

**THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
PROGRAM IN THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE,
MEDICINE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

**GRADUATE HANDBOOK
for Students in the Department of History
of Medicine**

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Introduction and History

Graduate study can be challenging, frustrating, and, for those suited to it, greatly rewarding. We hope that this handbook reduces the middle term of that equation by providing a convenient guide to our program's policies and traditions, as well as answering a few frequently asked questions about graduate life. Bear in mind, however, that this handbook is intended to supplement, not substitute for, the university catalog, guidelines, rights and responsibilities of graduate students, and other official documents which may be found by consulting the [JH Medicine website](#).

The Institute of the History of Medicine was founded in 1929 with a gift from the Rockefeller General Education Board. The department was organized three years later and is the oldest academic department of its kind in the United States. It pioneered graduate education and research in the history of medicine and public health and has played a prominent role in the development of medical history as an academic discipline. The Institute comprises the Department of the History of Medicine, the library, and the editorial office of the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*—the flagship journal of the American Association of the History of Medicine.

With the department of the History of Science and Technology (HST) on the Homewood (Arts, Sciences, and Engineering) campus, we co-administer the graduate program in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. Graduate students in the program share classes, attend colloquium, and socialize together, but the two departments are administratively distinct.

The small size of our program is among its biggest assets. Our students receive a great amount of personal attention, enjoy very small class sizes, and quickly come to feel like respected junior colleagues. Conversely, our students play a significant role in shaping the tone and even the content of the curriculum. You should feel that you can take initiative at any time. If there is a course you would like to see taught, or a discussion group you would like to organize, get in touch with a faculty member and suggest it. Much of what we do is in response to student initiatives.

General Remarks on Coursework and Advisors

Coursework

You will find that your courses are small—often only one or two students—and your curriculum after the first year is tailored to your needs and interests. While most of your coursework will naturally be geared toward completion of your fields, every course need not be part of a field. Our courses rarely if ever have exams; in general your grade will depend on participation, a variety of smaller writing assignments, and a paper. Each term, you should meet with your advisor and other faculty to see what research seminars will be offered next semester and then discuss with your advisor which one(s) to take.

Directed readings

Directed readings are tutorial-type courses, often one-on-one or two-on-one with the professor. These typically involve tailoring a reading list to your specific interests and meeting with the professor every week or every other week to discuss books on the list. Directed readings give the same credit as other courses; i.e., a course list that contained three directed readings would be considered a full load, just the same as three research seminars. Often, you will find yourself taking one or two research seminars and two or one directed readings in a given semester.

Research Papers: Writing and Presentation

Students should aim to write at least one research paper (~20 pages) based on original sources per semester. You should expect to write papers outside your area of special interest: this is an opportunity to broaden your knowledge and learn to use a variety of sources. Explore and experiment. Your aim should be toward a paper of publishable quality, although it is of course understood that interests shift and that one semester is rarely if ever sufficient time to develop work to that standard.

Presentation of your work to a larger audience is as important as research and writing. Students are encouraged to present their work at professional conferences. The department will often schedule practice sessions on an ad hoc basis to help you polish your talk. Consult your advisor if you'd like a practice session. If you present a paper or give a talk at a conference, you may request travel funds from the department. See Coraleeze or ask your advisor for details.

Choosing an advisor

In your first year you will be assigned a faculty advisor, depending on your interests. Near the beginning of the second year, you should determine the area you wish to specialize in and choose an advisor who is willing to supervise the rest of your graduate program. Your advisor should help you design a coherent, individualized program of studies. Generally your advisor will be the person you expect to be your dissertation advisor. If your interests change, you should also change advisors.

Student Assistance Program

Graduate school is likely to be one of the most rewarding but also most stressful times of your life thus far. The university's Student Assistance Program (JHSAP) offers resources for anxiety and depression, school problems, grief assistance, substance abuse, and other issues. Services are free, confidential, and unlimited. You can reach them online at <http://www.jhsap.org> or by phone at (443) 287-7000 (local) or (866) 764-2317 (toll free).

