

The Graduate Student Handbook

For additional information and application forms, write to:

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For additional information or assistance on the equal opportunity, affirmative action and harassment policies of the University or information on Title IX, ADA or 504, please contact

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, is staffed by faculty representing a broad range of literary, linguistic, and cultural specialization's. The Department is an integral part of the Russian and East European Center, one of the leading centers of Slavic and East European studies in the United States. An outstanding feature of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is its library, containing over seven million volumes and 94,000 current serials. Its Slavic

collection, numbering almost 600,000 titles in Slavic and East European languages, over 120,000 in Western languages, and over 14,000 serial titles, is one of the two or three largest such collections in the country. Every summer over two hundred Slavists from this country and from abroad come to Illinois to avail themselves of this excellent resource and to take part in a variety of scholarly and cultural activities known as the Illinois Summer Research Laboratory.

The Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures cooperates closely with other units within the Russian and East European Center, as well as other units on campus, particularly the Program in Comparative Literature, the Department of Linguistics, the Unit for Cinema Studies, and the Language Learning Laboratory.

The CIC Exchange Program, an exchange program among Midwestern universities, may be useful to students with a special interest in an area of Slavic studies more strongly represented at another institution.

The University of Illinois is a member of the Cooperative Russian Language Program Consortium administered by the Council of International Educational Exchange. The Consortium offers summer, semester, and academic-year Russian language programs in St. Petersburg and other Russian cities.

The University of Illinois operates its own study abroad program at St. Petersburg University, catering primarily to students with one to three years of prior study of Russian. This program offers an opportunity for senior graduate students to serve as program directors in St. Petersburg.

The University of Illinois, one of the nation's leading state universities with some 35,000 students on its Urbana-Champaign campus, is located in the twin cities of Urbana and Champaign, some 150 miles south of Chicago. The size and location of the community offer the advantage of small-town life with the cultural and recreational opportunities of a large metropolitan center. Particularly noteworthy is the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, a complex of four theaters, plus an outstanding concert hall, under one roof.

Housing for graduate students is available in several graduate dormitories and in the married housing complex, as well as in the community at large.

Scheduled course work is regularly supplemented by guest lecturers sponsored by the Department and the Center, and by various lecture and film series sponsored by cognate departments and units. Students have the opportunity to participate in the Russian Folk Orchestra, as well as the Russian Club, the Ukrainian Student Association, the Polish Club, the Baltic Students Association, and more than 500 scholastic, professional, social, and religious organizations

-serving the needs and interests of the academic community. There is also an independent Russian house, housing both undergraduate and graduate students.

II. ADMISSION

The Graduate College considers for admission only those applicants who hold, or will be granted at the end of the current academic year, a baccalaureate, MA, or equivalent degree comparable to that granted by the University of Illinois, and whose admission average is at least 3.0 (A=4.0). Admission averages are computed from the last sixty hours of undergraduate work and any graduate work completed. GRE scores are required for all student, TOEFL scores for foreign students.

Students applying to the Department are expected, in addition to the Graduate College requirements, to have had a minimum of three (preferably four) years of college-level Russian, or comparable proficiency, as well as course work in Russian literature.

Students' Russian language proficiency is tested immediately after arrival on campus through a departmental Advanced Proficiency Exam (A.P.E.) in Russian. Students who do not pass are required to take appropriate remedial courses. All students must pass this exam before any advanced degree can be awarded or teaching assistantship assigned.

Students enrolling at the University of Illinois with Master of Arts degrees in other fields are subject to a Qualifying Examination. It will be given together with the other graduate degree examinations. It is given twice a year, in November and April. This examination must be passed by the end of the second semester of full-time study in the Department.

To be admitted, students who are not native speakers of English must take and pass the TOEFL examination (Test of English as a Foreign Language). They may be required to take, after enrolling, additional English language courses in the Division of English as an International Language.

