

Introduction

This Graduate Student Handbook provides information on the policies and requirements of the graduate program in Spanish in the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese (SIP) at Penn State. While most of the policies detailed in this handbook are established at the Departmental level, others are policies set by the Graduate School and the University. For further details on Graduate School and University-level policies, please consult the most recent Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin at the following URL: <http://www.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/>.

Whether you are a new or continuing graduate student, it is always important to be familiar with the handbook. Our goal is to design a handbook that will be a useful reference for you as you progress through your program, and we hope that with your feedback, we can continually refine the handbook to best serve your needs. With this in mind, please be aware that ***the policies in this handbook are subject to change***. We believe that a strong program requires feedback, evaluation and revision, and as a consequence, from time to time the policies in this handbook will be updated. The Graduate Officer will notify you of any such changes and of their date of implementation. For changes affecting your programs of study, such as course requirements or exam structure and/or format, students will be given the option of completing their programs under the structure in place when they began their studies or the option of adhering to the new policies.

The Graduate Faculty understands that as graduate students you make crucial contributions to the mission of the Department. We very much hope that you will participate fully in the intellectual life of the Department, that you will be active participants in helping to improve our graduate programs, that you will be active learners, and that you become independent scholars throughout the course of your graduate studies. We also hope that you will stay in touch with us after you graduate and let us know of your progress in your career.

The Department extends to you its best wishes for a productive and rewarding stay as a graduate student in Spanish at Penn State.

Overview of the Linguistics Program

The Hispanic Linguistics program at The Pennsylvania State University ranks among the strongest in the nation. We have major strengths in bilingualism and language contact, areas in which all of our faculty work from distinct perspectives and which connect to other language researchers at Penn State. Our faculty encourage excellence in scientific research by engaging in collaborative projects with students and other scholars here and abroad that examine questions related to dialectology, language contact and language variation, as well as the linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of bilingualism.

Over the past several years, many of the faculty and graduate students in our program have received external funding, including awards from the *Guggenheim Foundation*, the *National Science Foundation*, and *National Institutes of Health*. We have an outstanding placement record, both in tenure track positions and, recently, in post-doctoral appointments of the kind not traditionally available to Spanish PhD students. This success is a direct reflection of the national visibility of our faculty and of the cutting-edge research we are pursuing.

Our faculty also play a central role in the cross-disciplinary Center for Language Science (<http://lsrg.psu.edu/about.shtml>), and the increasing methodological sophistication of our experimental research, including work in eye-tracking and planned developments in neuro-imaging, provides a transformative model for Hispanic Linguistics programs.

The M.A. in Spanish: Linguistics Division

The purpose of this section of the handbook is to explain the requirements and procedures for the completion of the M.A. degree in Spanish within the Linguistics Division of our graduate program. This section provides information on credit requirements, specific course requirements, residency requirements, credit transfer, and the M.A. Exam protocol.

Credit Requirements

The Graduate School requires the completion of a minimum of 30 credits for the successful completion of an M.A. degree. The Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese requires that of these 30 credits, a minimum of 27 graduate credits must be taken at the 500-level. Under special circumstances, the Graduate Officer can authorize a student to take a 400-level course and have it count towards the 500-level requirement, such as, for example, in the event that a relevant course in a particular area is not regularly offered.

Course Requirements

All M.A. students in Spanish that serve as Teaching Assistants are required to take Spanish 502, a course in teaching methodology, during their first semester.

In addition, M.A. students in Hispanic Linguistics follow a carefully structured curriculum of core and elective courses. The purpose of this core curriculum is to provide students with the necessary breadth and depth for general training in theoretical and applied linguistics, to expose students to diverse areas of potential interest within Hispanic linguistics, to provide students with an opportunity to study with a broad range of our Linguistics faculty members at Penn State, and to prepare students for the rigors of independent research at the subsequent Ph.D. level.

