

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

FIU DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Welcome to the Department of History at Florida International University (FIU)! Congratulations on joining our vibrant community. Whether you are pursuing a Master's (MA) or Doctoral (PhD) degree, this handbook is your guide to navigating academic requirements, procedures, funding opportunities, professional development, and student life. This handbook, however, is not intended to be exhaustive. Kindly refer to the History Department website, official University catalog, and speak to your advisor and Graduate Program Director (GPD) for more information.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Why FIU History?

- FIU's History Department emphasizes transnational, comparative, and regional history, making the most of Miami's location as a global crossroads.
- Graduate students have access to multiple research centers and institutes, including area studies centers, cultural institutions, and intellectual and social spaces.
- Our programs prepare students for careers in academia, government, public history, policy, nonprofits, and more.

Graduate Programs Offered

- **MA in History**

Students do not need to formally declare the option they are pursuing but must meet the requirements of one. It is highly advised that students speak to their advisor and the GPD early on to determine the pathway that is best suited for them.

1. Report Option
2. Public History Option
3. BA/MA (4 + 1) Accelerated Option
 - Students in this option must select either the Report Option or Public History Option

- **PhD in History**

Our research-focused doctoral program emphasizes comparative and Atlantic histories from pre-colonial times to the present.

- Available Joint Programs with the PhD in History
 1. MA in African and African Diaspora Studies
 2. MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
 3. MA in Asian Studies
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MAJOR MILESTONES AND POLICIES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

All students must abide by the policies and deadlines set forth by the university. University policies can be [found here](#). Below, we specify some of the departmental policies and milestones for individual programs.

For graduate work, students are expected to work with Graduate Faculty, which is a university designation intended to enhance graduate education at FIU. You [can find a list of current Graduate Faculty at FIU, including the Department of History and cogent units, here](#).

MA in History

All students in the MA program must meet the distinct requirements of either the Report Option or Public History Option. [Those requirements can be found on the History Department website](#).

PhD in History

Dissertation milestones mark the progress of a doctoral candidate's progress toward completing the dissertation and are major components that contribute to the completion of the PhD in History. The Online Dissertation Milestone Activity Guide is [available here](#) under your *Student* environment, in the *Tasks* tile. For academic guidance, be sure to communicate with your major advisor(s) and Graduate Program Director prior to initiating dissertation milestones. It is essential to communicate with your academic advisors and obtain approvals prior to the submission of any dissertation milestone.

The submission of all online dissertation milestones must follow registration, good academic standing, and deadlines requirements. You can [find the timelines and deadlines here](#), and [find the milestones here](#). Make sure to include all required documents as instructed on each dissertation milestone. Failure to do so will result in delays that can negatively impact your progress and eligibility for fellowships.

In addition to those requirements, the Department of History has other important milestones and policies that students must meet to successfully earn their doctorate.

- **Selecting an Advisor**

Most doctoral students are admitted into the program having already identified a member of the Graduate Faculty who they hope will serve as their primary advisor for the dissertation and their progress in the program more broadly. Speak to the member of the faculty whose research best aligns with your own proposed work (e.g., expertise on a particular topic, method, period, geography, etc.) and inquire whether they are willing and able to serve as your primary advisor. In some instances, a faculty member may be unable to supervise a dissertation, perhaps because they are already overcommitted with other doctoral students, anticipate being on fellowship or sabbatical, or for other reasons.

If a student did not identify a potential advisor who has agreed to work with them prior to entering the program, they will be assigned a temporary advisor upon admission. Students are expected to meet with their advisors on a regular basis and discuss any plans that relate to their professional development and research.

It is important that students discuss plans for fellowships, conferences, publications, etc., far in advance with their advisors, who are better equipped to determine whether a student is at the right stage to consider such options. As you progress through graduate school and develop your research, you represent the department and university. Your advisor, the GPD, and other faculty are available to offer guidance.

In many ways, the relationship between an advisor and student is a social contract, one built on trust, respect, commitment to rigorous scholarship, shared vision, and hard work. If at any point, either party believes that progress in the program would be best achieved via a change in mentorship, they may discuss the possibility with one another and the GPD. The GPD will assist in identifying another suitable advisor, likely another member of the Comprehensive Exams Committee of the Dissertation Committee. In the very rare circumstance that the student is unable to find a replacement advisor, the student will work with the Graduate Program Director to determine the best course of action.

- **Completing Foreign Language/Competency Requirements**

All doctoral students must acquire reading competency in two languages other than English. The language requirement may be fulfilled in one of two ways: (1) achieving a High Pass on the departmental examination in one language, and at least a Pass on the second, or by receiving a grade of “B” or “B+” for Pass and “A” or “A-” for High Pass in an appropriate course approved for this purpose by the Graduate Program Director; or (2) achieving a Pass or High Pass on the departmental examination in one language, and competency in a digital humanities or a social science quantitative skills demonstrated by receiving a grade of “B” or “B+” for Pass and “A” or “A-” for High Pass in an appropriate course approved for this purpose by the Graduate Program

Director. At least one High Pass must be received. Language requirements vary, according to the concentration fields. Language exams will be graded on a High Pass, Pass, and Fail basis; a High Pass is required in the student's primary language.

Students should work with their primary advisor to determine which foreign language(s) are appropriate for their program of studies. The advisor will have final say on these decisions.

- **Selecting Members of Your Comprehensive Exam Committee and Dissertation Committee**

Doctoral students will need to form two major committees: 1) Comprehensive Exams Committee; and 2) Dissertation Committee.

The Departmental [policies on forming your Comprehensive Exams Committee can be found here](#). It also includes filing an internal form, the [H1, which can be found here](#). That form should be filed at least 60 days in advance of the date of a student's written exams (for more on this, see section, "Comprehensive Exams").

