D. students)
18-21 Feb	Reading Week
1 Mar	PhD annual reports due (all PhD students)
15 Mar	Internal award applications due to the department
19 Mar	Final date to submit Ph.D. thesis to SGPS for Winter Term defense
31 Mar	Dissertation Proposals due (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
8 Apr	Winter Term classes end
Mid April	Dissertation Proposal defenses (2 <sup>nd</sup> year Ph.D.s)
Mid April	M.A. Cognate symposium
30 Apr	End of Winter Term
1 May 2021	Beginning of Summer Term
15 June	M.A. Cognate rough drafts due; M.A. Thesis Proposals due
20 July	Final date to submit Ph.D. thesis to SGPS for Summer term defense
1 Aug	M.A. Cognates due
Early Aug	Registration for Fall Term courses
Mid Aug	GTA and RA Assignments for 2021-22
31 Aug	End of Summer Term

## **Program Regulations**

The following guidelines and regulations govern the graduate program in History. They complement and do not supersede SGPS general regulations.

### **Admission Requirements**

Applicants to M.A. programs at Western must possess a four-year degree from an accredited university. Applicants to the M.A. in History or Public History typically have an undergraduate major or specialization in History; however, other applicants who can show evidence of interest in, and aptitude for, historical study may be considered. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requires at least a 70% average across courses taken in the last two full-time years of the undergraduate degree. The Department of History normally requires an average of 78% or higher, though such an average does not in itself guarantee admission.

Applicants to Ph.D. programs at Western must possess a Master's degree or equivalent from an accredited university and provide evidence of research potential. Applicants to the Ph.D. in History must generally have an M.A. in History, or have completed all requirements of an M.A. degree. Applicants from adjacent disciplines who can show evidence of aptitude for, and success in, historical study may also be considered. The department may conditionally accept applicants still completing M.A. theses. In such cases, the applicant must defend the thesis successfully before admission to the program. The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requires at least a 70% average in all of an applicant's advanced academic work. The Department of History normally requires an average of 80% or higher, though such an average does not in itself guarantee admission.

### **Course Work**

M.A. students in History and Public History take six one-term courses (or the equivalent in two-term courses), normally three during the Fall Term and three during the Winter Term of their first year. Ph.D. students take four one-term courses (or the equivalent in two-term courses), normally two during the Fall Term and two during the Winter Term of their first year. These courses will be chosen from the approved list of graduate courses (9000-level) in History.

### **Directed Readings Courses and Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit**

Directed readings courses may be offered to Ph.D. students at the discretion of the Graduate Chair and Department Chair. Directed readings courses must meet the same criteria as regular graduate courses, including an established reading list, regular meetings, and clearly articulated standards for evaluation. Syllabi for directed readings courses must be submitted to, and approved by, the Graduate Chair.

Directed readings courses are not normally available to M.A. students. However, in cases where no regular graduate course is available in an M.A. student's primary research field, the student may register in an enhanced senior-level undergraduate course. In this case, the instructor is required to provide the student and the Graduate Chair with an enhanced syllabus outlining additional assignments and standards for evaluation.

### **Courses in Other Departments**

A student may receive credit for a maximum of one one-term graduate course (0.5) from outside the Department of History, with the approval of both departments concerned. [Request Form](#)

### **Plagiarism and Appeals**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Graduate students must understand and recognize plagiarism to grade undergraduate work as teaching assistants or markers. More than this, plagiarism is unacceptable in work produced by graduate students. Graduate students should be fully aware of university expectations regarding academic integrity and can expect that all scholastic offences will be dealt with through the university process. Students are urged to read thoroughly this official information on graduate scholastic offenses:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

Information on the appeals procedures for graduate students can be found here:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/appealsgrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsgrad.pdf)

### **Satisfactory Progress**

Students must make satisfactory progress towards their degree at all times. Deadlines for completion of course work and other academic milestones are firm. In general, no extensions will be granted. In exceptional cases, an 'INC' (incomplete) can be awarded if course work or other requirements are not completed when due. When this occurs, the defaulting student may be granted no more than one term to complete all outstanding work. Note that this may require a student to register for a subsequent term (and therefore to pay fees) while work is outstanding. If outstanding work is not submitted before the end of that term, or if that work receives a failing grade, the incomplete notation will automatically become an 'F'. No subsequent extension will be considered for any reason other than medical accommodation. Graduate regulations are emphatic on this point.