The particular courses included in the core curriculum vary slightly by year and semester, depending on the courses offered by our faculty, faculty leave schedules, and so forth. However, the following provides a general overview of the structure of the coursework that students will pursue in our M.A. program. Note that classes listed with a slash, such as Dialectology/Sociolinguistics, indicate that in any given year either one or the other of these courses may be offered. In some cases both may be offered. This said, for the purposes of illustration, a typical two year (4 semester) core will look like the following:

Semester 1:

- Methodology (Spanish 502)
- Syntax (Linguistics 500)
- Phonology (Linguistics 504)

Semester 2:

- Acquisition of Spanish (Spanish 513)
- Spanish Phonology (Spanish 510; often offered in conjunction with French 503 as Romance Phonology)
- Spanish Syntax (Spanish 511; often offered in conjunction with French 504 as Romance Syntax)

Semester 3:

- Spanish Dialectology (Spanish 514)/ Sociolinguistics (Linguistics 548)
- Psycholinguistics (Linguistics 520)/ Bilingualism (Linguistics 447 with an added work component for graduate students)
- Elective (in consultation with Graduate Officer)

Semester 4:

- Hispano-Romance Linguistics (Spanish 507)
- Seminar in Applied Linguistics (Spanish 597)
- Elective (in consultation with Graduate Officer)

Residency Requirements

The university requires that at least 20 credits must be earned in residence at the University Park campus.

Credit Transfer

A maximum of 10 credits may be transferred towards the credit requirement for the M.A. Generally speaking, we believe that success in our program requires the completion of the training that students receive at Penn State. With this in mind, we do not readily approve transfer credits, especially if they pertain to substitutions for the non-elective part of our core curriculum. However, some courses taken at another institution of high caliber may, with the written permission of the Graduate Officer, be granted transfer credit towards the M.A. degree.

The M.A. Exam

The M.A. exam consists of two parts: 1) a paper submitted by March 1 of the student's 4th semester and 2) an oral Exam administered by the M.A. Exam committee in Hispanic Linguistics. Each of these elements is explained in this section. The M.A. exam can be taken in English or Spanish.

M.A. Exam: Paper requirement

The Graduate School at Penn State requires that each M.A. program at the University culminate in a significant or "capstone" experience that demonstrates evidence of the student's analytical skills and shows an ability on the part of the student to synthesize material. ([http://www.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/\\$gradreqs.htm](http://www.psu.edu/bulletins/whitebook/$gradreqs.htm)). For academic

programs such as our M.A., this capstone experience can take the form of a suitable paper or essay.

To satisfy this requirement, M.A. candidates must turn in an original paper, written for one of their classes in our program. The deadline for submission of this paper is March 1, of the student's 4th semester in the program, as established by the Graduate School. (Should the date change, this information will be updated.) Papers should be submitted to the Graduate Program Staff Assistant in the main office in 231 Burrowes no later than 12:00 noon.

Students are free to revise this paper if they wish, though revision is not required. We strongly recommend, however, that students consult with faculty members for whom they have written papers if they have any doubts about whether a given paper would be suitable for submission as part of the M.A. Exam. Students are advised to select what they believe to be the best paper they have written in the program. In some cases, and only after consultation with the Graduate Officer (or with the Linguistics faculty member heading the Exam Committee if the Graduate Officer is not a member of the Linguistics faculty), a student may submit a portfolio of problem sets in lieu of a paper. We do not expect this circumstance to be the norm, however, nor do we encourage this.

M.A. Exam: The Oral Exam

In addition to the University paper requirement, the Department administers an oral examination as part of the M.A. examination process. The M.A. Oral Exam consists of an oral examination lasting up to two hours. Questions on the examination will focus, in part, on issues arising from the paper submitted for the written portion of the M.A. Exam. In addition, M.A. students will be provided with a list of study questions by the end of January of their fourth semester. These questions will be related to areas and issues covered in their core curriculum coursework. The study questions are not meant to be answered in rote fashion. Rather, we intend them to serve as points of departure for a general range of questions during the oral exam. Students are encouraged to ask other students in the program for copies of their questions in order to get a sense of the kinds of questions that appear on the study guides.

It is important to note that the oral exam serves as an opportunity for the student to show her or his ability to field questions, exhibit mastery of central areas in linguistic research and display flexibility in the ability to extend answers beyond the specific question asked on the study guide, connecting the questions to broader issues in linguistic theorizing. This is an essential skill, especially for those students wishing to continue on to Ph.D. studies.