III. MASTER OF ARTS IN SLAVIC LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE

A. General Requirements

In addition to fulfilling the general requirements of the Graduate College (8 units, 3 of which must be at the 400 level), students must pass an examination that includes both written and oral sections and that is based on the courses taken by the student and/or on a departmental reading list. All members of the MA committee must approve the questions on the written examination. Students who perform well on the written examination may, at the discretion of the examiners, be excused from the oral examination.

B. Course Requirements

All Students must complete two graduate (300- and 400-level) courses in Russian literature, as well as, two graduate courses in Slavic linguistics with a grade of B or better in each. With the approval of the advisor, up to one unit of course work in a related field outside the Department may be counted toward the degree sought.

C. Examination Procedures

1. Students are encouraged to take the M.A. examination as soon as possible after they have completed eight units of course work, and are expected to complete the course requirements within two (2) years.
2. Written examinations are normally given once each semester, in November and April. The oral examination is given approximately two weeks later.
3. The Committee for the M.A. examination will consist of not fewer than three faculty members, representing the three areas covered by the M.A. written examination. Two of the committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty. All written questions will be submitted by the exam committee. Additional faculty will not submit written questions. The committee will be chaired either by the Graduate Advisor for Linguistics, or the Graduate Advisor for Literature, depending on the student's main area of interest. If a minor is given, additional faculty will be named to the committee.
4. The MA written examination consists of three one-hour parts. Part one will cover Slavic Linguistics; Part two will cover Old and Medieval texts, as well as eighteenth-century Russian Literature; Part three will cover nineteenth and twentieth century Russian literature. If a minor is offered, the written examination will include an additional one-hour section in the minor field, based on the appropriate reading list. If a student fails one section of the written examination, he or she may retake the section failed without repeating the sections passed, so long as the section failed is retaken within one calendar year.
5. A candidate who wishes to take the MA examination first contacts either the Graduate Advisor for Linguistics, or the Graduate Advisor for Literature, depending on the student's main area of interest. The Graduate Advisor chooses the members of the examination committee, determines the specific subjects to be tested, and solicits exam questions from the committee members. Candidates may consult with the Graduate Advisor, as well as, other committee members, to learn what to emphasize in their preparation.
6. As soon as possible after the written exams are given, students will be notified of the result; this may include a follow-up oral examination.
7. The oral examination which may be given consists of approximately one hour of questions on the fields covered in the written examination(s).

8. A student will be notified within three working days after the oral examination if the committee recommends either pass, not pass, or pass with the recommendation that he or she not continue graduate study in the department. This latter recommendation will be made on the basis of overall performance in the department as well as performance on the M.A. examination, and it will be noted only on the student's departmental record and not in his or her file in the Graduate College.

IV. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

A. General Requirements

Students entering with a B.A. degree must complete all requirements for the Ph.D. degree within seven calendar years. Students entering with an M.A. degree from another university must complete the requirements within five years. The student must earn at least 8 units of credit, including 5 in his or her major field, beyond the 8 required for the M.A., as well as 8 units of dissertation credit (Slavic 499). At least two of these three stages, i.e. 16 units, must be completed in residence.

B. Admission to the Ph.D. Program

The student is admitted to the Ph.D. program on recommendation of his or her M.A. examining committee. A student entering with an M.A. degree from another institution must have a graduate grade-point average of at least 3.5, or the equivalent. If this MA was in another field, the student must take a four-hour Qualifying Examination in his or her proposed major field. He or she will also be expected to pass the Advanced Proficiency Examination in Russian.

C. Departmental Requirements

1. The student must demonstrate a reading knowledge of both French and German. This requirement can be satisfied by receiving a grade of at least B in French 401 and German 401 or by passing reading comprehension exams for graduate students offered by the Department of French and the Department of German.
2. In exceptional circumstances, when a language other than French and/or German is required for the student's research, the student may petition to demonstrate a reading comprehension of that language instead of French or German. The departmental faculty as a whole evaluates this petition.
3. The language requirements must be satisfied before a student takes his or her written preliminary exams.
4. Students majoring in Slavic linguistics must complete at least two semesters each of graduate courses in a second and third modern Slavic language, preferably one each from the West and South Slavic groups. They are also

required to take two graduate courses from among the linguistics offerings of other departments.