Academic Requirements Pre-Candidacy

During the first two to three years, students work both to attain a general mastery of the history of medicine and to learn the foundational skills of academic research and writing. As you progress, you will begin to specialize in a few specific areas, and ultimately to choose a dissertation topic. The formal requirements for pre-dissertation students include: completing four fields; preparing *JHU History of Medicine Graduate Handbook, revised November, 2014*

and presenting a second-year paper; and demonstrating reading proficiency in two foreign languages.

Fields

The graduate program is organized around fields. A field is intended to demonstrate a student's mastery of a specific body of knowledge, both for the student's own scholarly work and as a preparation for teaching. Each student must complete a field in the foundations of the history of medicine, plus three other fields to be chosen in consultation with your advisor (see below for more on fields). Fields are put together with a combination of seminars and independent readings. Students normally take three courses per semester.

Foundations

The first field—Foundations of the History of Medicine—is tightly structured and is completed in the first year. It provides all our students with a common foundation in the subject matter and methodology of the history of medicine. It comprises the two-semester undergraduate survey course in the history of medicine and a companion graduate-level reading course led by the survey instructor, in which students read more deeply into the primary and secondary literature, and the one-semester course, "Research Methods in the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology."

First-year exam

At the end of the first and second semesters (i.e., December and May of the first year), all students take a 24-hour take-home exam, which covers the material in these courses. Speak to your advisor and to the faculty leading the survey about specific requirements for the exam. The exam is graded on a high pass/pass/fail scale. Students are notified in writing (and often in person as well) of the results of their own exam, usually within a few days of taking it. A grade of Pass or High Pass on both halves of the exam constitutes successful completion of the Foundations field.

Specializations

The remaining three fields are much more flexible. Completed during the second and third years, they normally consist of a combination of research seminars and individual reading courses. The second field is a specialty within the history of medicine. The third field should be in a historical discipline outside the Program (normally History, but related fields such as History of Art are also possible). The fourth field is highly flexible and negotiable depending on student interests and needs. It can provide an opportunity to work directly with another faculty member within the program on a relevant subject, or it can extend beyond historical subjects, to another field of the humanities or social sciences, such as anthropology, or to biomedical fields, such as public health or psychology.

The specific focus and exact requirements of the specialization fields will be determined in consultation between student and advisor, but in general they involve a solid year of work. The most common field format is a seminar and/or directed reading, with one or more papers; some professors, however, may prefer to administer an exam. On successful completion of a field, you must request the supervising faculty member to write a short letter of certification, delivered in hard copy to Coraleeze for your file.

Field	<i>Foundations of the History of Medicine</i>	Specialty in the History of Medicine	History	Open
Requirement	<i>Undergraduate survey; graduate seminar; Methods</i>	Seminars; directed readings; independent reading; paper(s)	Seminars; directed readings; independent reading; paper(s)	Seminars; directed readings; independent reading; paper(s)
Examples	---	History of Medicine in Early Modern England; History of Public Health; History of 20 th century Biomedicine	Modern Germany; Early Modern France; Colonial Africa; 19 th century America	History of the Brain Sciences; History of Alchemy; Endocrinology; Epidemiology
Evaluation	<i>First-year exam (fall and spring)</i>	Paper(s) and/or exam	Paper(s) and/or exam	Paper(s) and/or exam

Table 1. The Four Fields.

Field waiver

Students coming to us with advanced post-baccalaureate training (such as a Master's degree) may petition to have one of their fields waived. Note that not all of our students with Master's degrees choose to "pass out" of one of their fields. As always, this is flexible and should be discussed with your advisor.

Second-Year Paper

The second-year paper is one of the rites of passage in our program. In your second year, you will choose one of your research papers and develop it more fully in order to present it in the departmental colloquium series. The paper should be of journal-article length (30-40 pages), contain original research based on primary sources, and be fully footnoted. You need to schedule your seminar with the faculty member who is organizing colloquium. This usually must be done early in the fall semester preceding the spring term in which you will present.

Languages

All graduate students must demonstrate reading proficiency in two languages other than English. The choice of languages is made by the advisor and student, according to the student's skills and research needs. Proficiency is shown by means of an exam—normally a translation exercise—administered by the relevant language department or by a faculty member. Successful completion (pass/fail) of "Reading and Translating German for Academic Purposes," offered by the German and Romance Languages department, satisfies a language requirement in German. As of this writing, the reading course in French is no longer being offered; however, an online proficiency exam may be taken to satisfy a language requirement in French.