M.A. Exam: The Exam Committee

The M.A. Exam committee is generally comprised of all of the Hispanic Linguistics graduate faculty members. On some occasions, especially if there is a large number of M.A. candidates or if faculty members are unavailable due to such issues as travel

schedules or sabbaticals, smaller committees will be assigned by the Graduate Officer. All M.A. Exam committees will have a minimum of three faculty members.

M.A. Exam: Exam Dates

As noted above, the due date for the paper component of the exam is by noon on March 1 of the student's 4th semester in the program. The specific dates of the Oral Exam vary by student and by year, although all full-time students are required to take the exam in their fourth semester. The Oral Exam will generally be administered after Spring break, sometime between late March and the end of the third week of April.

M.A. Exam: Grading

At the end of the oral examination, the Exam Committee will come to a determination regarding whether the student has passed or failed the M.A. Exam. In general, the committee will inform the student shortly after the exam of its decision. Determination of the pass or fail grade will be made on the committee's assessment of the quality of the paper submitted by the student and on the quality of the student's performance on the oral portion of the exam. In extraordinary cases, the committee may not be able to reach an immediate decision. In these cases, the committee may delay its decision for a period of up to one week, after which point the committee will provide a final decision, either passing or failing the student on the exam. In addition, each student will receive later written feedback from either the Graduate Officer or the Exam Committee Chair regarding her or his performance on both parts of the exam.

It is important to note that a grade of "Pass" on the M.A. Examination does not automatically qualify students to continue onto the Ph.D. program in Hispanic Linguistics. The Pass/Fail grade refers strictly to the committee's decision regarding the student's performance on the M.A. Examination. A passing grade, assuming that all other departmental and university requirements have been met, qualifies a student to earn the M.A. degree. For information pertaining to continuing into the Ph.D. program in Hispanic Linguistics, please consult that section of the handbook.

M.A. Exam: Failing grades

If a student fails the M.A. Examination, she or he may retake the examination once within the following six calendar months. Note, however, that if the student has been receiving support as a Teaching Assistant, she or he is not guaranteed continued support. Students will make arrangements on an individual basis with the Graduate Officer should a retake be necessary. The primary responsibility to arrange for the scheduling of the exam resides with the individual student, who will work with the Graduate Officer and the departmental staff. The composition of the Examination Committee may not be the same as on the first taking of the exam, depending on faculty availability and the timing of the retake. A second failure on the examination will result in termination of graduate student status in the Department.

M. A. Program: Summary Check List

Credit and course Requirements

- Spanish 502 taken in the 1st semester
- Minimum of 30 credits
- Minimum of 27 credits at 500-level
- Core curriculum coursework (see above)

M.A. Exam:

- Paper submitted to the Graduate Program Staff Assistant by March 1 of student's 4th semester in the program
- Study questions received by student by the end of January of 4th semester
- Oral Examination after Spring break through third week of April of 4th semester

The Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics

The purpose of this section of the handbook is to explain the requirements and procedures for the completion of the Ph.D. degree in Spanish within the Linguistics Division of our graduate program. This section provides information on admission to the Ph.D. program and the Candidacy Exam, credit requirements, specific course requirements, residency requirements, credit transfer, the Ph.D Exam protocol, and the Ph.D. dissertation.

Admission to the Ph.D. program.

Students may be admitted in one of two ways to the Ph.D. program in Hispanic Linguistics:

- 1) Students who successfully complete an M.A. in Spanish within the Hispanic Linguistics program at Penn State may apply to continue on to the Ph.D. program;
- 2) Students who have earned an M.A. in Hispanic Linguistics (or an approved equivalent) may apply directly for admission to the Ph.D. program.

In either case, all students entering the program are required by the University to pass a Ph.D. Candidacy Examination.

This section of the handbook provides information on credit requirements, content course requirements, residency requirements, and credit transfer.

Credit Requirements

The Graduate School requires that a minimum of 30 credits of coursework at Penn State must be completed in order to earn the Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics. Of these, a minimum of 27 graduate credits must be taken at the 500-level. Under special circumstances, the Graduate Officer can authorize a student to take a 400-level course and have it count towards the 500-level requirement, such as, for example, in the event that a relevant course in a particular area is not regularly offered.