The History Graduate program uses the standard [SGPS grading scale](#) in its courses, cognates, and comprehensive exams:

A	80-100%
B	70-79%
C	60-69%
F	00-59%

Students who fail a course (less than 60%) must pass a subsequent course to fulfill program requirements. Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit (including comprehensive exams); those who do not meet this standard may be asked or required to withdraw.

Students who do not complete their course work, or who do not meet milestones set by the program (including the M.A. cognate or thesis; Public History internship; Ph.D. language requirement; Ph.D. comprehensive exams; Ph.D. thesis proposal; Ph.D. annual reports; Ph.D. dissertation and defense), or who fail to make satisfactory progress in their research may be asked to withdraw.

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Interruptions in registration (e.g., leaves of absence) or changes in status must be approved by the Graduate Chair and the [School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#).

The M.A. program should normally be completed in three, four, or six terms, depending on the program stream (see details below). SGPS regulations state that the maximum registration period for completing an M.A. degree is three calendar years. The Ph.D. program should ideally be completed within twelve terms (four years). SGPS regulations state that the maximum registration period for completing a Ph.D. degree is six calendar years.

#### **Graduate Course Deadlines Statement:**

The syllabus of a graduate History course needs to supply all deadlines for assignments and must be clear on the consequences if material is not submitted according to that schedule. This includes the specific late penalty and/or the date after which material will not be accepted. The syllabus also needs to specify the process students should follow when they cannot submit an assignment on time (or give an oral presentation). If a student has not followed this process, or has not communicated with the course professor about missing work, then at the end of term when grades are submitted, the grade submitted for that student will be whatever the student has earned in the course up to that point, even if this is a low or failing grade.

Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. In the event that the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

The deadlines for all assignments are set at the course professor's discretion, with all deadlines within that term. This means fall term deadlines should be before the university closes for the December holiday break, and winter term deadlines should be set before the end of April. This is to ensure that work from one term does not carry over into a subsequent term and to facilitate the timely submission of final course grades. An "Incomplete" is a rare option of last resort that requires a significant reason for accommodation, and requires the approval of both the course professor and the Graduate Chair.

## **M.A. in History**

Students in the M.A. in History program may choose either the **3-term (1 year) cognate option** or the **6-term (2-year) thesis option**. This decision must be made by the middle of November following September admission. The M.A. cognate essay is a research paper of approximately 12,500 words (about 50 pages). The M.A. thesis is a longer work of original scholarship of approximately 25,000 words (or 100 pages), accompanied by a thesis defense.

Students in both streams take six one-term graduate courses during their first two terms of study. Whichever option is chosen, students need to be aware that the M.A. degree is a year-round program—until all degree requirements are completed, they remain full-time students during the Summer and any subsequent terms. Both streams lead to the same degree.

### **Research Involving Human Subjects:**

Research involving humans must be approved by a UWO Research Ethics Board (REB) prior to the start of the project. This includes oral interviews, among other methods, used by historians who are interviewing (live) human subjects. Students who are consulting oral histories or who are conducting oral history interviews as part of their course work, their MA cognate/thesis, or their PhD dissertation must have their research project approved in advance by REB. The student's faculty supervisor (the course instructor, the MA supervisor or the PhD supervisor) is responsible for submitting the application to the REB, must sign as principal investigator, and will oversee the project undertaken by the student. Students and faculty are urged to consult with the Office of Research Ethics about their project as soon as possible. Further information about the ethics review process can be obtained from the [Office of Research Ethics](http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/index.html). See also <http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/index.html>

### ***Cognate (3 terms)***

Students in this stream must meet the following requirements:

Six one-term graduate courses (or equivalent in two-term courses), completed in the first two terms of study.

