

## **U. Iowa Department of Philosophy – Statement of Normative Progress to the Ph.D. –**

**PREAMBLE:** The following is an extremely informal statement of normative progress to the degree of Ph.D. in Philosophy at the University of Iowa. It is in no way intended to replace or supplant official Philosophy Department rules and regulations.

### **First year of Graduate School**

#### **Fall semester of first year:**

This is my first semester of graduate school. Unless I am working as a teaching assistant, I should be enrolled in three or four graduate-level philosophy courses. At this pace I will be able to satisfy all of my course requirements by the end of the spring semester of my third year.

As this is my first semester, I have not necessarily settled on a specialization or dissertation topic. I should therefore select my courses with an eye to (1) my philosophical interests and (2) whether or not the courses satisfy distribution requirements. Roughly speaking, I need to take three courses in the area of metaphysics and epistemology, two courses in the area of philosophy of math/philosophy of science/logic, three courses in the history of philosophy, and two courses in ethics. That adds to 10 courses. If I take 6-8 graduate level courses in my first year, 4-6 in my second year (where there might be a reduced load as a result of teaching responsibilities), and 2-4 in my third year, that will add to 12-18 courses. I need to keep in mind that of these courses, three will need to be seminars (courses at the 200-level). I also need to keep in mind that I will need to take a few extra courses in my area of concentration (which is secondary to my eventual area of specialization), though I don't really need to think of any of this until later. There is a checklist that I can acquire from the Director of Graduate Studies that will help me to keep tabs on this.

Another thing that I need to keep in mind is that I can only take a grade of "Incomplete" with instructor approval and that different faculty members have different policies on giving incompletes. If I do take an incomplete, the instructor and I set a date by which leftover work will be completed, and I need to finish the work by that date. Another thing to keep in mind is that I cannot advance to candidacy (normally in the fourth semester) if I have any incompletes on my record. I should also note that, depending on the amount of time involved in completing leftover work, some faculty may regard as different achievements a grade that replaces a grade of "Incomplete" and the same grade earned straightaway.

The first thing that I want to do at the start of this and every semester is to meet with my assigned advisor to schedule my courses for the semester and to talk about distribution requirements, a possible trajectory of study, etc. As the semester gets underway I will want to meet with my professors (in office hours and by appointment) to talk through course material and to engage in discussions that will help to locate the seeds of possible paper topics for each course. Faculty members tend to keep their doors open in the department, so it will be easy to go and visit them.

### **Spring semester of first year:**

I have satisfied some of my distribution requirements. This semester I will enroll in courses that satisfy other distributions requirements but that also mesh with interests I may have developed from the courses that I took in the fall.

The first thing that I want to do at the start of the semester is to meet with my assigned advisor to talk about my courses for the semester, my interests, and a possible trajectory of study. As the semester gets underway I will want to meet with my professors (in office hours and by appointment) to talk through course material and to engage in discussions that will help to locate the seeds of possible paper topics for each course.

## **Second year of Graduate School**

### **Fall Semester of second year:**

I am about half-way to satisfying my distribution requirements. On thing that I want to start thinking about is that later I will be declaring an area of specialization and an area of concentration. The area of specialization will reflect the work that I end up doing on my dissertation. I need to take at least three courses in the area of specialization. The area of concentration is a secondary area. I will choose one area of concentration from among the following: metaphysics and epistemology; ancient and medieval philosophy; modern philosophy; logic, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mathematics; and value theory. To select metaphysics and epistemology as my area of concentration, I will have to have completed a total of five courses in metaphysics and/or epistemology (which would mean two such courses in addition to the regular distribution requirements); to select ancient and medieval philosophy, I will have to have completed at least four courses in ancient and/or medieval philosophy; to select modern philosophy, I will have to have completed four courses in modern philosophy; to select logic, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mathematics, I will have to have completed four courses in logic, philosophy of science, and/or philosophy of mathematics; and to select value theory, I will have to have completed four courses in value theory. So, I will want to start choosing my courses as a function of whether or not they satisfy distribution requirements and as a function of whether or not they will fulfill the additional requirements for my area of concentration.

The first thing that I want to do at the start of the semester is to meet with my assigned advisor to talk about my courses for the semester and my trajectory of study. As the semester gets underway I will want to meet with my professors (in office hours and by appointment) to talk through course material and to engage in discussions that will help to locate the seeds of possible paper topics for each course.

### **Spring Semester of second year:**

I am continuing to take courses to satisfy distribution requirements. Note that this is the semester in which the department meets to decide whether or not I advance to Ph.D. candidacy. Achieving this status is a pre-condition for selecting a comprehensive examination committee (CEC) advisor and for planning to take the comprehensive exam (which I will take in my third year).