Course Requirements

All Ph.D. students in Spanish that serve as Teaching Assistants are required to take Spanish 502, a course in teaching methodology, during their first semester.

In addition, Ph.D students in Hispanic Linguistics follow a carefully structured curriculum of core and elective courses. The purpose of this core curriculum is to provide students with the necessary breadth and depth for general training in theoretical and applied linguistics, to expose students to diverse areas of potential interest within Hispanic linguistics, to provide students with an opportunity to study with a broad range

of our Linguistics faculty members at Penn State, and to prepare students for the rigors of independent research during their Ph.D. studies.

The particular courses included in the core curriculum vary slightly by year and semester, depending on the courses offered by our faculty, faculty leave schedules, and so forth. Courses will be chosen on a semester-by-semester basis, in close consultation with the student's adviser and/or Graduate Officer.

Additional Language Requirement

For the Ph.D. degree, students must demonstrate reading proficiency in a language other than English or Spanish. The requirement may be satisfied in one of several ways:

1. Passing an appropriate graduate-level reading course in a language other than English or Spanish offered by a language department at Penn State.
2. Passing a Reading Proficiency Examination in a language other than English or Spanish offered by a language department at Penn State.
3. A student who can demonstrate that he or she is a native or near-native speaker of, or has been educated in, a language other than Spanish or English, may use this language as a means of satisfying the requirement.

If an individual case does not fall neatly within any of these scenarios, please consult with the Graduate Officer.

Residency Requirements

The University requires that at least 20 credits must be earned in residence at the University Park campus.

Credit Transfer from another institution

The Department does not accept transfer credit towards the satisfaction of the 30 credit requirement for the Ph.D. We believe that the success in our program requires full participation in the training opportunities that students receive at Penn State.

However, some courses taken at another institution of high caliber may, with the written permission of the Graduate Officer, may be counted towards the satisfaction of one or more of the core curriculum classes listed above. Under such circumstances, the student may substitute another graduate course at Penn State for that class. It is our experience, however, that students are best served by carrying out the entirety of the training that we provide in the courses offered during the first two years in the program.

Credit Transfer from the M.A. at Penn State

Ph.D. students continuing from the M.A. program in Linguistics at Penn State often earn more than the 30-credit minimum required for the M.A. Up to 9 discipline-relevant credits above the minimum 30 credits earned in the M.A. program may be counted towards the satisfaction of the additional 30 credits required for the Ph.D. Technically, these are not “transfer” credits, but if a student earns 39 credits at the M.A. level, for example, 9 of these may be used towards satisfying the credit requirements of the Ph.D.

If a student has doubts regarding whether a particular course is “discipline-relevant”, she or he should consult with her or his advisor and with the Graduate Officer. Within Hispanic Linguistics, discipline-relevant coursework is primarily found in linguistics courses taken in one of the other language departments, in coursework in the Linguistics program, in language-related courses in Psychology, and in coursework in the Department of Applied Linguistics.

The Ph.D. Candidacy Exam

All students entering the Ph.D. program (whether continuing from an M.A. earned within the Department or coming from another institution) are required by the university to pass a Candidacy Examination within the first three semesters of their Ph.D. studies. The Candidacy Exam can be taken in English or Spanish.

The nature of the Candidacy Examination process can vary depending on whether a student applies to continue beyond the M.A. at Penn State or whether the student is admitted to the program from another institution. This section of the handbook will discuss each of these scenarios.

The Candidacy Exam: Continuing Students

Upon successful completion of the M.A. Comprehensive Exam in Hispanic Linguistics, students may apply to continue on to the Ph.D. program. *Admission to continue on to the Ph.D. program is not automatically granted upon completion of the M.A.. Rather, admission is contingent upon two factors: 1) the student expressing an interest in continuing and 2) the recommendation of the Linguistics faculty that the student be allowed to continue.* This application is internal to the Department and simply requires that the student submit a request in writing (upon successfully completing the M.A. Comprehensive Exam) to the Graduate Officer. In this letter, the student will request admission to the Ph.D. in Hispanic Linguistics and should specify the general area of interest in which she or he plans to pursue her or his Ph.D. studies.

