

MLC Policy on Duration of Graduate Assistantship Support

Department of Modern Languages and Classics

(as formalized on March 11, 2010, and as redistributed to all graduate students on September 9, 2022)

The Department of Modern Languages and Classics wants all graduate students to achieve degree completion in a timely fashion, primarily for their own benefit so that they can make the transition to the professional world and achieve their own career goals with optimal dispatch, but also in order to more efficiently recycle assistantships so that a greater number of students have the opportunity to achieve their academic and professional goals. The policies stated below are not new and conform to reasonable expectations that have always been in place, but it is useful to have them formally restated.

Good academic progress is the condition sine qua non for holding any assistantship of any duration. In the following, the term “good academic progress” means, at the minimum, maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher and fulfilling academic requirements in a timely manner (accumulation of course credits, submission of a pre-prospectus, sitting for required exams, submission of a prospectus, submission of a thesis or dissertation, meeting with designated academic advisors during advising periods, etc.). Failure to do any of these things may result in loss of the assistantship. Likewise, poor performance in fulfilling any service duty or any teaching obligation that is associated with an assistantship may result in loss of the assistantship. Unwillingness to comply with the normal, reasonable directives of any Language Program Director who supervises GTAs or any other departmental administrator will result in the loss of the assistantship. Departure from standards and practices associated with good teaching, as well as inappropriate behavior in the classroom or in the execution of any assigned service duty, will result in loss of the assistantship. To insure compliance, all GTAs must thoroughly familiarize themselves with any guidelines provided by the respective Language Program Directors.

1. Assuming good academic progress and the availability of an undiminished number of assistantships, all MA candidates who have been awarded assistantships, regardless of the program or track, can expect two years (= 4 semesters) of support. Candidates should be careful to enroll for sufficient hours each semester so that the total required accumulation of hours for the particular MA degree and track is achieved within the two-year period of support. Furthermore, in all cases, the MA candidates, regardless of track, must accumulate 18 graduate hours by the end of the first year of enrollment, so that they will be ready to be placed in the classroom during their second year.
2. Assuming good academic progress and the availability of an undiminished number of assistantships, all PhD candidates who are awarded assistantships and who are able to transfer a substantial number of credits (usually approximately 30 hrs) from a prior MA degree earned at UA or elsewhere can expect, regardless of the program or track, four years (= 8 semesters) of support. The first two years will normally be dedicated to completing all required coursework, with the subsequent semester dedicated to the creation and defense of a prospectus (this is now incorporated into the qualifying exam structure for all PhD candidates), and with the remaining three semesters dedicated to the completion and defense of the dissertation. Candidates should be careful to enroll for sufficient hours of coursework each semester so that the total required accumulation of coursework hours for the PhD degree (60 hrs; 54 hrs for students having completed an MA thesis) is achieved within the first two years of support. During the semester devoted to the prospectus and during the subsequent three semesters devoted to

the completing of the dissertation, candidates should be careful to enroll for sufficient hours each semester so that the required accumulation of dissertation research hours (24) is achieved within the second two years of support.

3. Assuming good academic progress and the availability of an undiminished number of assistantships, all PhD candidates who are awarded assistantships and who are enrolling in the PhD program directly from an undergraduate degree, or who are not able to transfer any credits from a prior MA degree earned at UA or elsewhere (for example, if that degree was earned 6 or more years prior to enrollment in the PhD program), can expect, regardless of the program or track, six years (= 12 semesters) of support. The first four years will normally be dedicated to completing all required coursework, with the subsequent semester dedicated to the creation and defense of a prospectus (this is now incorporated into the qualifying exam structure for all PhD candidates), and with the remaining three semesters dedicated to the completion and defense of the dissertation. Candidates should be careful to enroll for sufficient hours of coursework each semester so that the total required accumulation of coursework hours for the PhD degree (60 hrs) is achieved within the first four years of support. Furthermore, in all cases, the candidates, regardless of track, must accumulate 18 graduate hours by the end of the first year of enrollment, so that they will be ready to be placed in the classroom during their second year. During the semester devoted to the prospectus and during the subsequent three semesters devoted to the completing of the dissertation, candidates should be careful to enroll for sufficient hours each semester so that the required accumulation of dissertation research hours (24) is achieved within the second two years of support.

4. Any newly admitted candidates or other enrollees whose situations do not correspond to the three typical scenarios described above will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate duration of support.

5. PhD candidates who have established a consistent record of good academic progress but are not able to complete the dissertation phase within the recommended time limit can make an appeal for an extended duration of support. If assistantships are readily available, such appeals will normally be looked upon favorably. However, priority will be given to qualified new applicants over candidates who have already enjoyed support for the normal duration.

6. Candidates who are accepted conditionally are at lower priority for receiving assistantships. In those instances where they do receive an assistantship, they must attain at least a 3.0 GPA during their first semester of enrollment (regardless of the number of hours for which they were enrolled) or else they will lose the assistantship, even though their probationary period is not over until a total of 12 hours have been achieved at a GPA of 3.0 or higher. This policy is campus-wide and is enforced by the Office of the Graduate School. Likewise, according to Graduate School policy, any candidate who was initially accepted unconditionally but whose GPA falls below 3.0 and who, as a result, receives an academic warning will not be eligible to hold an assistantship.

7. Except in those cases where the formal policy of the Office of the Graduate School takes precedence, the Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Classics is vested with all jurisdiction and makes the final determination regarding the awarding of all assistantships.