5. Students majoring in Russian literature must complete at least two graduate courses in a second modern Slavic language and/or literature in the original.

6. Students in both fields must present a minor consisting of three or more graduate courses in a single field, or a split minor consisting of at least two graduate courses in each of two fields. Possible minors include Slavic linguistics, Russian literature, or a relevant subject area outside the Department approved by the advisor.

D. Examination Procedures

Students are encouraged to take the Ph.D. examination as soon as possible after they have completed the required eight units of acceptable graduate course work beyond the M.A. degree.

1. Written examination in the major field:

- a. This examination normally is given twice a year, in November and April.
- b. The Literature or Linguistics Advisor solicits questions from the entire staff in the major field, all of whom constitute the Written Exam Committee and participate in evaluating the results.
- c. The examination in the major field consists of seven hours of questions. The examination is ordinarily given in three sessions (usually Monday, Wednesday, and Friday).
- d. A student who fails the written major examination may have two additional opportunities to pass it at the regularly scheduled degree examination times. A student will fail the examination if more than one examiner gives him/her a failing grade on the entire exam, or on more than one section of the examination. A student who passes two of the three sections of the examination will be re-examined only on the section failed. The student may request a written evaluation of his or her examination from the committee.

2. Written examination in the minor field:

- a. This examination is given approximately three weeks after the written examination in the major field.
- b. The advisor, in consultation with the student, invites the appropriate faculty to examine the student in the minor field(s).
- c. The examination in the minor field consists of three hours of questions. If the student presents two minor fields, there will be two hours of questions in each.
- d. A student who fails the written minor examination may have two more opportunities to pass it at the regularly scheduled examination periods.

3. Ph.D. Preliminary Examination (Oral)

- a. The Preliminary Examination (Oral) is normally given within two weeks after the completion of the written examinations.

- b. Each student's Committee for the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination (Oral) shall consist of four or more members chosen, with their consent, by the student in consultation with the Graduate Literature or Linguistics Advisor and his or her future dissertation director (who will normally chair the committee), and with the approval of the Head of the Department. One member of this Committee must be from outside the department. For linguistics students, one member must be a U of I linguist outside of the department. The Chair of the committee may be any faculty member with Graduate Faculty standing. The minor field should, if possible, be represented on the Committee.
- c. The Preliminary Examination (Oral) is from one to two hours long. It must include presentation of an acceptable dissertation topic.

E. Dissertation

The Committee for the dissertation is normally the same as that for the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination. Graduate Students are encouraged to write their dissertation in English. If the student wishes to write his or her dissertation in Russian, he or she must obtain permission to do so from his or her advisor and **committee**.

F. Final Examination (Defense)

The Final Examination consists of a public presentation on the topic of the dissertation followed by a question and answer period. This examination must be passed within five years of the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination. Otherwise, the Ph.D. Preliminary Examination must be retaken.

V. FINANCIAL AID

The Department has three formalized avenues of support for both incoming and continuing graduate students. These include teaching assistantships, University Fellowships, Graduate College Fellowships, which are all accompanied by a tuition and service fee waiver except (ca. \$565 per semester, Fall, 1998 cost), except hospital-medical-surgical and computer fees.

Some students may be funded through "soft money" which is not guaranteed to the Department. This includes monies from the Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) and Research Assistantships from the University of Illinois Research Board or from outside sources.

Alternatives to TA funding and eligibility for other awards and monies should be discussed by the student and his or her advisor. Access may depend on program of study and research interests. All students must reapply for funding in the spring semester (for the next year).

The Department makes a concerted effort to award financial aid in one form or another to a large majority of students pursuing graduate studies in the

Department. This support generally will not exceed 2 years for MA level students and 5 years (3 years past MA level) for Ph. D. level students.