The cognate essay, a research paper of approximately 12,500 words (about 50 pages).

### ***Thesis (6 Terms)***

Students in this stream must meet the following requirements:

Six one-term graduate courses (or equivalent in two-term courses), completed in the first two terms of study.

The M.A. thesis, a work of original historical scholarship of approximately 25,000 words (about 100 pages, typed and double-spaced), successfully defended in a formal thesis defense.

**History Cognate / Thesis Proposal Form**

**Due:**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Choose one of the three options (see the History Graduate Student Handbook for details):

I am choosing the 3-term (1-year) M.A. cognate option.

I am choosing the 6-term (2-year) M.A. thesis option.

I am choosing the 4-term (16 months) MA Public History cognate option.

Check the following box if applicable:

I intend to (or may) use oral histories AND/OR I intend to (or may) conduct oral interviews with living subjects. I understand it is my responsibility to discuss with my cognate supervisor this issue and, when necessary, apply for Research Ethics permission as soon as possible.

Research involving humans must be approved by a UWO Research Ethics Board (REB) prior to the start of the project. For more information on research with human subjects and the required research approval process see: <http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/index.html>

Please attach a cognate / thesis proposal of approximately 500 words. Your proposal should describe:

- Your topic of research.
- The historical question or questions you seek to answer.
- Some of the historical literature you are engaging with or responding to.
- What historical sources you intend to use and where you will find them.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the attached proposal, support the choice of cognate/thesis option, and I agree to supervise this project

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## M.A. in History Timeline

### Year One (all students)

**September-October:** On their arrival in the program, all M.A. in History students, with the help of the Graduate Chair, will identify a topic and appropriate supervisor for their research.

**November 15:** Students declare whether they are taking the M.A. Cognate Essay stream or M.A. Thesis stream. Students submit a Cognate/Thesis Proposal Form (see page 7) including a title, a short proposal (approximately 500 words), and a supervisor's signature. Students and supervisors are expected to meet regularly thereafter to discuss their progress

#### M.A. Cognate (3 Terms)

**Mid-April:** The graduate program holds a symposium where students present and discuss their cognate essays in progress. Second readers are confirmed.

**June 15:** Students submit rough drafts of cognate essays to their supervisor for review and feedback.

**July 1:** Supervisors must provide feedback on the cognate rough drafts to students by this date.

**August 1:** Final drafts of cognate essays are due to the supervisor and Graduate Advisor in hard copy and electronic versions.

**August 15:** Grades and feedback due to Graduate Advisor from supervisor and second reader.

**August 31:** End of program.

#### Year One M.A. Thesis (6 Terms)

**Mid-April:** The graduate program holds a symposium where students present and discuss their proposed thesis research. Second readers are confirmed.

**June 15:** Students submit detailed thesis proposals (approx. 2500 words, not including bibliography) to their supervisor and second reader.

**July 1:** Supervisors and second readers must provide feedback on thesis proposals by this date, either approving proposal or requiring revisions. Revisions to the proposal will be completed by August 1 under normal circumstances.

**August 31:** Progression to second year requires approval of the thesis proposal.

#### Year Two (Thesis option only)

**January 15:** Student and supervisor submit M.A. Thesis Progress Report.

**April 15:** Students submit rough drafts of thesis to their supervisor for review and feedback.

**June 15:** Final drafts of M.A. theses are due to the supervisor and Graduate Advisor.

**July-August:** M.A. Thesis Defenses are held.

**August 24:** Last possible date for M.A. Thesis examinations.

**August 31:** End of program.



### **Cognate Essay Guidelines**

The cognate essay should be a high-quality research paper, comparable to an article published in a scholarly journal, which develops and sustains a significant historical argument. It must be:

- approximately 12,500 words (about 50 typed, double-spaced pages) in length
- characterized by polished presentation (well organized, clearly, concisely and elegantly expressed, free of grammar and syntax errors etc.)
- based on primary source material, and
- set in the context of the critical published work.

