

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program is for individuals who have already earned a Master's degree (or have other substantial research experience) and seek to further their expertise as scholars and practitioners of international relations. PhD students work closely with faculty advisors to develop an academic plan that best supports their dissertation research. Throughout the program students develop a comprehensive understanding of qualitative and quantitative analytical skills, international relations, economics, and regional studies.

PhD students begin their studies in Washington, DC. During the dissertation stage, students can explore opportunities to study at SAIS Europe, the Hopkins Nanjing Center, or at other prominent global institutions.

Johns Hopkins SAIS graduates are sought after by employers in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Their knowledge of economics, analytical abilities, regional expertise, diplomatic skills, international experience, language proficiency, as well as capacity to apply theory to real-world problems, give students a distinct professional advantage.

PhD Fields of Study

PhD students will have one of the following concentrations (either a policy or region):

International Policy Areas

- American Foreign Policy
- Energy, Resources and Environment
- Global Theory and History
- International Development
- International Relations
- International Political Economy
- Strategic Studies

Regions of the World

- African Studies
- Canadian Studies
- China Studies
- European and Eurasian Studies
- Japan Studies
- Korea Studies
- Latin American Studies
- Middle East Studies
- South Asia Studies
- Southeast Asia Studies

Faculty Advisors

Our faculty experts and scholars are internationally recognized for their scholarship, experience, and quality of teaching. They are award-winning scholars, authors, diplomats, thinkers, and senior ranking officials who

are authorities on international economics and international relations and who have expertise in contemporary issues around the world.

All PhD students have a tenured, faculty advisor. The advisor has primary responsibility for coordinating the candidate's research agenda. Another senior member of the dissertation committee or "second reader" monitors the student's research throughout the dissertation project. Both the faculty advisor and the second reader are to be substantively involved in the student's preparation of the prospectus and the dissertation.

While the student will work actively with the first and second readers to prepare a dissertation prospectus, the student should also consult with the three supporting committee members throughout the doctoral research.

Prospective and current PhD students are encouraged to use the Faculty Directory to identify individuals to approach about involvement in their research and dissertation.

Degree Requirements

Note: SAIS has currently paused admission of new students into the PhD program.

Campus: Washington, DC

Duration: Four to nine academic years (average 5.5), Full-time

Course delivery: In-person

PhD Program Structure

The PhD is divided into pre-dissertation (resident) and dissertation (non-resident) stages.

In order to earn the degree, students must fulfill all degree requirements and earn a cumulative GPA of 3.33 or above.

Each PhD student is required to do all of the following:

1. Complete a minimum of two consecutive semesters of registration as a full-time, resident graduate student, meaning that the student is present on-campus and working towards fulfilling the requirements for the degree.
2. Register as an active student each fall and spring semester from matriculation to degree completion.
3. Maintain a B+ average for all courses and receive no grade below B-.
4. Submit a preliminary schedule of coursework and comprehensive examinations upon entering the program.
5. Complete coursework in research methodology (details below).
6. Complete coursework relevant to their chosen fields of study.
7. Submit annual progress reports.
8. Pass two written comprehensive examinations within the first five semesters. See below for timeline details governing SAIS master's alumni compared to those who previously studied elsewhere. Note: The American Foreign Policy comprehensive exam is oral.
9. Complete a high-quality research paper prior to the end of their second year in the program. The paper must be distinct from the dissertation, make an original scholarly contribution, and must be considered to have a strong potential of ultimately being publishable. The papers must be approved by the

student's advisor and a second faculty member that is outside of the student's main field. (Details below.)

10. Demonstrate competence in two foreign languages, OR one language and Applied Econometrics. Note: Non-native English speakers can use English as a language for this requirement.
11. Write and defend a dissertation prospectus within three years that is approved by at least two readers (including the advisor).
12. Successfully defend the dissertation at an oral examination with a committee consisting of five examiners, a majority of whom determine it to be a significant contribution to knowledge and worthy of fulfilling the PhD.
13. Receive certification from the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs and the PhD Faculty Committee that all requirements have been fulfilled.
14. Receive dissertation-binding approval from the Homewood Library prior to the SAIS Faculty PhD Conferral Meeting.

Students who are not meeting any of the above requirements may be placed on academic probation and/or dismissed from the program.

In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) signed between Johns Hopkins University and the TRU-UE (union), students receiving a SAIS stipend are subject to mandatory work assignments without additional compensation, as decided by the school administration. This is communicated in the form of a PhD Appointment Letter (PAL).

Pre-dissertation status should last no more than two years for SAIS MAIRs and three years for non-SAIS MAs and is the time when students complete coursework, comprehensive exams, the second-year paper, and the dissertation prospectus, including the prospectus defense. Dissertation status usually begins in the third year for SAIS MAIRs and in the fourth year for others and is the time when a student completes the dissertation research, then writes and defends the dissertation. A student may advance to the dissertation stage earlier upon completion of all pre-dissertation requirements.

Pre-dissertation students must be present on-campus and working full-time toward fulfilling the requirements of the degree. To be registered full-time, a pre-dissertation student must engage in a full-time program of courses, seminars, and/or independent study approved by the faculty advisor, while remaining on track with the timeline for completing the degree.

Deadlines for Pre-Dissertation and Dissertation Students

Students entering the PhD Program with a SAIS Master's degree are expected to complete their comprehensive examinations within three semesters, their prospectus within six months after that, and their dissertation defense within five years after completing the prospectus defense.