Language requirements should be completed **by the end of the third year**. Like the fields, successful completion of the language requirements must be documented by a short letter indicating the fact (or certificate, in the case of an online proficiency exam) and deposited in your student file.

Advancing to Candidacy

Once you have completed your fields and language requirements, you are eligible to advance to candidacy. Our program does not have a traditional humanities oral examination (the dreaded "Orals"); instead, we have you prepare and defend a dissertation proposal, which is designed to provide you with a roadmap to your dissertation.

Dissertation proposal

During the third year, students compose a dissertation proposal. The dissertation proposal should be roughly 20–30 pages in length and should be framed approximately like a grant proposal, with an introduction and literature review, statement of the research question, and a plan for and timetable of research. It should include an annotated table of contents for the dissertation: a list of

chapters, with brief synopses of their focus and contents. It is understood that the final product will likely change; the exercise is intended to get you to express a coherent research agenda.

The dissertation proposal is defended before a committee consisting of your thesis advisor and at least two other faculty members. Your committee may comprise History of Medicine faculty or faculty from other departments. The defense lasts one to two hours. It may be scheduled when you and your advisor deem that your proposal is ready, but this should be during the third year or at latest early in the fourth year.

Master's Essay

In general the Department does not offer the M.A. as a freestanding degree program. (Exceptions are where students already enrolled elsewhere in the university undertake an M.A. in history of medicine as part of their graduate training, e.g. the History of Global Health and Disease program.) Where Ph.D. students have needed additional time to improve their research and writing skills before going on to their field and dissertation work, the department has recommended that they prepare for an M.A. In such cases, the requirements include:

1. One year of residency
2. Completion of satisfactory course work
3. Competency in one foreign language
4. Submission of an acceptable thesis, generally in the range of 50–75 pages.

Although the Master's essay can be understood as remedial, you should also know that a number of our students have undertaken Master's essays, have published them in scholarly journals, and then have gone on to complete the graduate program and embark on distinguished careers. About as many others have ended up with terminal master's degrees. Sometimes students who choose to leave the program will complete a master's degree.

International students

To retain J-1 (student) visa status, international students must register for a full load (3 courses) each semester until graduation. After advancing to candidacy, this requirement may be fulfilled through registering for Dissertation Research and directed readings.

Graduation

The Dissertation

Nothing will do more to shape your future career than the choice of subject and the quality of your thesis. The subject will be negotiated between you and your advisor, sometimes with the assistance of other faculty members with particular expertise in the field. Your dissertation must be an original contribution to knowledge, and should be defined in a way that allows you to complete it within 2-3 years.

In selecting a project, remember that you will be making a serious investment of your time and energy over the next several years. Your first book will most likely be derived from the dissertation. Don't be discouraged if your first couple of ideas don't fly. Feedback from your advisor up front can save you from making some costly mistakes.

Thesis committee

Soon after you begin your dissertation, you and your advisor should assemble a thesis committee. The university has specific guidelines about the composition of your committee. It must contain five members.

Example 1.		Example 2.	
<i>Faculty Affiliation</i>	<i>Internal or External</i>	<i>Faculty Affiliation</i>	<i>Internal or External</i>
Hist. Med.	I	Hist. Med.	I
Hist. Med.	I	Hist. Med.	I
Hist. Med.	I	HST	E
HST	E	History	E
HST	E	Psychology	E

Table 2 Two Possible Dissertation Committees

At least two and no more than three members must be “internal”— i.e., members of the history of medicine department; the remaining members are “external.” Often these are drawn from the HST faculty and from other JHU faculty relevant to the dissertation (public health, psychology, history, philosophy, and so forth).

Non-JHU faculty may serve as external members—if their specialty is not covered by a JHU faculty member. Please set up a meeting with Coraleeze the semester before you plan to graduate, to go over a completion checklist with her.

Your committee—particularly your internal members—can be of great help throughout the dissertation process, through discussion of thorny interpretive problems, comments on chapter drafts, and so forth. Students are encouraged to get their committee members involved *before* scheduling their dissertation defense.

