

African Diaspora Studies Ph.D. Program Department of African American Studies Graduate Student Handbook

The Department of African American Studies offers a PhD in African Diaspora Studies that trains students to become independent researchers and educators who shed light on the conditions of Black life lived throughout the African Diaspora. We consider diaspora in its economic, social, cultural, political, and geographic dimensions through required and elective coursework. While our primary expertise is in preparing graduate students for careers in the professoriate, we also support and encourage students who choose different career paths to leverage their research, writing, and teaching skills in other professional fields.

Admissions Process

All applicants to the PhD Program must hold a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and must fulfill the requirements of the [Graduate Division](#) in addition to our departmental criteria for admission. We do not require or consider GRE scores in our review process. While it is not required, some applicants also hold a Master's Degree at the time of application. Admission and program requirements are the same for applicants holding Bachelors and Masters degrees. We accept applications only to the PhD program, although students who enter the program without an MA in African American or Africana Studies will sit for the oral MA exam, which covers the core requirements and basic texts in African American Studies, as part of the graduate curriculum.

Applications are typically due the first Monday of December, and must be submitted, along with all supporting materials (including letters of recommendation), through the online admissions portal. Our departmental review process is facilitated by the Head Graduate Advisor and the Graduate Student Affairs Officer. The Admissions Committee is comprised of a subset of faculty from the department and, at the discretion of the Head Graduate Advisor, may also include up to 2 (two) advanced graduate students. The committee reads all completed applications and evaluates them according to academic preparation, motivation to earn a degree in the field, demonstrated writing and research skills, and suitability of proposed research for our departmental and campus resources. A short list of candidates from the full applicant pool are invited to a brief interview with the admissions committee, and from that short list, the committee recommends candidates for admission to the program. Formal offers of admission come from the Graduate Division, not from the Department, after eligibility requirements are verified.

Students who are offered admission are typically offered teaching-based or hybrid teaching/fellowship-based funding packages. We are able to nominate a limited number of candidates for campuswide fellowships, which are decided upon by a committee appointed by the Graduate Division. (Note: this process of accessing multiyear fellowships funded by the campus is likely to change in either the Fall 2021 or Fall 2022 admissions cycles.) We strive to offer all admitted students a funding package that covers five years of study, and further strive to offer all graduate students in good standing funding beyond those five years as they continue to make timely progress toward their degrees.

Program Progression

Years 1 and 2: Coursework, development of faculty relationships, and the MA Exam

Entering students are assigned a faculty advisor who, along with the Head Graduate Advisor, will work with them to identify faculty most appropriate to their long-term needs and research interests. They are also encouraged to work closely with the department's Graduate Student Affairs Officer, Lindsey Villareal.

During the first two years, students must complete a minimum of 24 of the total required 48 units of graduate-level coursework, including the core requirements in the department. Half of these units must be earned through coursework within the African American Studies Department.. Coursework is intended to help students understand the breadth of work that is possible within the interdisciplinary field of African Diaspora Studies, develop methodological proficiencies that will support their research activities, clarify and deepen knowledge within their specific area of research, and to establish fruitful intellectual relationships within the graduate community and with faculty, both inside and beyond the Department. **Graduate units completed elsewhere are NOT usually transferred for the Ph.D. unless the Graduate Advisor decides that graduate course work done in other universities meets University and departmental requirements.** Students who have completed graduate level coursework at another campus may request credit for no more than four (4) semester or five (5) quarter units of 200 level courses. This approval will be granted on an individual basis and can only be applied if the courses were not used towards a previous degree.