While the cognate essay may be based on work previously submitted for a course grade, it should show considerable revision and improvement, representing at least one term's consistent endeavor. In cases where the cognate essay is based on previous work, the foundation essay must be submitted with the cognate for comparison.

Cognate essays are normally read and graded by two readers: the cognate supervisor and a second reader, selected by the Graduate Chair. Both readers should provide a percentage grade and written comments. The final grade for a cognate paper will be the average of the grades assigned by the two markers. If there is a disparity of 10% or more, or if one reader has failed the paper and the other has not, then the paper will also be graded by a third reader. The final grade will be the average of all three grades.

The SGPS grading scale applies: A: 80-100%; B: 70-79%; C: 60-69%; F: 59% or lower. A grade of 85% or higher is excellent, indicating that a student has considerable talent for academic work and might well consider progression to a Ph.D. program. A grade of 80% or higher could be taken to indicate that potential for further graduate education exists. A failing grade (less than 60%) will result in failure of the M.A. program. In exceptional cases, students may be given one chance to revise and resubmit a failing cognate; they will be required to register for a subsequent term (and therefore to pay fees) while work is outstanding. No extensions of greater than one term will be considered for any reason other than medical accommodation. Graduate regulations are emphatic on this point.

### **Thesis Guidelines (Year Two Only)**

The M.A. thesis should be a substantial piece of original historical research, comparable in quality to a scholarly article or monograph, which makes a contribution to historical knowledge. It must be:

- approximately 25,000 words (about 100 typed, double-spaced pages) in length
- characterized by polished presentation (well organized, clearly, concisely and elegantly expressed, free of grammar and syntax errors etc.)
- based on primary source material, and
- set in the context of the critical published work.

While the thesis may draw on work previously submitted for a course grade, it should show considerable revision, improvement, and expansion. In cases where the thesis is based on previous work, the foundation essay must be submitted with the thesis for comparison.

MA Thesis Progress reports (only for Year 2 MA thesis students) are due January 15 from student and supervisor. The student's report (1-2 pages) should describe the project and its central research questions/problem, what has been accomplished so far, and what work is yet to be done, including a detailed plan of work and timeline for winter and summer terms, culminating in the April 15 submission of the rough draft and June 15 submission of the final draft. The supervisor's report should comment on the student's report, and assess the quality of the work so far and the feasibility of the plan of work.

### **M.A. Thesis Defense (Year Two Only)**

Thesis examinations are organized and overseen by SGPS; see its detailed regulations on thesis format, submission, and examination procedures. Please refer and read carefully to Regulation 8.5.1 to 8.5.6 – Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirements.

In preparation for thesis submission, students must submit a penultimate draft to their supervisor, who will judge if it meets the recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and department, and advise the candidate if revisions are recommended or required. It is the student's responsibility to allow sufficient time for the supervisor to examine and return the dissertation draft, while allowing the three weeks reading time required for examiners, and (particularly in the Summer Term) to account for faculty and staff vacation periods and other leaves. These drafts must be submitted by June 15 in the student's sixth term.

When a student's M.A. thesis is judged ready for examination, the Graduate Chair arranges a thesis examination by organizing a thesis examination board and setting a proposed date. The examination board consists of two program examiners (Department of History faculty members) and one university examiner (a Western faculty member from outside the Department of History). [The Master's Thesis Examination Request Form](#) must be completed 4 weeks prior to the submission of the thesis.

The student's supervisor attends the oral defense but is not part of the examination board. The M.A. thesis defense is normally a closed event.

The thesis must be uploaded to the [Scholarship @ Western ETD Repository](#) 3 weeks prior to the defense date.