Depending on the quality of the student’s work in the M.A. program and on her or his performance on the M.A. Comprehensive Examination, a student may be admitted into the Ph.D. in one of two ways. If a continuing student’s performance in coursework and on the M.A. Examination is considered to be of sufficiently high quality by the

Linguistics faculty, then the student will be admitted to the Ph.D. program, and the M.A. Examination will satisfy the university Ph.D. Candidacy Examination requirement.

Alternatively, the faculty may also determine that a continuing student can be allowed to begin the Ph.D. program, but that final acceptance into the program is contingent upon the student passing a separate Candidacy Examination. *Under these circumstances, the Candidacy Examination will be structured in the same fashion as detailed below for students who come to the program with an M.A. from another institution.*

If a continuing student is required to take a separate Candidacy Examination, she or he will complete this exam by the end of the third semester in the Ph.D. program.

The Candidacy Exam: Students entering the Ph.D. program from another institution

As noted above, all students admitted to the Ph.D. program are required by the University to pass a Candidacy Examination within the first three semesters of their Ph.D. program. In the Hispanic Linguistics program, the Candidacy Examination will be given in the third semester of the program. The Candidacy Exam consists of two parts:

- 1) two papers submitted by September 15 of the student's 3rd semester and
- 2) an Oral Exam administered by the Ph.D. Candidacy Exam committee in Hispanic Linguistics.

Each of these elements is explained in this section.

Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: Paper requirement

To satisfy the written portion of the Ph.D. Candidacy exam, students will submit two original research papers. At least one of these papers must have been written while at Penn State.

We strongly recommend that students consult with faculty members for whom they have written papers if they have any doubts about whether a given paper would be suitable for submission as part of the Candidacy Exam. Students are advised to select what they believe to be the best paper (or two papers should they to submit two papers that they have written for courses at Penn State) that they have written in the program. In some cases, and only after consultation with the Graduate Officer (or with the Linguistics faculty member heading the Exam Committee if the Graduate Officer is not a member of the Linguistics faculty), a student may submit a portfolio of problem sets in lieu of one of the Candidacy papers. We do not expect this circumstance to be the norm, however. Note, as well, that any paper written exclusively for the Candidacy Exam may not be submitted as a paper for subsequent coursework in the program.

The Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: The Oral Exam

The Department will administer an oral examination as part of the Candidacy Examination process. The oral component of the Candidacy Oral Exam consists of an oral examination lasting up to two hours. Questions on the examination will focus in part on issues arising from the papers submitted for the written portion of the Candidacy Exam as well as on questions regarding the coursework that each student has completed at Penn State. The oral portion of the exam will also include general questions that probe the scope of knowledge that the candidate possesses in the field of linguistics.

It is important to note that the oral exam serves as an opportunity for the student to show her or his ability to field questions, to think flexibly, and to exhibit mastery of central areas in linguistic research. This is an essential skill, especially for those students wishing to complete their Ph.D. studies.

The Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: The Exam Committee

The Candidacy Exam committee is generally comprised of all of the Hispanic Linguistics graduate faculty members. On some occasions, especially if there is a large number of candidates or if faculty members are unavailable due to such issues as travel schedules or sabbaticals, smaller committees will be assigned by the Graduate Officer. All Candidacy Exam committees will have a minimum of three faculty members.

The Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: Exam Dates

For students coming from another institution, the submission deadline for the papers is September 15 of the student's third semester in the program (or the following Monday if September 15 falls on a weekend). Papers should be submitted to the Graduate Program Staff Assistant in the main office in 231 Burrowes no later than 12:00 noon.

The Oral Exam will generally be administered by mid-October. (Note: as per above, *Candidacy Exam for continuing students (if required) will be structured in the same fashion as for students who come to the program with an M.A. from another institution*).

Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: Grading

At the end of the oral examination, the Candidacy Exam Committee will come to a determination regarding whether the student has passed or failed the Candidacy Exam. In general, the committee will inform the student shortly after the exam of its decision. Determination of the pass or fail grade will be made on the committee's assessment of the quality of the papers submitted by the student and on the quality of the student's performance on the oral portion of the exam. In extraordinary cases, the committee may not be able to reach an immediate decision. In these cases, the committee may delay its decision for a period of up to one week, after which point the committee will provide a final decision, either passing or failing the student on the exam.