A. FUNDING FOR GRADUATE STUDIES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CAMPUS

1. CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS:

(a) Teaching Assistantships:

The Department is awarded a number of teaching assistantships (TAs) based on enrollment in undergraduate courses requiring TAs. These are given by the University in the form of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) with minimum salary rates established by the University depending on the Department. All TAs between 25% and 67% time include tuition and service fee waivers. In response to a graduate student request to see as many students funded as possible (at least at a minimal level), these monies are mostly divided into 33% time positions.

Each TA is provided with space in an office in the Department and is expected to hold two office hours per week at established times.

TAs receive information about room assignments and other operational matters from the Departmental Office. The office also informs TAs about procedures governing the use of departmental supplies and copying machines.

Foreign students who are non-native speakers of English and who have been awarded a TAship must present a score of 520 or better on the Test of Spoken English to receive a Teaching Assistantship. A lower score may be acceptable if the assistantship does not involve classroom teaching. Students already in residence may satisfy this requirement by taking the SPEAK examination in the Division of English as an International Language.

All new teaching assistants must attend TA Orientation. Orientation will provide training and familiarize new TAs with University of Illinois teaching procedures. For International Teaching Assistants, orientation usually runs for five days just prior to the beginning of the fall semester. All new TAs are required to participate in a week-long orientation held by the campus just prior to the beginning of the fall semester. Graduate students given a TAship in the Department normally must also pass the departmental A.P.E. exam (advanced proficiency in Russian) within the first semester of their TAship.

A number of resources are available to teaching assistants in order to improve their teaching proficiency and other skills. The Office of Instructional Resources, Division of Instructional Development offers formal and informal programs and workshops on a variety of topics for faculty, staff, and students. They also have several useful handbooks on improving effectiveness in teaching, including one specifically for TAs. In order to obtain more information about the programs they

offer, contact the office which is located in Room 249, Armory Building, 505 E. Armory Street, Champaign (phone: 333-3370).

Recommendations for assistantships are made by the Department to the Graduate College.

(b) University Fellowships

In order to obtain a University Fellowship, incoming and continuing graduate students must be nominated by the Department. The application form for financial support in general, filled out every year, also serves as an application for University Fellowships, which the Graduate College allots, to the Department based on the outcome of a competition between departments. Some continuing students' academic records may be requested by the Department for submission to a Graduate College committee that evaluates the relative levels of achievement of all departments; these data help the Graduate College to determine how many fellowships to award in the future to each department.

Specific recommendations for University Fellowships, when such are awarded to the Department are made by the Department to the Graduate College.

(c) Graduate College Fellowships

These awards are limited to certain targeted minority groups. Both incoming and continuing students who are members of the targeted minority groups are nominated for these awards by the Department and these nominations forwarded for evaluation and selection by the Graduate College.

(d) FLAS Fellowships

FLAS Fellowship awards, based on funding from the U.S. Department of Education, are granted by the Russian and East European Center (REEC). Both incoming and continuing graduate students interested in these fellowships apply for them through the Department, which forwards the rank-ordered list of its nominees to the REEC.

(e) Research Assistantships

Money for a research assistant (RA) can be gained through the University of Illinois Research Board by any professor. The Board obtains its money through an endowment from the Beckman Institute in addition to overhead from grants in all departments. These monies are then channeled throughout the university. Eight to ten competitions are held annually, where faculty may apply for student aid for involvement in a particular project. The research proposal must be submitted by a faculty member and its quality is extremely important for receiving a grant.

Research Assistantships are assigned through the Department by professors requiring students for particular projects. The amount of hours per week will vary

with the assistantship. All RAs between 25% to 67% time include a tuition and service fee waiver.

2. DEADLINES FOR THE AWARDS:

For incoming students, application for financial aid is made simultaneously with the application for admission. For continuing students, the deadline for application for financial aid is mid-January. The results of the competition for University Fellowships, Assistantships, and Tuition and Fee Waivers are announced in March. The final results of the FLAS competition are not available until the U.S. Department of Education has made its allocations, which is usually in April. Applicants are, however, notified of their relative standing in the competition by mid-March.