### **MA in Public History**

Students in the M.A. in Public History program may choose either the **regular 3-term (1 year) option** or a **4-term cognate essay option**. This decision must be made by the middle of November following September admission. Both streams lead to the same degree.

The regular 3-term M.A. program in Public History consists of three elements:

Three mandatory one-term courses in Public History, which are: History 9800A: Public History: Theory, History and Practice; History 9801B: Public History Group Project; and History 9808A: Digital History, completed in the first two terms of study.

Three additional one-term graduate courses (or equivalent in two-term courses), completed in the first two terms of study.

History 9802: Public History Internship, consisting of 12 weeks of full-time paid or unpaid work under a Public History professional, completed during the Summer Term. This is a full-credit course, graded on a pass/fail basis.

The 4-term cognate essay stream adds one additional element:

The cognate essay, a research paper of approximately 12,500 words (about 50 pages).

For more details on the Public History program, see the [M.A. in Public History website](#). For details on the cognate essay, see [M.A. Cognate Essay Guidelines](#), above.

### **MA in Public History Timeline**

#### ***Year One (All Public History Students):***

**November 15:** Students choosing to take the 4-term cognate essay option must submit a Cognate Proposal Form including a title, a short proposal (approximately 500 words), and a supervisor's signature. Students and supervisors are expected to meet regularly thereafter to discuss their progress.

**Mid-April:** The graduate program holds a symposium where students introduce and discuss their cognates in process. Second readers are confirmed.

**May-August:** Public History Internship and submission of report.

#### ***Year Two (4-term Cognate Students Only):***

**November 15:** Rough drafts of cognate essays are due to supervisors for review and feedback.

**December 1:** Supervisors should provide feedback on the cognate rough drafts to students by this date.

**December 20:** Final drafts are due to the supervisor and Graduate Assistant in hard copy and electronic versions.

**January 7:** Grades and feedback due to Graduate Assistant from supervisor and second reader.

### **Ph.D. in History**

Ph.D. students in History must meet the following requirements:

Four one-term graduate courses (or equivalent in two-term courses), normally completed in the first two terms of study.

Knowledge of a second language relevant to the student's program.

Comprehensive exams, normally completed in November of the second year.

History 9823A/B: Professional Development, normally completed in the second year.

Ph.D. dissertation proposal and defense, normally completed in April of the second year.

Ph.D. dissertation and dissertation defense.

### ***Language Requirement***

To meet the standards of the discipline, historical research often requires the use of primary and secondary sources written in languages other than English. As such, Ph.D. students are required either to possess a working knowledge of a second language relevant to the subject of their studies at the start of their program or to acquire a working knowledge of it during their program. Ph.D. students may meet this requirement in a number of ways:

taking and passing a full-year second language course at Western (such as French 9005, Japanese 1036, or Latin 1000). See SGPS Regulation 6.07 with regard to graduate students taking undergraduate courses.

providing evidence of having previously taken and passed such a course at Western or elsewhere, or having previously passed a second language competency exam as a graduate student.

being a native speaker of, or demonstrating mastery of, a relevant non-English language. Such students may be required to take and pass a translation exam, or otherwise demonstrate competency in the language.

Ph.D. students are encouraged to go beyond than these minimum requirements by continuing to improve their existing language skills and by learning new languages.

### ***Comprehensive Exams***

Comprehensive exams are taken in November of the second year. The purpose of the comprehensive exams is to expand and deepen students' historical knowledge, provide them with the tools to conduct research in history, and prepare them to teach in a variety of fields.

Ph.D. students are required to prepare three fields: a major field, which includes both comprehensive exam and dissertation proposal components; and two minor or supporting fields. Students are urged to select fields and find field supervisors as early as possible. They must submit forms listing their fields and supervisors and obtain signatures from all three supervisors by January 15 of their first year in the program. Comprehensive reading lists should be finalized by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

---

## UWO Department of History

### PhD Comprehensive Examination Fields form

*Please print out 3 copies of this form, have each of your field supervisors agree to and sign one, and submit the copies to Graduate Coordinator*

**Title of field:** \_\_\_\_\_

This is the Major field, ending in a historiographical essay.