Dissertation defense

As you near completion of your dissertation, discuss possible dates for your defense with your advisor. He or she will work with you on the tricky logistics of herding five professors into one room at the same time. Send your dissertation to your committee members a month in advance to ensure they have time to read it carefully. The defense itself lasts about two hours, with each examiner taking a turn questioning you. After a successful defense you will send one copy of the thesis to the library (for microfilming and binding) and give a second bound copy to the department. Many students also give a copy of their thesis to their advisor. Meeting the official fall and spring deadlines for the defense affects whether tuition needs to be paid (for the fall) and whether you can graduate at the May ceremonies (for the spring). The exact deadlines vary from year to year, but are some time in mid-March for May graduation and early October for December graduation. See Coraleeze for the exact deadlines in a given year.

After your defense, you will formally submit your dissertation to the university. The typographical format of the dissertation is crucial—the library stacks fairly echo with horror stories of dissertations rejected for the sake of 1/8 of an inch of margin. When the time comes to format your dissertation, see the official guidelines here:

<http://old.library.jhu.edu/services/cbo/guidelines.html>

School of Medicine requirement for Responsible Conduct of Research

Because we reside within the School of Medicine, we are bound by some of the same requirements as the medical and science students. One of those is formal training in the ethical conducting of research. **No student may graduate without completing this requirement.** It may be fulfilled by completing Research Ethics I and II, offered through the Office of Graduate Student Affairs. RE I is offered in the fall; RE II in the spring. Obviously then, this process must be started at least a year before you intend to graduate. See Coraleeze for scheduling and sign-up form. See the graduate advisor for possible other options for completing this requirement.

Teaching

Our program seeks to strike a balance between providing students with ample time for research and providing them with the teaching experience needed to be competitive in the academic job market.

In general, students are expected to serve as teaching assistants (TA) for 6 of their 10 semesters. Being a TA typically involves running a discussion section, grading student work, holding office hours, and assisting in other ways. Graduate students can expect to TA no more than 2 sections per semester, in a course in the School of Arts and Sciences; the School of Medicine; or in the School of Public Health, in onsite or online courses.

Office space is available in Gilman Hall for holding TA office hours. As a guideline, the department suggests that you spend an average of 10-12 hours per week on your Taship. This of course can vary widely over the course of the semester; you should plan ahead to minimize collisions between assignments in your own coursework and the grading of midterm and final exams.

Students do not TA during their first year. As a rule, second-year students TA for the history of medicine survey. During the remaining four semesters of Tships, students may TA for the survey or for other courses, either in History of Medicine or, by arrangement, in the History Department. During the research/writing phase, students are granted two additional semesters free of teaching. The timing of these semesters should be discussed with your advisor well in advance. See the *Appendix: Calendar for a History of Medicine PhD* for a summary of what and when you will likely TA.

Funding

Students are admitted with five years of funding, contingent upon their maintaining satisfactory progress. We provide students with funding in several forms: tuition relief, stipend, and health insurance.

Satisfactory progress

At the end of each year in the program, you will receive a letter providing a brief summary of your accomplishments over the year, laying out the goals for the following year, and, assuming satisfactory progress, making an offer of support for the next year.

There is no ironclad definition of satisfactory progress, except that it is defined by the student's advisor and the student, in conjunction with the department's expectations. The single most important assessment of satisfactory progress is made by your advisor; the two of you should work out concrete plans for assessing satisfactory progress from year to year. Final decisions about satisfactory progress are made by the faculty as a whole when it meets in the spring to review the progress of each student, but reaching the goals set out in your letter usually constitutes satisfactory progress. If progress is not satisfactory, students may be denied funding or asked to leave the program. Know, however, that such decisions are taken extremely seriously and are only made after lengthy discussion with the department director and the entire

faculty. Each year you should think of April 1 as your unofficial deadline: be prepared to show your advisor what you have accomplished to date that year, so your advisor can speak for your progress in the faculty meeting later that spring.

External support

Some students enter the department with external funding, such as that from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Jacob-Javits Fellowship, or Mellon Fellowship. In these cases, students may receive a larger stipend, or travel funds, than those of other students. For department support for graduate student travel and research, see below.

