

## Department of Political Science Guidelines for MA Students

### Admission

1. The Master's program in Political Science may be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. The normal requirement for admission is English language proficiency sufficient to undertake graduate studies and an Honours BA (or equivalent) in Political Science with at least high second-class standing. This normally means a Carleton grade point average (GPA) of at least 9.0 (B+). For information on how we arrive at the GPA, go to "[how to apply](#)."
2. The Graduate Committee considers the GPA, and makes an evaluation of the letters of reference and the statement of interest. Of those applicants who meet the minimum requirements, the department accepts only the most qualified.
3. Students with a General Pass BA in Political Science are encouraged to complete an Honours BA either at their undergraduate university or at Carleton.
4. Honours graduates in fields other than Political Science are considered for admission, with particular attention given to their academic background and standing. Those with deficiencies in Political Science may be required to take one or two additional courses or to register in the Qualifying Year program, depending on the nature and extent of the deficiencies.
5. As a general rule, applicants that do not have the following number of Political Science credits on their transcript must take the Qualifying Year, rather than apply directly to the MA: 1.5 credits at the 4000 level; 2.0 credits at the 3000 level; 1.5 credits at the 2000 level. Discretion will be used for those applicants whose degree was in a field closely aligned with Political Science.
6. The Qualifying Year is intended only for those students (with at least an 8.0 grade point average) whose universities do not offer an Honours degree or for graduates in other fields who have little background in Political Science. The Qualifying Year program is not intended to be a method for improving a student's weak undergraduate record. Being admitted into the Qualifying Year does not guarantee being admitted into the MA program.
7. Students in their final year of a Carleton BA Honours degree in Political Science with a CGPA of at least 10.5 may qualify for an Accelerated Pathway to graduate study by completing up to 1.0 credit in PSCI courses at the 5000-level with a grade of B+ or higher. If subsequently admitted to the MA program, students who have successfully completed the Accelerated Pathway can receive advanced standing with transfer of up to 1.0 credit from their BA. However, participation in the Accelerated Pathway does not guarantee admission to the MA program.

8. To be considered for participation in the Accelerated Pathway students in the BA Honours degree in Political Science must complete an application at the end of their third-year. The application form is available at <http://carleton.ca/polisci/graduate/current-students-2/graduate-student-documents-and-forms/>. It is recommended that third-year students interested in the Accelerated Pathway consult with both the Undergraduate Supervisor and the Graduate Supervisor to determine if the option is appropriate for them and to discuss the selection of courses for their final year of undergraduate studies. Admission to the Accelerated Pathway is based on academic excellence, motivation and aptitude for research.

### **Course Requirements**

9. Master's candidates must complete the specified number of courses listed on their Statement of Standing on Admission. The normal program consists of 5.0 credits. Most courses are worth 0.5 credits and take place over one term. Some courses are 1.0 credit and take place over two terms.

10. The MA program provides three options for meeting the course requirements:

- Option A: 3.0 credits of courses plus a thesis (PSCI 5909, which carries the weight of 2.0 credits);
- Option B: 4.0 credits of courses plus a research essay (PSCI 5908, which carries the weight of 1.0 credit); or
- Option C: 5.0 credits of coursework.

11. It is anticipated that candidates will enter having taken some political theory at the undergraduate level, regardless of their desired field of specialization. Those who have not will be required to take PSCI 5310 History of Political Thought. This 0.5 credit counts toward the normal MA program requirements of 5.0 credits.

12. It is anticipated that candidates have completed a social science research methods course at the undergraduate level, regardless of their desired field of specialization. Those who have not will be required to take PSCI 5700 Basic Research Methods or PSCI 5705 Approaches to the Study of Political Theory. This 0.5 credit counts toward the normal M.A. program requirements of 5.0 credits.

13. Courses will normally be taken at the 5000 level. A maximum of 1.0 credit is permitted at the 4000-level. It is not advisable for MA students to take 6000-level classes. Any requests for exceptions must be made to the Graduate Supervisor.

14. Students may take a maximum of 1.0 credit outside of the Department of Political Science in courses that are of a related discipline. Questions on whether a particular

course is acceptable should be directed to the Graduate Supervisor prior to registering for the course to ensure the credit will count towards the degree.

15. Students may request permission to include directed reading courses (PSCI 5900 or PSCI 5901) as part of their program. Permission is required from both the Graduate Supervisor and the professor with whom the tutorial will be taken. Students must complete a [Tutorial Approval Form](#). A detailed course outline must be attached to the form. No more than 1.0 credit in tutorials can go towards the MA degree requirements.

### **Thesis or Research Essay**

16. Students may choose to write a thesis or research paper as part of their degree (option A or B above).

17. The MA thesis presents the results of original research while the MA research essay is based on secondary research. As a guideline and depending on the method employed, a thesis is usually longer (80-100 pages) than the research essay (65-80 pages). In addition, the thesis is usually more ambitious in constructing or testing theory. Additional details on the distinctions between a thesis and a major research paper: [masters thesis essay guidelines](#).

18. Students choosing the thesis or research essay options will select a supervisor, preferably by April of the first year. **The Graduate Supervisor is available for consultation on this selection if needed. The MA supervisor should be a full-time or cross-appointed faculty member in the Department of Political Science. Requests for exceptions must be made in writing to the Graduate Supervisor.** As soon as this selection has been made, the student must inform the Graduate Administrator so that the faculty member's name can be entered into the Departmental records.