This is 1 of the 2 Minor fields, ending in a take-home exam.

**Planned dissertation topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student's name**                      **Signature**                      **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Field supervisor's name**                      **Signature**                      **Date**

Students then prepare for their major and two minor fields. The details of this process will be left mostly in the hands of the student and their supervisors, with the understanding that students should be expected to read between sixty and eighty books in each of their three fields. Within each field, an encyclopedic knowledge of detail is not required, but the student should demonstrate mastery of the basic literature and familiarity with the important problems in each field.

The written portion of the major field is a historiographical essay (of 7,500 to 10,000 words, not counting the bibliography) which surveys the literature of that field in a broad, synoptic way. This essay is due on the first Monday of November. The written portion of the first minor field is a seven-day take-home exam (of 5,000 to 7,500 words) due on the second Wednesday of November. The written portion of the second minor field is a seven-day take-home exam (of 5,000 to 7,500 words) due on the third Friday of November. Late exams will not be accepted.

The Graduate Chair and Graduate Coordinator will schedule all exams, including determining the order of minor fields. The format of the take-home exams will be left largely in the hands of the examiners.

**Oral examinations** will be scheduled in late November or early December. Each student will be examined by a committee consisting of a chair, the major field supervisor, and the two minor field supervisors. This oral exam should be two to three hours in length. Each of the three supervisors will question the student and then consider and grade the student's written and oral performance as a whole.

The [SGPS grading scale](#) applies, and all three grades will appear on the student's transcript. A grade of 85% or higher constitutes a Pass with Distinction. If one exam field is failed (less than 60%), the examining committee sets the terms and timetable for reexamination of that field. If two or more exam fields are failed, or if the student fails one field at both examination and reexamination, the student has failed the comprehensive examination process and will be withdrawn from the graduate program.

## UWO Department of History

### PhD Comprehensives Oral Exam -- process

1. The student may bring a copy of their written exams and reading lists into the oral exam.
2. The chair convenes the meeting. The three examiners are informed that each may question the student for up to 30 minutes in a first round of questions and up to 15 in a second. The order of examiners is set.
3. The student is invited to make a brief statement to correct or modify statements made on the written examinations.
4. The first round of questions begins. When both rounds have been completed, the chair asks if any examiner has any further question.
5. When all questioning is complete, the student is invited to make a concluding statement.
6. The student is then asked to withdraw.
7. Each examiner submits to the chair a numerical grade marked out of 100 for their portion of the student's examination. Each examiner's grade may be derived in any way the examiner sees fit, so long as it is based on both the written and oral portions of the examination. The standard SGPS grading scale applies:

A	80-100%
B	70-79%
C	60-69%
F	00-59%

A grade of 85% or higher constitutes a Pass with Distinction. All three grades will appear on the student's transcript.

8. The chair announces the grades to the examiners, and discussion may follow. If one exam is failed (less than 60%), the examining committee sets the terms and timetable for revision of that exam. If two or more exams are failed, the student has failed the comprehensive examination process and will be asked to withdraw from the graduate program.
9. The student is invited to return. The chair reports the results orally to the student, and subsequently reports them to the Graduate Chair.
10. Within a day, each examiner provides the student, in written form, with a more detailed assessment of their performance in the written and oral portions of the comprehensive field.

---

## UWO Department of History

### PhD Comprehensives Oral Examination – Chair’s Report

Name of Student: **XXXXXXXXXXXX**

Date & Location: **XXXXXXXXXXXX**

#### RESULTS

Examiners:

Grade:

**Course number** (Major Field)  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Course number** (Minor Field)  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Course number** (Minor Field)  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

---

Name:

Signature of Chair



### **Dissertation Proposal and Defense**

Having completed their comprehensive exams, students now rewrite and focus their broad historiographical essay to create a dissertation proposal (approximately 7,500 words in length, not counting the bibliography). The dissertation proposal must be submitted no later than March 31 of the student's second year in the program.