Core Departmental Seminars

Students must complete at least one out of the three courses from the 201 series, plus AAS C375

- AAS 201A: Interdisciplinary Research Methods :This seminar will provide a detailed introduction and working knowledge of the various methodological techniques appropriate for interdisciplinary research on the African Diaspora.
- AAS 201B: Qualitative Research Methods: A review of competing epistemologies in qualitative research of African Americans.
- AAS 201D: Theories of the African Diaspora: This course is intended to provide students with an initial background for the composition of the position paper discussing the concept and study of African Diaspora necessary for passing department qualifying exams. It will introduce some of the theoretical frameworks for, and approaches to, scholarship concerning the African Diaspora.
- AAS C375: Critical Pedagogy (Required to GSI):The seminar provides a systemic approach to theories and practices of critical pedagogy at the university level. Examines the arts of teaching and learning and current disciplinary and cross-disciplinary issues in African/diaspora and Ethnic Studies. Participation two hours per week as practicum in 39, "Introduction to the University: African American Perspectives" is mandatory. The course is required for students expecting to serve as graduate student instructors in the department.

Students may also take courses in the Research Series, and/or enroll in Independent Reading Courses with African American Studies faculty, affiliated faculty, or other University faculty. The designated numbers for these courses are:

- AAS 296 Directed Dissertation Research
- AAS 299 Individual Study or Research*

Some faculty with joint appointments might offer independent study units under course numbers from their other departments; these will still count as departmental units.

*299 courses are taken as a S/U as a default unless approved by the Chair and a proposal must be submitted with the faculty signature before you enroll. Please make sure the faculty member you are working with knows that you are taking the course for a letter grade at the start of the term.

Petition for 299 course:

<https://africam.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Petition%20for%20299.pdf>

Please note: Students may not take more than 16 units of the total 48 units of coursework required towards the Ph.D. for a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade.

Affiliated Disciplines and Designated Emphases

Students may elect to take up to half (24 units) of their course work from affiliated disciplines that will enhance their training as a scholar in African Diaspora Studies. Units in Individual Study Courses: AAS 602 (usually taken when studying for the doctoral qualifying examinations) as well as Critical Pedagogy (AAS C375) count toward a full course load but NOT toward the course requirements for the degree.

Additionally, some students choose to pursue a Designated Emphasis (DE) in a field closely related to their research interests, in order to support their projects, and also to develop legible expertise in other disciplines that could prove useful on the academic job market in particular. Completing a DE typically involves applying and being admitted into the DE program; taking a limited number of authorized courses within that program; and including an approved faculty member who represents the DE's knowledge area on both your Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Committees. Students who choose to pursue a DE should be proactive about monitoring their requirements for both Departmental and DE program milestones to prevent unexpected delays on the path to the degree.

The Masters Examination in African American Studies

The M.A exam is an oral examination given during the spring semester of the second year in the program that tests the student's knowledge of the field of African American Studies. It is administered by three faculty members determined by the department. Students are eligible to take the M.A. examination only after completing the Core Requirements in the program, and after completing a minimum of 24 coursework units. Students must also fulfill all of the university-wide requirements for the M.A., which include at least one year of academic residency. The exam is graded on a pass/not pass basis. Students are informed of the examination results the same day the examination is taken.

The Masters Exam focuses on a reading list in African American Studies and African Diaspora Studies compiled by the department comprising texts that represent major intellectual strands in the field. Students are expected to read all texts on the list independently, though the department does offer an optional MA preparation course in alternating years that shares critical reading and synthesis strategies that are useful to this independent preparation.

Development of faculty relationships

In general, students are expected to use the first two years of coursework and participation in departmental activities to get to know faculty and their research areas in order to identify the specific faculty members who will offer the best professional mentorship and supervision at the doctoral level, in years 3 and beyond.

Year 3: Graduate Student Teaching and the Qualifying Exam

In the third year of the program, students should be solidifying their areas of doctoral research focus, preparing for and passing the Qualifying Exam, and gaining teaching experience (if they have not already).

Teaching Experience

As part of their training, all students will be expected to serve as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) for a minimum of one semester and a maximum of 8 semesters. (GSIships awarded for the Summer Session are excluded from this maximum.) Students receive their first GSI appointment no later than their third year in the program.