19. The examining board for the research essay consists of the supervisor and another examiner who is usually a faculty member of the Political Science Department. The essay will be assigned a letter grade once both readers have read the final document and reached an agreement on the grade. Once the grading forms have been completed and signed by the two readers, the student will submit one unbound copy of the essay, along with a signed "License to Carleton University" form, to the Graduate Administrator.

20. If the thesis option is chosen, a second member of the faculty is selected by the student in consultation with the supervisor. This is done early, well before the paper is completed. This faculty member and the supervisor constitute the thesis advisory committee.

21. There is an oral defence of all MA theses. The examining board consists of the supervisor, the second member of the advisory committee, an external examiner from outside the department, and a chair. An examination is scheduled when the Committee is

satisfied that the thesis is ready for defence. Arrangements for the scheduling of the thesis defence must be made through the Graduate Administrator.

22. An electronic copy of the thesis MUST be submitted to the Graduate Administrator and uploaded in Carleton Central under E-Thesis. Details can be found at: <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/>. The Graduate Administrator will schedule a date for the defence no sooner than four weeks after the date of the submission of the thesis. The electronic copy of the thesis is distributed by the Graduate Administrator to the members of the examining board. Should a member require a hard copy, it is up to the student to deliver this copy to this member or the Graduate Administrator and to pay for any expenses associated with this.

23. A thesis may be “accepted as submitted”, “acceptable after minor corrections and modifications”, “acceptable after major modifications” or “rejected”. In addition, the thesis is awarded a grade of “Pass with Distinction”, “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory”. The oral defence is also graded “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory”.

24. The board determines the result at the time of the examination and the Chair of the board notifies the student orally at once, to be confirmed in writing later. The examining board may ask the student to make certain modifications. Once the modifications have been approved by the supervisor, a final copy of the thesis must be submitted to Graduate Studies via the Electronic Thesis Deposit System.

25. Students whose work involves research with human subjects (questionnaires, interviews, or archival research on living subjects, for example) must gain the approval of the Carleton University Research Ethics Board before they begin their research. Details can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/humanresearchethics/submit-an-application/>

26. After initial registration in PSCI 5909 or PSCI 5908, students (full-time or part-time) must maintain this registration in all successive terms until the thesis or research essay is completed, including the term in which the thesis or research essay is defended.

### **General**

27. Master’s candidates must obtain at least B standing (grade point average of 8.0). Note that this GPA includes any undergraduate courses that are taken because of program deficiencies. A maximum of 1.0 credit (one full course or two half courses) at the B- level can be counted toward the degree. One grade of C+ for 0.5 credit may be allowed to count toward the degree.

28. Full-time master’s candidates must complete their degree requirements within six terms of registered full-time study and within an elapsed period of two calendar years after the date of initial registration. Master’s candidates who elect to complete their program by a combination of full-time and part-time study are governed by the following elapsed-time

limitation: five calendar years if the candidate is registered as a full-time student for two or three terms and part-time for the balance; four calendar years if the candidate is registered four or five terms as a full-time student and part-time for the balance.

29. All graduate students must apply to graduate online at [Carleton Central](#) by **APRIL 1** for Spring Graduation, **AUGUST 31** for Fall Graduation, and **NOVEMBER 30** for Winter Graduation.

### **Co-op Option**

30. A co-op option is available to full-time students in the MA in Political Science program. Students are eligible to undertake a co-op placement after having completed a minimum 2.5 credits of their program.

31. The deadlines are as follows to submit an application through the University's [Co-op and Career Services office](#):

- August 31st for those students doing their job search in the fall term for a first work term in winter;
- December 31st for those students doing their job search in the winter term for a first work term in summer;
- April 30th for those students doing their job search in the summer term for a first work term in fall.

32. If they so wish, first year students may apply for co-op by December 31st of their entry year for a work term the following summer. Acceptances will be on the condition that they will have completed 2.5 credits of their MA program by the end of the winter term.

33. Students admitted to the co-op option must satisfactorily complete two work terms in order to graduate with a co-op designation on their transcripts. While on a work term the Co-op Office will register students in PSCI 5913.

34. Work terms are four months in duration and locate students in government departments or other organizations in order to work at a junior officer level. The coordination of the work terms is done by the University's Co-op office.

### **Dual Master's Degree Pathway**

35. Full-time MA students in Political Science may apply for admission to the Dual Master's Degree Pathway offered in cooperation with the [Department of Political Science \(Politikwissenschaftliches Seminar\)](#) at the [University of Lucerne in Switzerland](#). Upon successful completion of the Dual Master's Degree Pathway students receive diplomas from Carleton University and from the University of Lucerne, each mentioning the partner institution and the Dual Master's degree mode of study. Students can apply for admission

to the Dual Master's Degree Pathway upon admission to the MA program in Political Science or at the beginning of their first term.

36. Students admitted to the Dual Master's Degree Pathway will spend two terms (or equivalent) studying at the University of Lucerne (usually the winter and summer terms of their first year). In their second year of study, they will write a Master's thesis supervised by an advisory committee composed of one faculty member from the Carleton Political Science Department and one from the Department of Political Science at the University of Lucerne. By permission of the Graduate Supervisor, Carleton students in the Dual Master's Degree Pathway may alternatively write a major research essay jointly evaluated by one faculty member each from the two participating departments. The language of instruction and examination in the Dual Master's Degree Pathway (including for courses offered at the University of Lucerne) is English. The specifics of the Dual Master's Degree Pathway are regulated by the Dual Master's Degree Agreement between Carleton and the University of Lucerne. Further information can be obtained from the Associate Graduate Supervisor.