Dissertation proposals should contain both a description of the intended dissertation project and a plan of work. Proposals should tell a general audience (experts and non-experts) what the topic is, how it relates to (and is different from) previous work by historians and other scholars. It should include:

- major research question(s) that open up your topic and indicate your approach to the project. In many cases, students will not have completed enough research yet to present arguments; this reinforces the importance of asking good research questions that are informed by existing scholarship and are focused/purposeful without being narrow or too leading. In other cases, students will be able to include an outline of chapters, identify major case studies, and/or discuss preliminary findings from a previous course paper or MA project.
- a statement about why this project matters, or why it is significant (i.e. Why do this? Who cares about it? How will this dissertation change historical understanding of a subject? What academic/non-academic subfields will be interested in it, and why?)
- an explanation of the major historiography(ies) related to the dissertation in a way that engages with these secondary sources by elaborating on how the topic/research questions are framed relative to the work of other major historians
- a description of the intended methodology, research strategy, and plan of work
- a discussion of theory if explicit/central
- an inventory of major primary sources including archival sources
- a justification of the periodization (i.e. why the dissertation will start and stop when it does)
- a description of any expected challenges
- a schedule outlining how you will complete your thesis over the next 2 to 3 years.

Supervisors may provide students with additional advice and commentary about the content of their proposal. The supervisor will work closely with the student to ensure that the dissertation proposal is as strong as possible.

## UWO Department of History

### PhD Dissertation Proposal Defense -- process

1. The student defends his or her proposal before two examiners. The student's supervisor also attends, and also serves as chair.
2. The chair convenes the meeting. The examiners are informed that each may question the student for up to 30 minutes in a first round of questions and up to 15 in a second. Because the defense serves as an important opportunity for the student to benefit from feedback and advice before proceeding with their dissertation, the chair may permit a third round of questions. The order of examiners is set.
3. When all questioning is complete, the student is asked to withdraw.
4. Each examiner grades the proposal on a pass/fail basis. If a student receives a failing grade from one or both readers, the committee sets the terms and timetable for revision of the proposal and another defense. (If the defense under discussion is that subsequent defense, and the student receives a failing grade from one or both readers in that subsequent defense, he or she is withdrawn from the graduate program.)
5. The student is invited to return. The chair reports the results orally to the student, and subsequently reports them to the Graduate Chair.

---

## UWO Department of History

### PhD Dissertation Proposal [History 9908]

Name of student: xxxxxxxxxxxx

Date & location: xxxxxxxxxxxx

---

Name  
Chair/Supervisor

---

Name  
Examiner/Reader

Pass

Fail

---

Name  
Examiner/Reader

Pass

Fail

Remarks:

## Doctoral Progression

Upon the student's successful completion of the dissertation proposal, a Thesis Supervisory Committee (see SGPS [Thesis Regulation 8.1.3](#)) is formed, consisting of the student's supervisor and one other faculty member (typically, one of the two readers of the proposal), chosen by the Graduate Chair in consultation with the supervisor. This Committee will oversee the student's progress through the remainder of the dissertation.

### Annual Progress Report:

Doctoral students and their supervisors must complete and file an annual progress report by 1 March each year. The student, the supervisor, the second member of the Thesis Supervisory Committee, or the Graduate Chair may request a meeting to discuss the student's progress at this time.

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress towards their degree may be asked or required to withdraw from the program.