Students must be registered during the term in which they serve as GSIs, be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units, have a GPA of at least a 3.1, and have no more than two Incompletes at the time of their appointment. GSIs are eligible for partial fee remission and remission of the Graduate Student Health Insurance Plan (GSHIP) premium fee if their payroll appointment is at 25% time or greater for an entire semester.

Each spring semester, students are invited to indicate their interest in teaching opportunities within the department for the following academic year. The GSAO and Head Graduate Advisor then assign students to the available teaching opportunities. First-time GSIs are usually assigned to support larger-enrollment classes, where they will typically lead discussion sections that complement the primary lectures of the faculty member who is the Instructor of Record for the course.

Responsibilities generally include attendance at lectures, independent facilitation of one or two sections of discussion sections, grading course assignments (papers and exams), holding office hours, and general administrative tasks (e.g. procuring audio visual resources for lecture, making copies of handouts, helping to proctor makeup exams, etc.) in support of the course. Advanced graduate students have the opportunity to teach independently, typically as instructors in the Reading and Composition courses where they can develop syllabi in their area of research expertise. The Department attempts to place students in courses related to their research interests and keeping in mind their work load for the academic year. However, such placement is contingent upon available teaching opportunities. Moreover, students who submit their requests in a timely fashion are more likely to receive their top choices.

Note: Before you commit to serve as a GSI for a course YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE for

checking your own records to ensure that you have no more than two outstanding Incompletes. You should check directly in your CalCentral account. You should also check with faculty to ensure that necessary “Removal of Incomplete” forms have been filed upon submission of your work for completing the course. If it is discovered that you have more than two outstanding Incompletes, the Graduate Division will prohibit you from teaching. This will affect your financial support package and you will have missed opportunities to find other sources of funding. It will also place the Department in the position of having to find a replacement instructor at the last minute. The Department will not be responsible for finding replacement sources of financial support if you are prohibited from teaching due to eligibility issues.

Berkeley is fortunate to have extensive resources available to support GSIs: check out the [GSI Teaching and Resource Center](#) for valuable information about how to become an excellent teacher during your time at Berkeley (the [“Must-See Policies and Resources for GSIs”](#) page is especially useful). The Graduate Division Website also has extensive information about the [academic appointment](#) process. Finally, GSIs at Berkeley are unionized employees, whose terms of employment are outlined in a labor agreement with the University, the most current version of which is accessible at the [UC systemwide website](#).

Within the department, we have a Faculty Liaison for GSI Affairs, who is responsible for supporting graduate students when there are concerns about the terms and conditions of their work as GSIs within the department. This Liaison ensures that faculty understand and honor the rights and responsibilities of GSIs and can serve as a resource to ensure that the GSI experience is a productive element of students’ professional development.

Over the course of a student’s graduate career, they should seek to gain a breadth of teaching experience across the department’s undergraduate curriculum in order to develop a broad teaching portfolio. Some students seek out GSI opportunities in other academic departments in order to further expand their teaching experience.

In addition to academic year teaching appointments, there are limited opportunities for teaching during Summer Session, either as a GSI supporting a large enrollment course taught by a faculty member, or as the sole instructor of a course in their area of expertise (during summer session, these are not restricted to Reading and Composition courses). Students must be in good academic standing in order to apply for these summer teaching opportunities, which are vetted by the department’s Curriculum Committee.

Please note; students on Filing Fee status (a special, reduced-fee enrollment status used by some students in their final semester of dissertation writing) are not eligible for an ASE appointment.

Foreign Language Requirement

Demonstrated proficiency in a language other than English is required **in order to be eligible for the Qualifying Exam**. Students should be sure to select a language that will support their intended area of research, when necessary. This requirement may be fulfilled by one of the following means:

- Successful completion of four (4) semesters or six (6) quarters of college level courses (with a minimum grade of B) in a foreign language acceptable to the program. The student should have completed these courses within the last four (4)

years (which includes recent instruction in a previous degree program, such as ones BA or MA). *If these courses are taken during the student's time in the doctoral program, the units taken to fulfill the Foreign Language Requirement count towards a full course load but do not count toward the degree.*

- A 300 word translation examination (with 90 minutes to complete) administered by a faculty member. Students are allowed the use of a dictionary while taking the examination.