All students in good standing receive tuition relief, health insurance and a research budget. Students are expected to apply for outside funding for dissertation research and writing, both to strengthen their CVs and to stretch scarce departmental resources.

Students who obtain external funding are not penalized: if a student does not require departmental funding in a given semester, that money is “banked” and may be used later, for example to maintain support beyond the fifth year if necessary.

Dean’s Teaching Fellowship (DTF)

Students who have completed their coursework and successfully defended their dissertation proposal may apply for a Dean’s Teaching Fellowship (DTF), which gives students the opportunity to design and teach their own course and provides \$10,500 plus 20% tuition (the department of course picks up the other 80%) for one semester. The program is quite competitive across the university, but our students have been disproportionately successful in winning them.

Conference & research support

The department offers its students support toward research expenses and attendance at conferences. It is a reimbursement account: appropriate expenses will be reimbursed after your purchase or trip, upon submission of receipts. Research funds may be also used to purchase equipment, supplies, or books relevant to your research. At the time of this writing, the department offers students \$1000 per year for research and academic travel, plus travel to the AAHM annual meeting. This amount may vary from year to year, however; your annual letter of support will inform you of the following year’s amount. Additional research and travel funds may be available within the department for special needs. Funds may also be available to support training in languages not available at Hopkins; consult your advisor and the department Director.

Leave of Absence and Special Status

For medical or personal reasons, or for purposes of conducting research or writing their dissertation away from Baltimore, students may apply for a leave of absence from the program for up to two years. During this period the student will not be registered at the school, will not receive a stipend, and will not have library privileges. The Department may agree to continue the student’s health insurance during the leave period.

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Students working on their dissertations alternatively may apply for Special Status. This is not an official School of Medicine status, but is granted by the Department. Under Special Status, a student will remain registered as a fulltime student in the program, will continue to receive health insurance, a tuition remission, and library privileges. They will not, however, receive a department stipend. In addition, they may not be employed in another capacity by the department. This status is often employed for students who have received outside research funding and wish to “stop the clock” on their five years of departmental funding, while remaining active members of the program. In special cases, students who have exhausted their department funding may also apply for this status while completing their dissertations. Special Status is normally granted for up to one year.

Departmental Activities

The department offers a variety of activities for training, for intellectual exchange, and for socializing. Immersion in the intellectual life of the department is one of the most important aspects of graduate training. By joining in that life, students learn how historians understand, discuss, and debate issues, methods, and sources. If you don't take part, you are not getting the best training that you could; nor will you be well prepared to become a member of a faculty elsewhere. For these reasons, it is important that students attend Colloquium and other departmental functions, and learn to play a role in such discussions. The intellectual life of the department is not something produced by the faculty for the students' consumption; rather, it is a group project, with all of us trying to create the intellectual community in which we want to work.

Colloquium

Our weekly colloquium series is a mainstay of the Program's intellectual life. Colloquium is a shared activity of the program and it alternates between the history of medicine department and HST. We meet on Thursday afternoons, 3:00–4:30, during the fall and spring semesters, either in 303-305 Welch Library (East Baltimore) or 300 Gilman (Homewood). Often there is a precirculated paper, although not always. Department students and faculty also present papers at the colloquium, including the Second Year Paper (see above). The department also sponsors a graduate-student lunch with the speaker and a beer hour afterward (see Other Events, below). Attendance at colloquium is not formally monitored but it is considered mandatory (as well as good citizenship). Students are expected to ask questions at the colloquium. The first colloquium of the academic year is usually given over to a party (alternating annually between Homewood and East Baltimore).

Graduate Student Association

The School of Medicine GSA provides graduate students with a voice in university affairs and offers support for a wide range of student concerns, from housing and student life to academics. Each department has a representative on the GSA; this responsibility rotates annually. The representative is expected to attend the monthly GSA meeting to report concerns

from the students and pass the latest news about GSA's policy and upcoming event/activities to the students (which can be done through an email list). Typically, the current graduate coordinator identifies the department's representative by asking for volunteers. The GSA website is <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/gsa/index.shtml>.