### Annual PhD Meetings

Every academic year following their dissertation proposal defense, Ph.D. students will have an annual meeting in late September/first week of October, the purpose of which is to provide on-going support for the student, and to set mutually agreed upon research and writing goals for the academic year. This is also an opportunity to discuss challenges or strategies that arise when writing a dissertation (e.g. how to enhance the dissertation's emerging arguments or its significance). In attendance at this meeting will be the student, their Ph.D. supervisor, and the second reader (or the Graduate Chair can substitute). This meeting does not preclude other important and regular meetings between the student and supervisor. Ideally the goals set should be ambitious but attainable, so as to provide a feasible plan of work. Students should be pro-active in writing this plan and setting goals. Within one week of the meeting, the Ph.D. supervisor will provide a brief written summary of the discussion and the goals to the Graduate Program Advisor and Graduate Chair. The PhD annual report the following March should comment on the progress made according to this plan of work, what work remains to be done, as well as identify new goals and achievements (e.g. a conference presentation or publication).

## Ph.D. Dissertation

Students and supervisors must follow SGPS's detailed [regulations regarding thesis format and submission, and timelines](#). All non-thesis degree requirements must be completed before a Ph.D. thesis or dissertation can be submitted for examination. Students must also be in good standing with the University regarding fees and any other dues.

In preparation for thesis submission, students must first submit a penultimate draft to their Thesis Supervisory Committee, who will judge if it meets the recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and department, and advise the candidate if revisions are recommended or required. It is ultimately at the discretion of the supervisor when the thesis is ready for examination, at which point they will inform the Graduate Chair.

A student may choose to submit their thesis for examination without the approval of their supervisor. In such cases, the supervisor must state in writing why his or her approval is withheld. The Graduate Chair signs the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form and provides the candidate with a copy of the supervisor's stated reasons for withholding approval.

It is the student's responsibility to allow sufficient time for the Thesis Supervisory Committee to examine the dissertation draft, to allow for the six weeks of reading time required for examiners, and (particularly in the Summer Term) to account for faculty and staff vacation periods and other leaves.

When a student submits their dissertation to the Western University Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository (ETD) before the end of a term, he/she may apply for [Thesis Defense Only \(TDO\)](#) status.

The Graduate Chair arranges a thesis examination by setting a proposed date and organizing a thesis examination board. The examination board consists of two program examiners (Department of History faculty members), one university examiner (a Western faculty member from outside the Department of History), and one external examiner (a faculty member from outside Western). The student's supervisor attends the oral defense but is not part of the examination board.

Once a Ph.D. thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except by the permission of the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

### **Thesis Examination and Public Lecture**

Thesis examinations are organized and overseen by SGPS; see its detailed [regulations on examination procedures](#).

Students are required to present a public lecture on their dissertation research, normally within twenty-four hours before their oral defense. The lecture is open to all members of the community. The examiners should ideally attend the public lecture, but it is not formally part of the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense is normally a closed event.

Successful candidates have up to six weeks to complete revisions to the dissertation required by the examiners and submit to the ETD within the term of the defense to avoid paying tuition/fees. [SGPS General Thesis Regulations](#)

### **Ph.D. in History Timeline**

#### **Year One**

Fall and Winter Term: Students take four courses (two per term) and fulfil language requirement if necessary.

**January 15:** Students submit form identifying 3 comprehensive exam fields and supervisors.

**April 28:** Students and 1<sup>st</sup> year advisors submit Ph.D. Annual Reports.

**April 1:** Comprehensive exam supervisors should provide reading lists by this point.

**Summer Term:** Students prepare for comprehensive exams.

## **Year Two**

**Fall Term:** Students prepare for comprehensive exams.

**November:** Students complete written and oral comprehensive exams (see details above).

**Winter Term:** Students take History 9823: Professional Development and prepare Dissertation Proposal.

**Mar 1:** Students and dissertation advisors submit Ph.D. Annual Reports. Language requirements should generally be fulfilled by the end of Year Two.

**April 1:** Students submit Dissertation Proposal.

**April:** Dissertation proposal defenses.

## **Year Three and After**

**Mar 1:** Student's research and complete dissertations. Students, dissertation advisors, and second readers submit Ph.D. Annual Reports.

**Late Sep/Early Oct:** PhD annual meetings (for year 3 and above)