We strongly encourage students to satisfy this requirement as early as possible during their time in the program, in order to prevent this requirement from delaying progress toward the Qualifying Exam.

Qualifying Examination

The Ph.D. qualifying exam is designed to test the student's breadth and depth of knowledge in the field of African Diaspora Studies. The QE process should enable students to identify the socio-historical and theoretical origins of current debates in African Diaspora Studies and how canonical as well as more recent texts represent key interventions in those conversations. The QE also exposes students to the literature of and issues in their specific field areas. Students should have a broad familiarity with these key conversations/debates that will help them to imagine and develop their own distinct contributions to the discipline(s). Finally, the QE process prepares students to develop broad teaching fields and establish foundational knowledge for the dissertation.

Selecting Your Qualifying Examination Committee

A four-person committee is required. You must choose a QE Chair that is a faculty member within our department. This person plays a procedural role and is responsible for helping to coordinate the logistics of the exam, including setting a date for the oral portion of the exam and ensuring that the position papers are completed and reviewed in a timely manner. They will also facilitate the actual 3-hour exam and the submission of necessary paperwork post-exam. In addition to the committee chair, you must choose three Academic Senate faculty to serve as committee members with whom you will develop area reading lists. Two of these faculty members must be within the department, and one of them must be a faculty member from outside of the department. Please note that faculty with joint appointments in African American Studies and another department cannot serve as the outside members of your committee. One member of the committee must be designated as the Academic Senate Representative, and is responsible for seeing that the overall standards of quality and equity appropriate for the award of the Ph.D. are met. Any member of your committee may serve in this capacity.

The selection of members of your Qualifying Examination Committee cannot be made at short notice. You need to have established relationships with prospective Committee members before approaching them. In planning your coursework you should be thinking about establishing such relationships.

In very rare instances, students may wish to petition to have a faculty member from another UC campus or other institution serve as a member of their QE committee, when they can make the argument that there is no equivalent expertise on the Berkeley campus, and that such expertise is vital at the moment of academic preparation that the QE represents. These requests are first vetted by the Head Graduate Adviser, and then forwarded to Graduate Division for final approval.

Note: The Graduate Division prohibits the Chair of the qualifying examination from serving as the Chair of the student's dissertation committee, so the student should choose the qualifying

examination committee Chair with the dissertation committee in mind.

The Qualifying Examination process, including committee composition, is governed by a complex set of [policies from the Graduate Division](#) that cannot be reproduced in full in this Handbook. You are required to consult with the Graduate Advisor well in advance about permissible members in your committee before setting an exam date with the proposed Committee members or submitting an application form to take the Qualifying Examination. If you try to bypass this procedure or if you are too late in consulting with the Graduate Advisor, approval may not be granted for taking the Qualifying Examination as planned. This can cause considerable delays in your Advancement to Candidacy.

Qualifying Exam Part 1: Position Papers

Students are required to submit two written papers for approval by the QE committee. Each paper should be at least 25 pages long but no longer than 35 pages including notes and a detailed bibliography. In writing the papers, students are expected to build on the coursework that they have taken and on issues covered in preparation for the MA exam.

One committee member from inside the Department should be selected as the primary reader for each paper. Students should meet with the primary readers while developing each paper, sharing outlines and/or sections of writing and receiving feedback to confirm that the proposed writing will satisfactorily respond to the prompts below. Whenever possible, we encourage students to begin outlining at least one position paper during the summer before the academic year in which they plan to take the qualifying exam. The final drafts of both position papers must be submitted to all members of the committee at least four weeks before the exam date. We urge students to establish a schedule and delineate roles at the outset of the exam preparation process with your QE Committee Chair and members.