The first thing that I want to do at the start of the semester is to meet with my assigned advisor to talk about my courses for the semester, my interests, and my trajectory of study. As the semester gets underway I will want to meet with my professors (in office hours and by appointment) to talk through course material and to engage in discussions that will help to locate the seeds of possible paper topics for each course.

## **Third year of Graduate School**

### **Fall Semester:**

There are at most a couple of courses left for me to satisfy all of my distribution requirements. I should also make sure that I have selected an area of concentration and that I have informed the Director of Graduate Studies of my selection.

This is the semester in which I should be thinking very seriously about whom I would ask to be my CEC advisor. One option (and this is highly recommended) is to do a readings course with a prospective advisor. Note that I should feel free to switch to another advisor if that would best suit my interests. I will take the comprehensive exam at the end of the spring semester of my third year, or during the summer, or early in the Fall semester of my fourth year.

### **Spring Semester:**

This semester I want to make sure that I have completed the courses for my area of concentration. This is also the semester in which I begin to make arrangements to take the comprehensive exam later in the semester or in the summer. I can make the necessary arrangements to take the exam even if I have not finished all of my coursework requirements.

The necessary arrangements that I need to make to take the comprehensive exam are as follows. Early in the semester, I obtain the "Application for the formation of a Comprehensive Examination Committee" form from the department office and arrange to meet with my CEC advisor to fill it out. I give the completed form to the Director of Graduate Studies who, in consultation with my CEC advisor and me, will finalize my Comprehensive Examination Committee. As the semester proceeds, I work with my CEC advisor to assemble the list of topics and questions that will serve as the basis for my comprehensive exam. When the list of questions is ready, I arrange a meeting to have it approved by the comprehensive examination committee. At this meeting I also finalize a date for the exam, to be taken in the next two to six months. For example, if I am taking the exam at the end of August, I can schedule the meeting as early as the end of February, but no later than the end of June.

## **Fourth year of Graduate School**

### **Fall Semester:**

I should complete the dissertation prospectus over the summer between my third and fourth year, or early in the fall of my fourth year. The dissertation prospectus should to some extent fall out of the issues addressed in the comprehensive exam. To write the dissertation prospectus is in effect to start writing the dissertation.

To complete the dissertation prospectus requirement, I need to have a meeting at which my dissertation committee determines whether or not the prospectus is in order. The dissertation committee is in most cases identical to the comprehensive examination committee that was formed in the process of arranging to take the examination. The dissertation advisor usually is, but need not be, the CEC advisor. One thing that I want to do during the fall of my fourth year is to settle on my dissertation advisor.

NOTE: If I pass the comprehensive exam, I sign up for thesis hours for my remaining three semesters. I need to have 72 total hours of graduate credit in order to graduate, but I will have completed only 42-60 by the end of my third year. Also, there is a graduate college residency requirement that I must meet after I have completed my first 24 hours of graduate study. The requirement is that I be enrolled for two additional semesters of 9 hours of coursework each, or for three semesters of 6 hours of coursework if I am a T.A.

NOTE: If I would like to be considered for a Seashore-Ballard dissertation fellowship (for my fifth year), I need to make this known to the Director of Graduate Studies in the December of my fourth year. In addition, by the end of January I would need to submit a clean version of my dissertation prospectus for departmental consideration. I submit the prospectus to the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Spring Semester:**

I am writing my dissertation.

**The summer after my fourth year:**

I am writing my dissertation. Sometime during the summer or, at the latest, very early in the Fall I need to have a discussion with my dissertation advisor about preparing for the job market. The initial job ads come out in mid-October. My dissertation does not need to be finished for me to apply for jobs. I will need to be finished by the end of the Spring semester of my fifth year, however, which would leave 1½ - 2 years for writing the dissertation.

**Fifth year of Graduate School**

**Fall and Spring Semesters:**

I am writing the dissertation with the expectation of finishing this year. In order to file the dissertation at the end of the Spring, I need to enroll in Doctoral Final Registration hours for the Spring semester. Details on signing up for these are in the Department Office.

NOTE: I have an expectation of being assigned 10 semesters of funding in total. If I received a fellowship for my first year, I have an expectation of funding through the end of my fifth year of study.

**n<sup>th</sup> year of Graduate School**

**Fall and Spring Semesters:**

I am still here. If I write 8 pages per month, I have a 192-page dissertation in two years. I should talk with faculty about strategies for completing the dissertation.