

Requirements for Ph.D. Degree

Requirements for Graduation

Having matriculated into the GIRS's Ph.D. Program, the Academic Committee of the GIRS appoints a faculty academic advisor to serve as a mentor for students during their period of study. During this period of study, students must fulfill the following academic requirements:

1. To select a Major and Minor field of study.
2. To fulfill 24 academic credits.
3. To complete the language requirement.
4. To pass the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations in good standing.
5. To pass the Ph.D. Oral Examinations in good standing.
6. To enroll in a period of overseas exchange study.
7. To participate and present research at an internationally-recognized academic colloquium or to publish two articles in an internationally-recognized academic journal.
8. To complete the Academic Internship.
9. To complete the Ph.D. Dissertation defense in good standing.

Major and Minor Fields of Study

Having matriculated into the GIRS Ph.D. Program in Religious Studies, Ph.D. students must select their fields of Major and Minor studies from the three areas of "Religious Traditions," "Theories of Religion," "Religions and Culture." If the student should select "Religious Traditions" as the field of Major study, he/she must select two religious traditions from the field of "Religious Traditions." Apart from study of "Religious Traditions," the student might select either of the two religious traditions to engage in comparative study. If the student should select "Theories of Religion" as his/her field of Major study, then he/she might elect for "Religious Traditions" as his/her area of Minor specialization.

Required Academic Credits

1. Ph.D. students must complete 24 credits of coursework, including 6 credits from required curricula and 18 credits from elective coursework. Those who have not previously read a degree in the field of Religious Studies should complete the pertinent M.A. Program coursework “Religious Traditions” and “Theories of Religion.” This coursework is not counted towards credits for graduation.
2. Following approval by the GIRS head and the student’s academic advisor, Ph.D. students may pursue coursework in other NCCU departments/institutes or departments/institutes at other universities, although no more than 6 credits may be counted toward credits for graduation.
3. Credits from coursework at other institutions may not offset credits from required coursework.

Language Requirements

1. Before submitting their Ph.D. Dissertation Prospectus, students must fulfill relevant language requirements.
2. All Ph.D. students must complete Chinese and/or English equivalency examinations.
 - a. Achieving a score of 100 or higher on IBT-administered online TOEFL examination.
 - b. Achieving an intermediate or advanced level on National English Proficiency Exam.
 - c. Testing above a level 7 on the IELTS International English Exam.
 - d. Achieving above FCE certification on the Cambridge Certificate English Proficiency Exam.
 - e. Completing two or more semesters of courses relating to Religious Studies taught in English.
3. Those who pursue to the Major field of “Religious Traditions,” must fulfill the language requirements for a second foreign language as it pertains to their field of study.
4. If the student should select as their Major Chinese Religions or Taiwanese Religions within the field of “Religious Traditions,” “Theories of Religion,” “Religion and Culture,” he/she must fulfill the relevant requirements for study of a second or third foreign language.

5. Normally, students study German, French, and Japanese to fulfill the requirements for the second or third foreign language; the study of other foreign languages is determined by the GIRS Head and the academic advisor.
6. In order for the GIRS to authorize study of and certify Ph.D. students' proficiency in Classical Languages, English, and second foreign languages, students may select one of the following methods:
 - a. Achieve an intermediate level of above on any officially-recognized foreign language proficiency examination.
 - b. Pass an exam on a foreign language or classical language administered by the GIRS
 - c. Demonstrate academic credits from four or more semesters of foreign or classical language study.

※The GIRS foreign language exams are held only once per semester. Students may apply in accordance with the announced time for exam administration.

Ph.D. Qualifying Exams

1. Having fulfilled the relevant language requirements, Ph.D. Students may apply for the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations. Examination fields include three areas, and the administration of each examination takes around four hours:
 - a. Basic knowledge pertaining to the study of World Religions
 - b. General Field: Issues in Religious Studies, and Methodology of Comparative Religion.
 - c. Major Field: the student's field of primary specialization.
2. When applying for the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations, eligible students must first consult with their academic advisors in order to determine the body of materials relevant to the exam content, and furnish a descriptive abstract of this content in order to aid in exam preparation and for perusal by the faculty members comprising the Qualifying Exam committee.
3. There are two periods for application for the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations each year, in June and April. The specific date for the exam is determined by the GIRS Head in consultation with the student.
4. A passing grade within each domain of the Qualifying Exam is 70 points. If the student should fail to pass the exam, he/she may apply to retake the

exam the following semester or the following academic year. Students may retake the exam only once. When the student re-sits the exam the exam fields remain unchanged. If the student should fail to attain a passing grade the second time, he/she may seek academic leave.

Ph.D. Dissertation Prospectus Oral Examination

1. In cooperation with their academic advisor, eligible Ph.D. students shall finalize their Ph.D. Dissertation Prospectus, and after gaining approval for the proposed doctrinal thesis project from the academic committee, they may then commence the formal process of composing the Doctoral Dissertation.
2. In principle, the Ph.D. Dissertation Prospectus shall assume the form of a five-thousand to eight-thousand character document (including bibliography), outlining the basic issues and authorial motivations behind the applicant's particular thesis topic. The Prospectus should also include: literature review, theoretical applications, methodology, structure/chapter layout, and bibliography.

Overseas Academic Exchange

1. After having submitted the Doctoral Dissertation Prospectus, or at least after having passed the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination, in order further develop their expertise in their field of research and to refine the direction of their Ph.D. Dissertation research, Ph.D. students make use of the opportunity to conduct research overseas through Academic Exchange.
2. Students normally seek opportunities for exchange study at participating Sister Universities or Academic Institutes that provide programs or offer resources relevant to the student's area of Ph.D. Dissertation research.
3. Funding for overseas study is usually provided by such fellowship organizations as the National Science Council (NSC), R.O.C. Taiwan Ministry of Education, or other intramural and extramural sources.

To participate and present research at an internationally-recognized academic colloquium or to publish two articles in an internationally-recognized academic journal.

Academic Internship

During their period of study, in cooperation with two or more faculty members of the GIRS or faculty of other NCCU departments, Ph.D. Students shall familiarize themselves with and assist in the process of preparing course materials, delivering lecture or discussion groups, computer-assisted research tasks, in the editing and grading of academic reports or exam papers, or in other various related tasks.

Ph.D. Dissertation Oral Examinations

1. Students that qualify for the Ph.D. Dissertation Oral Examinations, may apply to administer the exam at any point during the academic semester, the one requirement being that the prospective student arrange to sit the Oral Examination prior to the commencement of the summer or winter holiday. Applicants must fill out an application form, and supply three to four bound copies of the Dissertation application materials are submitted to the GIRS Administration Office.
2. The format for the Ph.D. Dissertation Examination assumes the form of an open oral examination.
3. The composition of the faculty committee for the Ph.D. Dissertation Oral Examination may be formed of from 2 to 4 faculty members, not including the student's thesis advisor. Among these faculty members, there may be no more than one-third representation by faculty from other institutions. The selection of faculty members with qualifications not equivalent to Assistant Professor, must be approved by the GIRS head.
4. The grades for the Ph.D. Dissertation Examination range from seventy points and above for a passing grade, to one hundred points for a perfect grade. These marks are administered by attendant faculty in the committee. If more than one-half of participating faculty on the committee submit non-passing marks, the Ph.D. Thesis Examination will be scored as a non-passing grade. Faculty deliberations occur only once.
5. Students failing to achieve a passing mark on the M.A. Thesis Examination are granted the right to continue study for additional semesters, and are permitted to re-apply to sit the Thesis Examination no more than once.