The First Paper—African Diaspora Studies: Theories, Concepts, Approaches, and/or Methodologies

The first paper is a field statement that defines African Diaspora Studies via the focus of the student's research. Most students find it productive to focus their written engagement with diaspora theory in one of two ways:

- 1) Diaspora as a process: This approach focuses on circulation, connection and the articulation of diaspora. What makes a diaspora? How do people belong to and connect with one another through this framework? What are the social, political, ethical, and/or economic structures that allow diasporic identities to be articulated, legible, and materially useful across space? How are notions of “the past”, “culture” and “identity” made, negotiated and contested, through such diasporic practices?
- 2) Diaspora as a condition: This approach focuses on comparative analysis of blackness and/or black experiences across two or more national contexts. What are the commonalities and differences of black experiences across geographic locations? For example, how does one understand the material workings of state violence against black subjects, or the development of racial capitalism, across different national contexts? How do unique national and colonial histories shape articulations of black identities, politics and/or cultural production?

In developing their papers, students must critically engage with different approaches to the study of the African Diaspora, from the perspectives of both single disciplines and interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary approaches, theoretically, analytically, and conceptually. Discussion and analysis must engage deeply with past and contemporary debates shaping the field of African Diaspora

Studies, and should offer a unique reading of the field.

The Second Paper—Area of Specialization

The second position paper should demonstrate comprehensive understanding of a field that is central to the student's intended dissertation research without being exclusively about the proposed research. In other words, what are 2-3 major themes or debates animating the broad area within which the student's work is located, and how did those debates or themes emerge? Writing this paper will help to identify the broad, interdisciplinary body of literature as well as some of the methodological approach/es that will ground the student's dissertation. Examples of effective areas of specialization are:

- Political Economy of Diasporic Subjects
- Social and Cultural Institutions [in different sites of the African Diaspora]
- Black Feminist Ethnography
- (Black) Visual Culture
- Race and Education
- (Black) Performance Studies
- African (American) Literature (Periodized)
- Black Queer Studies
- Black Feminist Theory
- Race and Digital Culture
- Black Geographies
- Race in Latin America

The Exam Fields Reading Lists

Of equal importance to the exam papers are the exam fields and associated reading lists. Students are required to prepare reading lists in at least three subject areas, including the general field of African Diaspora Studies and 2 areas of specialization. These can be understood as broad "teaching fields," organized around a set of general questions and arguments, areas of inquiry, and/or historical periods. The position papers should incorporate texts that appear on these reading lists. However, the lists should far exceed what the position papers directly address. Each list should have between 30 and 50 texts (on the higher end if several of the entries are essays or chapter excerpts from full-length texts, on the lower end if most of the entries are monographs). No more than 10% of reading list entries should be texts from students' prior coursework, as the QE reading process should be approached as an opportunity to expand one's knowledge in the subject areas.

Qualifying Exam Part 2: The Oral Exam

The oral exam is designed to ensure that the student is ready and able to undertake primary research for the dissertation. Through questioning about the papers and the exam field reading lists, the student will be expected to demonstrate mastery of convergent and divergent issues in African Diaspora Studies from the perspectives of both single disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches to the field.

Because of the challenges involved in coordinating multiple schedules, we encourage students conduct a poll in the fall in hopes of setting a target exam date for the late in the spring semester of your third year, and then working backwards from that date to set deadlines for completing the incremental work of writing and revision position papers on the path to their approval. It is often easier to postpone a confirmed date than to try to schedule one late in the spring semester after the

position papers have been approved.