Conferences

Conferences are a crucial part of academic life, for learning about new work, presenting your own material, networking, and just socializing. You will find many conferences in your areas of interest, but two mainstays are these:

American Association for the History of Medicine

The flagship conference of the field; held in spring. Because travel, hotel, meals, and registration for AAHM are substantial expenses, the department has traditionally provided support for students to attend.

JAS-Med & JAS-Bio

The Joint Atlantic Seminar in the History of Medicine is an annual, informal, graduate-student-run conference held each fall. The venue rotates among the various institutions on the East Coast that have programs in the history of biology.

JAS-Med is modeled on a similar meeting for the history of biology, usually held in late March or early April. First held at Harvard in 1964, JAS-Bio has been the site where many of our students, their advisors, and even their academic grandparents have given their first papers. Hopkins was instrumental in organizing the first JAS-Med meeting (also at Harvard) in 2004. These meetings are known as fora that combine intellectual rigor with a warm, supportive atmosphere. Although the department has not provided independent support for the JAS meetings, they are run on a small budget with little or no registration fee; students who travel to the meetings generally stay with other students to further keep expenses down.

Other departmental and program events

Pre-colloquium lunch

Students are invited to have lunch with the seminar speaker, usually from 12:30 until about 1:30 (the department picks up the check). Please tell the department administrator at least a day in advance if you plan to go to lunch.

Post-colloquium beer hour

A sacred tradition. After colloquium, students and faculty gather at a local watering hole for drinks and snacks with the speaker, again on the department's tab. This is a valuable and fun opportunity to talk shop with visiting scholars, catch up with Program faculty, or just socialize with fellow students.

Special seminars

We may have other events during the semester—watch the printed colloquium poster, your email inbox, and the department Facebook page for announcements.

Tuesday lunch

Occasional brown-bag seminar by department faculty and students—a good forum for practice talks—or other presentations of interest to the department.

Halloween party

Hosted by the HST department—with a history of science and medicine costume theme, of course!

Holiday party

Usually held a week or so after the first-year exam (for obvious reasons!) in the 3rd floor lobby area. Bring a dish to pass and/or an appetite.

Appendix 1: Calendar of a History of Medicine Ph.D.

Below is a rough guide to your time at Hopkins. The first year is fairly fixed, the second more flexible, and the later years are highly individualized. Variations from this calendar should be discussed with your advisor, the graduate coordinator, and if necessary the department Director.

Year	Semester	Coursework	Teaching	Milestones & Expectations
1	1	Hist Med Survey; grad section; Methods	Off	1 st year exam, pt. I (Dec.)
	2	Hist Med survey; grad sec., Historiography or elective (should have associated research paper); begin	Off	1 st yr exam pt. II (May)
	summer	Begin 2 nd yr paper		
2	3	Electives; work on fields and languages	TA (Survey)	Draft 2 nd yr paper; set colloquium date
	4	Electives; work on fields and languages	TA (Survey)	Deliver 2 nd year paper at Colloquium
	summer	Reading for fields; research		
3	5	Directed readings; work on fields, languages	TA (Survey or other)	Write dissertation proposal
	6	Directed readings; complete fields, languages; defend dissertation proposal	TA (Survey or other)	Complete fields Advance to candidacy
	summer	Dissertation research		
4	7	Dissertation research	TA/off	
	8	Dissertation research	TA/off	
	summer	Dissertation research/writing		
5	9	Dissertation research/writing	TA/off	Ensure ethics requirement is fulfilled
	10	Dissertation research/writing	TA/off	Dissertation defense **Internal funding ends**
6	11	Complete writing if necessary		

Appendix 2: Important personnel and phone numbers

Coraleeze Thompson, Administrative Manager	(410)-955-3178	coraleez@jhmi.edu
Frances Rudner, Administrative Assistant	(410) 955-3662	frudner1@jhmi.edu
Eliza Hill, Library Assistant	(410) 955-4797	ehill17@jhmi.edu
Randall Packard, Dept. Director	(410) 955-3178	rpackar2@jhmi.edu
Christine Ruggere, Associate Director and Curator of the Historical Collection	(410) 955-3159	ruggere@jhmi.edu
Danielle Rollison, Admin. Coordinator, HST Department, Homewood campus	(410) 516-7501	danielle@jhu.edu

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