Students entering from other schools are expected to complete their comprehensive examinations within five semesters, their prospectus defense within six months of that, and their dissertation defense within five years after completing the prospectus defense.

The maximum time from matriculation to degree completion allowed by the Johns Hopkins University for the PhD is nine years. Students who exceed this limit are subject to dismissal from the program.

PRE-DISSERTATION, RESIDENT STAGE

Pre-dissertation status lasts up to two years for students who have completed the Master of Arts of International Relations (MAIR) degree at Johns Hopkins SAIS and up to three years for those without an MAIR degree from the school. Students complete coursework, comprehensive exams, and defend the dissertation prospectus.

Quantitative Skills

Students must complete Statistics for Data Analysis (SA.100.501; waiver exam offered to eligible students) and Econometrics (SA.100.401; no waiver, but sometimes possible to take a more advanced/specialized course as a substitution).

Research Methodology

All incoming students must fulfill the following research methodology requirements within the first five semesters, totaling at least four courses. Auditing is not allowed—these courses must be taken for graded credit.

- Theories and Methods of Qualitative Political Research (SA.100.410)
- Research Design and Causal Inference (SA.100.408, Stats and Econometrics prerequisites)
- Two additional methods courses in a social science discipline relevant to the student's research agenda (e.g., political science, history, economics, sociology, anthropology, public health, etc.) in consultation with the faculty advisor.

Comprehensive Examinations

All students must select two examination areas from among the following:

- American Foreign Policy
- Comparative Politics
- International Development
- International Economics
- International Political Economy
- International Relations
- One of the SAIS Regional Studies Areas.

With the exception of American Foreign Policy (oral), all of the comprehensive examinations are fulfilled via written examinations.

Students are not permitted to take both of their comprehensive examinations in regional studies area.

PhD students with a SAIS MAIR must take both comprehensive examinations by the end of the third semester in the PhD program, and those students with a master's degree from another university must take both comprehensives by the end of the fifth semester in the PhD program.

Within six months of passing the second comprehensive exam, students must prepare a written prospectus of the dissertation and present it in a formal defense that is open to members of the university faculty.

PhD Second-Year Paper Detailed Guidelines

Students must complete an original research paper prior to the end of their second year in the program. The deadline for this paper to be submitted is the final day of classes in the spring semester. The deadline for the two faculty graders to make a determination on whether the paper passes is the deadline for submitting spring-semester grades.

A passing grade indicates that the paper makes an original scholarly contribution that has the strong potential to be published, even if additional refinement would be required prior to publication. Each paper is expected to develop an original argument and/or present novel evidence to support that argument.

Students must also submit an abstract to the two faculty graders by October 15, as well as a more detailed outline of their paper by the end of the fall semester. Students must submit a draft of at least part of the paper, and ideally a complete draft, by March 1st. The lead advisor is expected to provide timely feedback, within a maximum of two weeks, on each of these interim assignments. The second reader is strongly encouraged to provide feedback on all of these assignments, and is required to provide comments on the March 1st draft within two weeks. The feedback on these assignments is intended to ensure that students understand what is required for them to pass the 2nd year paper requirement and to succeed in subsequently publishing their paper.

The purpose of these papers is to gain experience writing original research papers. Accordingly, the papers must be single-authored research papers. While the output from these papers might eventually be incorporated into coauthored projects in the future, the research underlying the paper and all writing must be completed by the student independently.

Each paper must be written as a stand-alone piece of research, and should be modeled after a journal article within the student's area of focus. There is no minimum or maximum word or page length; rather, the paper should follow the typical length of a journal article in their field. The second-year paper is not intended to be a brief preview of the student's overall dissertation project, though it is possible that the second-year paper could turn into one of the chapters of a student's dissertation.

Two members of the SAIS faculty will evaluate the final paper. Students must create this two-person committee before the end of the fall semester. A student's main dissertation advisor will serve as one of the two graders. The second grader must be a full-time member of the SAIS faculty.

Students that do not receive a passing grade at the end of the second year will be placed on academic probation. If a student is unable to complete the 2nd year requirement before the end of the fall semester of their third year they will be terminated from the program.

DISSERTATION, NON-RESIDENT STAGE

Students advance to the dissertation stage after completing all Pre-Dissertation Stage requirements, including successfully defending a prospectus. They are no longer required to be on campus, however, are still considered full-time status. Students should defend the dissertation within five years of the prospectus defense.

PhD Dissertation

At the time of application, students will propose a research topic they would like to pursue for their doctoral dissertation. During their course of study, students will hone this topic in consultation with a faculty advisor and defend a prospectus that outlines the dissertation's research questions, mission, and methodology.

The PhD dissertation must be an original and analytical treatment of a subject of conceptual importance that involves the creation of new knowledge and not simply the master of existing knowledge. To conduct

the research for, write, and defend the dissertation, a candidate will have a maximum of five years from the prospectus defense.

Termination of Doctoral Candidacy

Students who fail to meet the program requirements and deadlines (including registration and payment deadlines) detailed in this manual are subject to termination of their doctoral candidacy by the Faculty PhD Committee. Before considering this step, the Committee notifies the candidate and provides an opportunity for the student and their advisor to provide any further relevant information, which will be considered when making a final decision.

In cases where the PhD Committee has provided deadlines/extensions in writing, the failure of the student to meet those deadlines/extensions will result in a recommendation for dismissal.

Students whose candidacy is terminated are offered appropriate personal and career counseling.