No less than three (3) weeks before the proposed exam date, the student must make a formal [Application](#) for the Qualifying Exam to the Graduate Division. To be eligible to take the qualifying examination, in addition to having two approved position papers, the student must:

- be registered at the time of the qualifying examination
- complete all coursework; **students must have no more than two Incompletes at the time of the examination.**
- have satisfied the Foreign Language Requirement
- have completed one semester of GSIship
- fulfill all residency requirements as specified by the Graduate Division
- submitted any necessary paperwork and satisfied any other prerequisites for a Designated Emphasis with the respective DE advisor (if applicable).
- have submitted an “Application for the Qualifying Examination” to the Graduate Division and have received the Graduate Division’s approval.

The qualifying examination will last three hours and will be facilitated by the QE Committee Chair. The exam typically begins with a brief conversation with the student, in which the student is invited to share a brief statement of their intellectual development thus far in the program. The student is then excused from the conversation so that the committee members may have a brief discussion of the student’s preparation for the exam. The student is then invited back into the conversation to be questioned by each of their three field examiners. The student selects the order in which they would like to receive questions, and each examiner receives 20-30 minutes to pose questions to the student. The examiners may pose questions that are grounded in the position papers, or may ask questions more generally related to the reading list in their field. After the questioning period, the student is again excused from the conversation so that committee members can discuss the student’s performance in the exam and determine if the student has passed. The student is then brought back into the conversation and given feedback on their performance.

In the case of a passing exam, committee members use the final portion of the 3-hour exam to discuss next steps for moving forward with the student’s research proposal. In very rare instances, students do not pass the Qualifying Exam on their first attempt and must redo all or a portion of the oral exam. In these cases, the requirements and timeline for retaking part of the exam are clearly expressed in writing and registered with the Graduate Division, and the committee reconvenes as agreed upon in the terms of the Failed or Partially Failed exam report.

Years 4 and Beyond: Advancement to Candidacy and the Dissertation

The Dissertation Committee

The dissertation committee must have at least three members: 50% must be Academic Senate faculty from within the department, and at least one must be Academic Senate faculty from outside of the department. Under exceptional circumstances, students may petition for a committee that does not meet these requirements, but must include with their petition evidence of their efforts to compose a committee that meets departmental requirements. All such petitions will be evaluated and decided by the Head Graduate Adviser.

The chair of the dissertation committee plays a paramount role in the completion of the dissertation. Not only is it her/his responsibility to guide the student through all stages of the dissertation, but also to lend support to the student as they make the transition out of graduate

school and into the next phase of their career. It is common that dissertation chairs continue to write letters of reference throughout several stages of the student's subsequent career. The Graduate Division insists that "under no circumstances should a student be permitted to complete a dissertation that the dissertation adviser finds mediocre and that consequently prevents the adviser from writing a strong letter of support."

The Dissertation Prospectus and Prospectus Meeting

After passing the qualifying examination, students are required to submit a Dissertation Prospectus to members of the Dissertation Committee. The prospectus should be submitted no later than the end of the semester following the one in which the qualifying examination was passed. Members of the committee will discuss the prospectus with the student in a one-hour formal meeting. This is not another exam, but an opportunity for the Committee to evaluate the prospectus and to give suggestions on the proposed research project. If asked, the student must write a brief response to the points raised in the meeting and submit the response to Committee members. In some cases, the student may be asked to substantially revise the prospectus before it is approved. The prospectus is typically 12-15 single-spaced pages long, and contains an overview of the project and its theoretical framework as well as where it fits in the tradition of African American Studies research, a discussion of methodology, a clear indication of the data/evidence to be collected, an abstract of individual chapters, a preliminary bibliography, and a proposed timeline for completion.

Once the prospectus has been approved by the student's dissertation committee, the student can apply to the Graduate Division to [advance to candidacy](#) for the PhD Degree (Plan B).

Scope and Contents of the Dissertation

Each dissertation is unique. The student and the Dissertation Committee determine the specific contents of the dissertation, and most dissertations go through several drafts. The dissertation should be the result of original and/or creative work, based on substantial primary data collection, and be of publishable quality. One might think of the dissertation as the first draft of a book. Research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects before the student begins research. If the final dissertation includes "more than incidental use of previously published or co-authored material" then the student must have prior permission from the Dean of the Graduate Division to have the material included.