3. DEPARTMENTAL POLICY ON FINANCIAL AID

To the extent permitted by available funds, the Department attempts to insure that all Master's program students are funded for two years and doctoral program students are funded for three years. However, the student's initiative is often very important in securing funding, especially money from sources outside the Department. Support from university sources outside the Department will be counted in the above limits. Students who exceed these limits are automatically put in the "lowest priority" category in all evaluations for continued financial aid from the Department.

It is the policy of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature to make recommendations for all forms of awards, as well as to award all financial aid, to graduate students based on merit, as demonstrated by past academic performance and satisfactory progress towards a degree. In order to qualify for these awards, a student is expected to have a minimum of a "B" (3.0) average.

"Satisfactory progress" requires passing the MA examination and APE (advanced proficiency exam in Russian) within two years after beginning the MA phase of graduate study, and passing the Ph.D. preliminary examination within three years after beginning the Ph.D. phase, along with satisfying the French and German language requirement, or other language requirement as deemed appropriate by the departmental faculty. The Qualifying Examination, where appropriate, should be passed within two semesters of full-time study in this Department.

4. DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES FOR ADVISING GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FOR EVALUATING GRADUATE STUDENT POTENTIAL AND PERFORMANCE:

All graduate students should obtain copies of the University's handbook for Graduate Students and Advisors. This handbook is updated each year and provides information regarding campus policies and procedures.

Incoming graduate students and graduate students working towards an MA are advised on their choice of courses, progress towards a degree and other academic matters by the Department's graduate advisor in their field of specialization (i.e., literature or linguistics). Graduate students must select their dissertation advisor upon passing their MA examination. Students are normally expected to complete their MA course work and to pass the MA examination within 2 years of entering the Department, and to complete their Ph.D. course work and submit their dissertation within 5 years of entering the Department.

Graduate student potential, progress and performance are judged annually as follows:

1. For Continuing Graduate Students

Since the primary purpose of financial aid is to enable students to pursue graduate studies towards a degree, all awards are contingent upon the student's making satisfactory progress toward a degree.

All graduate students in the Department are evaluated by the entire faculty of the Department as a whole in a separate meeting at the end of each semester. The faculty consider the progress the students are making towards their degrees as well as their past performance as TAs, and make constructive suggestions to the students, if needed, on how they can improve their performance. Written summaries of these evaluations are remitted to each student and copies placed in their files.

Continuing graduate students requesting financial aid for the following academic year petition the Department for this support at the beginning of the spring semester. Their petitions, together with accompanying documentation (Transcripts, letters of recommendation from the faculty) are reviewed by the entire faculty at a faculty meeting where the students are ranked based on their past academic performance. This ranking forms the basis for all future decisions about any form of financial aid controlled by the department (TAships, University Fellowships) as well as for the rank ordering of applicants for funding available through the Campus (e.g. FLAS, Graduate College Dissertation Travel Grants).

At a separate meeting of the entire faculty, this rank-ordered list is interdigitated with a ranked list of potential new graduate students deserving of financial aid.

Students receiving financial aid are expected to register each semester for a course load sufficient for making satisfactory progress, as determined by their advisor.

2. For New Graduate Students

The qualifications of prospective new graduate students requesting admission into the Department's graduate program and financial aid are reviewed early in the Spring semester (usually February) by the Admissions Committee, which

consists of the entire faculty plus a representative elected by the graduate students. Students accepted for admission who request financial aid from the Department are ranked in the same manner as are continuing graduate students (see above). The criteria for the ranking include past academic performance as seen in their statements of purpose, transcripts, GRE scores, for foreign students also TOEFL scores, letters of recommendation, etc.

This rank-ordered list of potential new graduate students is subsequently interdigitated, at a separate meeting of the entire faculty minus the graduate student representative, with the list of continuing graduate students requesting financial aid. The resulting single ranked list of all new and continuing students seeking financial aid for the following academic year is used in a straight forward manner in all subsequent decisions about whom to offer any and all financial aid: we begin with the top ranked individuals and move down the list.