If a student receives a grade of “Pass” on the Candidacy Exam, the student will have officially completed the University’s Candidacy Examination requirement and will thus be officially admitted into the Ph.D. program.

Ph.D. Candidacy Exam: Failing grades

If a student fails the Candidacy Examination, she or he may retake the entire examination once.

In the case of students coming from another program, the Exam must be retaken prior to the end of the student’s third semester in the program.

If a student continuing from our M.A. program fails to pass the Candidacy Examination, he or she may retake the exam by the end of her or his third semester in the Ph.D. program, although continued financial support by the Department is not guaranteed past the semester in which the first Candidacy Examination failure occurs.

Students will make arrangements on an individual basis with the Graduate Officer should a retake be necessary. The primary responsibility to arrange for the scheduling of the exam resides with the individual student, who will work with the Graduate Officer and the departmental staff. The composition of the Examination Committee may not be the same as on the first taking of the exam, depending on faculty availability and the timing of the retake. A second failure on the examination will result in termination of graduate student status in the Department.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Exam Dates

In order to have ample time for dissertation research and writing, as well as career planning, it is strongly recommended that the exam be taken during the fifth semester in the program (in most cases, during the fall semester of the third year). When circumstances require that a student take the exams during the spring semester, these will be offered in January. The Ph.D Comprehensive exam can be taken in English or Spanish.

It is the student’s responsibility to inform the Graduate Secretary the semester prior to taking the exam.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: The Doctoral Committee

By the time the student successfully completes the Candidacy Exam, she or he should have made arrangements for the formation of a Ph.D. Doctoral Committee. This committee is charged with creating the Ph.D. exam questions and administering the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam. Each of these elements is described below.

Students pursuing a Ph.D. in the linguistics division will meet with a faculty advisor to create a Doctoral Committee. Ideally, the first informal meeting should take place prior to the end of the third semester in the doctoral program.

The Doctoral Committee has a minimum of four members. Students may suggest members for their committee in consultation with their advisor. Generally speaking, the Chair of this committee will be the eventual dissertation advisor. The members of the committee should reflect the student's research interests while maintaining a balanced representation of the entire linguistics faculty. Note: changes to the Doctoral Committee can be made after successful completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam.

The members of the Doctoral Committee must be finalized and approved by the Graduate Officer during the semester prior to taking the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam. Ideally, students should take the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam during the student's 5th semester in the program. It is the student's responsibility to contact potential committee members (in consultation with the Graduate Officer).

The Doctoral Committee is in charge of creating and evaluating the student's Ph.D. comprehensive examination, as well as supervising the dissertation research and writing.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Exam Composition

All candidates must satisfy all course requirements and pass regular departmental evaluations in order to schedule the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination. All deferred or incomplete grades must be resolved before scheduling the exam.

The Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam consists of three parts: 1) two research papers submitted by the third week of the student's 5th semester in the doctoral program, (2) two examination papers, and 3) an oral Exam administered and graded by the Ph.D. Exam committee in Hispanic Linguistics, completed before the end of the student's 5th semester in the doctoral program. Each of these elements is explained below.

Please Note: When a period of more than eight years has elapsed since the passing of the candidacy examination, or more than six years since the passing of the comprehensive examination, the candidate is required to pass a second comprehensive examination before the final oral defense will be scheduled.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Paper requirements

Ph.D. students must turn in two original research papers of publishable quality. In most cases these will be revised course papers. The deadline for submission of these papers is no later than the third week of the student's 5th semester in the doctoral program. Papers should be submitted to the Graduate Program Staff Assistant in the main office in 231 Burrowes.

In addition, the student will submit two examination papers in which she or he addresses a set of questions or problems posed by the doctoral committee. The questions will be given to the student no later than two weeks after the student has submitted the research papers. The specific nature and requirements of the two examination papers will be left to the discretion of the committee members responsible for preparing this portion of the examination. The student will be given two months time in which to complete and submit the two examination papers.

The examination papers are expected to be submitted as originally-researched, full-length, properly-formatted research articles, but they are not expected to be of publishable quality. All exams in Spanish linguistics may be written in English or Spanish as per the decision of the committee members responsible.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Oral examination

Within three weeks of submission of the examination papers, the student will take an oral examination based on the original research papers and the examination papers.