Filing the Dissertation

Graduate students must submit a complete draft of their dissertation to their entire committee well before the filing deadline of the term in which they plan to file (fall, summer, or spring) to ensure that committee members have the opportunity to engage in a meaningful review of materials and to provide time for necessary revisions before filing the dissertation. Beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, these internal circulation deadlines are:

To file in:

Fall
Spring
Summer

Circulate the full dissertation no later than:

November 1
April 1
July 1

Please note that these are the very latest dates that committee members can receive dissertation materials and be expected to have time to review and approve them for filing in each term. In individual circumstances, even these deadlines may not provide enough time for a faculty member to read and respond—they are within their rights to request materials earlier based on their work

calendars. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to work proactively with your committee members to establish and honor a timeline for sharing dissertation drafts at the very beginning of the term in which you hope to file the dissertation, if not earlier.

In addition, it is important to understand that committee members will not sign off on dissertations simply because a filing deadline is imminent, but rather because the submitted dissertation meets the standards of rigor that warrant the receipt of a doctoral degree. It is expected that unless a committee member has explicitly requested otherwise, the aforementioned late-semester deadlines will not be any committee member's first opportunity to read and respond to your work. Dissertation writing is an iterative process, and you should plan for a completion timeline that includes sharing multiple drafts of each chapter with your committee on the path toward filing the dissertation.

Once you have approval from your committee members, you may begin the formal filing process. Please consult Graduate Division for their exact [filing requirements](#) regarding formatting, forms, signatures, etc. You can also reference [filing procedures](#) here. Students must be registered, or on [Filing Fee](#), to file their dissertation: you can submit the form [online](#) in your Cal Central in the right bottom corner of your dashboard under the "forms" area. Once you have filed the dissertation, Graduate Division will verify that it meets their requirements, and that you have satisfied all requirements for graduation. Once this happens, you may [request a certification of completion](#) while you await your official diploma.

In addition to filing the dissertation with Graduate Division, we ask that you also provide a copy of the completed dissertation to the department.

All requirements for the Ph.D. should be completed within the normative time of six years of the student's entry into the graduate program. (Normative time has been extended by at least one year for students who were enrolled during the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021).

Enhancing your Graduate Experience

Financial Support

Teaching-related Support

As described above, the department offers a number of Graduate Student Instructorships.

Research-related Support

GSRs: Graduate Student Research Assistantships (GSRs) are not available on a regular basis; rather, they are available through individual faculty holding research grants. Occasionally GSR positions can be found with faculty and research institutions elsewhere on campus. The Department also has two GSR positions that are usually available on an annual basis: these positions are in the Reading Room (note: this position is in the process of being redefined), and as Editor of the *Diaspora* Newsletter. While they are not traditional research positions with an individual faculty member, they are classified as a GSR and can also serve as a means of financial support for students. These appointments are typically for the entire academic year and students can apply for them during the Spring semester for the upcoming academic year.

Departmental Support

Block Grants: The University awards "blocks" of money to the department to assist in financing students. The block grant money is used by the department to offset GSI fee remissions granted by

the University and to honor the terms of our stated financial offers made at the time of admission. The Head Graduate Advisor and Graduate Student Affairs Officer work together to determine how to distribute any block grant money that is not already committed to satisfying specific financial agreements. In addition to topping off stipends, block grant funds are used to support conference travel and, as we are able, to offer hardship funds. Students will be informed, during graduate meetings, on the procedure for applying for **hardship funding** via block grant money, if necessary. Hardship funding is only available during the Spring Semester after all GSI fees are paid. To ensure eligibility for Block Grant funding, the FAFSA application must be filled out and submitted annually.