3. Exceptions to #1 and #2

Some of the TAships available to the Department are earmarked for the teaching of the less commonly taught Slavic languages such as Bulgarian, Polish, Serbian/Croatian, and Ukrainian. These languages can only be taught by those graduate students in the Department, or by others, who have special linguistic skills. When individuals possessing these skills can be found among the graduate students in the Department, these graduate students are offered the TAships for the teaching of these specific languages. In some instances this requires "skipping down" the master rank-ordered list described above. In other cases, when our own graduate students do not possess the required linguistic skills, the TAships in question will be offered to graduate students from other related departments, such as Linguistics. On rare occasions, when qualified individuals could not be found in these two pools, these specific TAships will be awarded to past graduates of the Department who may be on campus or to other qualified individuals.

5. PAY SCALES:

The rate of pay is established by the University and varies by department. Rates of pay in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature vary according to the type of funding (fellowship, TA, RA, etc.). Wages are averaged for the semester and distributed monthly in standardized installments.

The pay scales used by the Department for its TAs and RAs are the same as the minimal TA salary established by LAS, which in 1997-98 was \$17,000. per annum for 100% time.

Pay scales for Fellowships awarded outside the Department are determined by the funding sources.

B. OTHER FUNDING SOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDY

A number of external grants and fellowships are available to graduate students,

including international students, in all stages of their programs. Information on these can be obtained through the Russian and East European Center, as well as the Departmental Newsletter and bulletin board.

Most applications to outside sources must be submitted in the fall a year prior to the time for which assistance is sought. As a consequence requests for information and application forms should be initiated in the early fall. It is especially important that students anticipate needs for the support of doctoral field research and explore carefully the various sources of funds.

C, RESEARCH AWARDS AND TRAVEL GRANTS

A number of other funding awards are available from the Department, the Russian and East European Center, the University of Illinois, and outside funding agencies. All students are strongly encouraged to seek additional sources of funding. Information is posted in the Department and is also available in the Observatory on campus.

1. Dissertation Travel Grants

The Graduate College provides grants to support expenses related to the preparation of a Master's or doctoral thesis, or to a project or other activity in lieu of a thesis for doctoral students who have passed their preliminary examination. These awards are primarily intended for students with necessary research expenses that are not covered by other available sources. Awards are made on the basis of the merit of the proposals submitted, up to a maximum of \$5000. These grants are available to both United States citizens and international students. The deadlines are announced in the Departmental newsletter and posted in the office.

2. Conference Travel Grants

The REEC, SEAL (Students for Equal Access to Learning), The LAS Humanities Council Graduate Student Conference and Research Support, and the Department provide small grants for expenses connected with travel to conferences for the purpose of paper presentation. When submitting an application, students must provide evidence of invitation by the conference to present a paper and a statement of endorsement by the Department. Students must be registered in the semester they apply for these grants.

3. Other Research Grants

There are a number of organizations and foundations which offer grants to support research in specialized fields. Information about these grants can be obtained from the Graduate College Fellowship Office, the Research Services Office (RSO 128 Observatory), and the REEC. Some schools and colleges publish additional materials concerning research grants and contracts. The RSO compiles information on research grants and has staff members who will assist researchers in their search for funding; it also conducts workshops on grant applications.

D. STUDENT LOANS

To obtain information on need-based financial aid please refer to A Handbook for Graduate Students and Advisors and/or go to the Office of Student Financial Aid and inquire about loan and scholarship programs.

The University of Illinois provides an Emergency Loan Fund. This program provides short-term loans of up to \$300.00/semester to graduate students in good financial standing with the University. The loans are interest-free but must be repaid within 30-45 days. The loans can be obtained at the Office of Student Financial Aid. International students must apply for these loans through the Office of International Student Affairs.

E. FEDERAL WORK-STUDY

Awards of work-study are based on student need. To apply for work-study, a student must complete the Free Application for Student Financial Aid and inform the Department of his or her intent to apply for work-study aid. Once the application is processed, it must be submitted to the financial aid officer at the University of Illinois, who then determines if the student is eligible for federal work-study monies. Work-study positions are often 50% time appointments.