Following successful performance in the oral examination, the student is required to submit and defend the dissertation proposal (explained below).

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Grading

At the end of the oral examination, the Doctoral Committee will come to a determination regarding whether the student has passed or failed the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam. In general, the committee will inform the student shortly after the oral exam of its decision. Determination of the pass or fail grade will be made on the committee's assessment of the combined quality of the written exams, and the student's performance on the oral portion of the exam. In extraordinary cases, the committee may not be able to reach an immediate decision. In these cases, the committee may delay its decision for a period of up to one week, after which point the committee will provide a final decision, either passing or failing the student on the exam.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam: Failing grades

If a student fails the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination, she or he may retake the examination once within the following six calendar months. Note, however, that if the student has been receiving support as a Teaching Assistant, she or he is not guaranteed continued support. Students will make arrangements on an individual basis with the Graduate Officer should a retake be necessary. The primary responsibility to arrange for the scheduling of the exam resides with the individual student, who will work with the Chair of the Doctoral Committee. A second failure on the examination will result in termination of graduate student status in the Department.

Ph.D. Dissertation: Dissertation proposal

Upon successful completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam, the student will schedule a date for an oral presentation of his/her dissertation proposal. The oral presentation should take place during the semester immediately following the semester in which the student took the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination.

In consultation with the dissertation director, the student will prepare a dissertation proposal or prospectus of ten to fifteen pages (research agenda and bibliography inclusive). This proposal is then circulated among the members of the Doctoral Committee.

During the oral presentation of the dissertation proposal, which normally will last no longer than two hours, the Doctoral Committee will advise the student on how to proceed with the dissertation, make changes, or decide whether or not the student should continue with the proposed dissertation topic.

Ph.D. Dissertation: Research and Writing

After the comprehensive examinations and during the writing of the dissertation, the chair of the doctoral committee is the faculty member who will supervise the dissertation; there must be one member from another department at Penn State and three other faculty members from the Department of Spanish, Italian & Portuguese to complete the committee.

The dissertation director is normally the chairman of the doctoral committee, but not always. He or she is, however, always a member of the doctoral committee, as is the first reader. Both the director and the chair of the committee must normally be members of the Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese. Each Ph.D. committee must include a faculty member from another department at Penn State.

It is possible, in exceptional cases, for faculty from outside Penn State to be directors of a dissertation committee, but the chair must still be from within the department. This must be requested and justified via a letter and curriculum vitae of the scholar to the Head and the Graduate School. In the case of former Penn State faculty members who agree to continue as directors of a dissertation that was begun while they were still at Penn State, a similar arrangement is possible, as well as a co-chairing arrangement. Again, this must be justified in writing by means of a letter to the Head and to the Graduate School. In both cases, the department and the Graduate School must approve the request before the arrangement is put into effect, since there are funding considerations involved (e.g., travel by the outside director to attend the dissertation defense).

The dissertation must be written in English or in Spanish.

The candidate should be sure to consult the latest copy of the Graduate School Thesis Information Bulletin, which contains complete information on the dissertation format,

preparation, content constraints, etc. Thesis formatting templates are also available for standard word-processing software. Consult the Thesis Office of the Graduate School.

When, after taking into account committee suggestions, the director and committee members are satisfied with the thesis draft, the complete, revised thesis will be sent to each committee member.

Each member will make any suggestions he or she may have within two weeks of receiving the completed draft.

The director (or the doctoral committee chairman, if they are not the same) will then set a date for the final defense.

No dissertation defense will be scheduled until the entire committee has read the complete, revised thesis and agrees that it is in a final state, ready for defense, with only minor stylistic or editorial changes pending.

The Graduate School requires three weeks' advance notice to schedule a doctoral defense.

Both the thesis director and the student are responsible for assuring the completion of a draft of the thesis and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral examination.

The final dissertation defense is normally advertised and open to the public.

The examination is related in large part to the dissertation, but it may cover the candidate's whole program of study without regard to courses that have been taken here or elsewhere.

A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the members is required for passing.

If the candidate fails, it is the responsibility of the doctoral committee to determine whether another examination may be taken.

Copies of the dissertation are available to the public and are on file in the department as well as in Pattee Library.

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