Fellowships

There are a number of Fellowships available to students in the department:

Doctoral Completion Fellowship: Once a student has advanced to candidacy (i.e. passed the Qualifying Exam, held a dissertation prospectus meeting, and submitted appropriate forms to the Graduate Division), they are eligible for the Doctoral Completion Fellowship. This fellowship provides a two-semester stipend with no teaching requirements, and in-state tuition, and must be used by Normative Time to Degree (six years plus one year grace). There is no application process for the DCF, but to [activate the fellowship](#), the student must have a satisfactory or better Academic Progress Report on file from the most recent year after advancement. Students Must complete the [DCR \(Doctoral Candidacy Review\)](#) in Cal Central before activating the DCF.

When a student chooses to take the DCF often depends on the kind of dissertation research to be undertaken. For example, students whose projects require fieldwork might find it useful to take the DCF to support a year of non-resident research immediately following advancement to candidacy. Other students might choose to take the DCF to support a year of dissertation writing. Students should consult with their primary adviser and dissertation committee members to determine what will best serve their needs.

University Fellowships: These fellowships are merit-based awards that provide a stipend for living expenses, plus tuition and fees. Applications for fellowships are judged on the basis of the quality of previous academic work, evidence of ability to do research, and promise of becoming a productive scholar. Applications for University Fellowships have various due dates. Please check with the [Fellowship Office](#) and/or the Student Affairs Officer. The Fellowship Section of the Graduate Division is an excellent source of information for fellowships or dissertation research support.

Extramural Fellowships: Graduate Division maintains a [list of links](#) to information about extramural fellowships. The Student Affairs Officer will also circulate notices of extramural support whenever they are received.

Professional Development, Mentoring, and Departmental Engagement

There are a lot of wonderful professional development resources available to graduate students at Berkeley. Campuswide, [GradPro](#) offers workshops, writing groups, panels, and other activities that support graduate students pursuing a wide range of professional paths. Within the department, we supplement the professional development activities offered elsewhere with more field-specific support on topics of interest to our students, such as writing cover letters, preparing applications for fellowships, developing articles for publication, preparing lectures for large enrollment classes, etc.

On a more regular basis we offer advising support through the one-on-one faculty/student

mentoring relationships and monthly advising meetings for the entire grad community. In addition, we have an annual review process each spring semester in which students are asked to reflect upon their work in the past year, and share updates and intentions for the coming year. These reports are discussed by the whole faculty, and then individual faculty are meant to have follow up conversations directly with their advisees, sharing any relevant feedback, especially if there are causes for concern or affirmations of strong work.

Creating a community of scholars is essential to the success of our program and each graduate student's matriculation. There are several ways in which you can contribute to this academic and intellectual partnership. For example, advanced graduate students can volunteer to read graduate admissions applications. All graduate students can participate in organizing and presenting at the St. Clair Drake Symposium, serve as a Graduate Student Liaison for the Graduate Assembly, or serve as the Graduate Student Representative for the Department. For more information about these [positions](#), please see the Graduate Student Affairs Officer.

We also encourage you to participate in community building and outreach programs through mentoring undergraduates and high school students in both official and unofficial ways, participate in the Poetry for the People program, Prison Outreach, or other community-based programs that may pique your interest. These experiences are intended to enable you to directly contribute to the formation and evolution of the Department and prepare you for your future professional pursuits.

We look forward to supporting your intellectual development.

Suggested Timeline through the PhD Program

Year One:	Six courses (three each semester)
Year Two:	Fall Semester: three courses Spring Semester: three courses; MA Exam; Summer: Assemble a QE committee and draft preliminary lists; begin QE studying
Year Three:	Fall Semester: GSI; complete foreign language requirement; submit a draft of at least one QE paper to exam committee Spring Semester: GSI; revise QE papers according to committee feedback for final approval; schedule and take oral QE exam;
Years Four- Six:	Dissertation Prospectus Meeting; advance to candidacy Dissertation research and writing Sharing work via conferences and publications Seeking post-degree employment; graduation