In broad strokes, members of your Comprehensive Exams committee should be selected on account of the following:

- They are Graduate Faculty
- They are experts in a particular field your advisor has approved
- You have completed coursework and/or trainings with them on that particular topic
- They have agreed to serve on this committee

The makeup of your Dissertation Committee may or may not be the same as your Comprehensive Exams Committee. In some instances, the same Graduate Faculty members who supervised your exams fields may also be best equipped to serve as readers on your Dissertation Committee. In other instances, they may not be. Speak to your advisor and potential committee members about your particular topic and circumstances.

The [policies for forming a Dissertation Committee can be found here](#).

- **Comprehensive Exams**

Once a student has completed all required coursework and met the requirements to take their comprehensive exams, students should work with the primary advisor(s) and the other members of the committee to schedule the written and oral components of the exam. This should be scheduled at least 6 weeks in advance.

The full departmental policies and procedures governing comprehensive exams can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

In addition, below you can find additional useful information to help guide you through this process.

- Check Your Eligibility
 - Complete all required coursework before the exam semester
 - Complete required language/competency requirements
 - Ensure your dissertation committee is officially formed
 - Confirm your comprehensive exam committee is officially formed (Form H-1 filed)
 - Schedule your exam dates with your committee chair, who should facilitate between you and the other members of your committee

- What Are the Exams?
 - The overall goals of the exams can be described as a display of depth and breadth of knowledge.
 - Exams are used to assess whether students possess historical literacy sufficient to carry out a monograph-length research project.
 - Exams are designed for students to display the kind of broad grasp of historical events, regional contexts and historiographical developments in ancillary fields necessary to contextualize their own work as well as to construct and teach courses at the university level.
 - There are two major components to Comprehensive Exams: Written Exams and Oral Exams.
 - Written Exams are take-home exams based on 3 distinct fields/questions. They take place during a 72-hour period.
 - If a student successfully passes the written component of their exams, they must then take the Oral Exams, which are generally scheduled within 2 weeks of the Written Exams.

- Tips to Help you Prepare
 - Start refining your reading lists early
 - Make a structured study schedule
 - Clarify expectations with committee members
 - Practice essay-writing within time constraints
 - Revise your essays carefully before submission
 - Review broad themes, historiography, and comparative connections among your fields
 - Work on your oral communication skills by being an active participant in graduate seminars, meeting with mentors, attending conferences, etc.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Student Conduct, Honor Code, and Academic Misconduct

At the departmental level, we work with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI) to ensure that FIU is a “safe and stimulating environment in which scholarship and personal growth may occur.” SCAI is tasked with administering the application of FIU Regulation 2501, the Student Conduct and Honor Code (Code) in a fair and developmental manner. Through the application of the Code, the safety and growth of community members is protected, and the integrity of an FIU degree is preserved.

All students share the responsibility of adhering to the FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code, [which can be found here](#). All students must read it and become familiar with the policies. Lack of knowledge about a policy or procedure is never an acceptable or permissible excuse for a violation.

Students who are found responsible of any of these policies—including Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, Misrepresentation, Multiple Submission, Plagiarism, among others—will be subject to the penalties sanctioned by the SCAI and any other governing bodies as per FIU policy.

In addition, the Department of History Graduate Committee reserves the right to conduct its own investigation into any alleged infraction. Evidence from that investigation may be used in an academic misconduct report to SCAI. If a student has been found responsible by a SCAI process, the Department of History Graduate Committee may apply its own sanctions, including being placed on probation in the program, loss of Graduate Assistantship, receiving a failing grade in a course(s), or expulsion from the program.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is all around us. But it is no substitute for your own critical thinking and work. In the use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Jasper.io, Elicit, etc.), including generative writing tools, it is essential that students conduct themselves ethically and responsibly. It is critical that you do not substitute or forego your own critical thinking and skill as a writer and scholar in favor of the generated responses from AI. You must adhere to all relevant laws and regulations, as well as avoiding plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and any other form of cheating.

In addition, students must observe an individual faculty’s own policies on AI use in the classroom and beyond. Students may be found responsible of academic misconduct if they violate a professor’s and/or university AI policies.

For more guidance, we highly encourage students to speak to their professors and read the American Historical Association (AHA) report titled, [“Guiding Principles for Artificial Intelligence in History Education.”](#)

Academic Standing

All graduate students in the Department of History must meet the minimum standards set forth for good academic standing set forth by the University Graduate School, [which may be found here](#).

In addition, any student who earns a “B-” or lower in two or more of their graduate courses will be reviewed by the Department of History Graduate Committee, which may place the student on probation in the program. A student who is on probation in the program for more than one semester without signs of improvement as determined by the Department of History Graduate Committee may risk losing funding, may not be allowed to advance in the program, or may be dismissed from the program.

Doctoral Student Annual Evaluations

Per UGS policy, all doctoral students who have completed at least 18 credits must undergo a formal evaluation every year. You can [learn more about the process here](#). It is first initiated by the doctoral student [here](#), under your *Student* environment, in the *Tasks* file. Before initiating the form, however, students must meet with their primary advisor (or, in the rare case that they do not have a primary advisor, the GPD), to discuss a clear plan and vision for their work moving forward.

Note: this is required of all doctoral students. Students who fail to do this will have their registration blocked, delaying their enrollments, financial aid, and Graduate Assistantships.

Graduate Faculty in the Department of History meet annually to discuss all graduate student performance and concerns. Students must meet the minimum standards of the University Graduate School, [which can be found here](#). In addition, if the Graduate Faculty in the Department of History reaches a consensus that a student is failing to meet the standards of the program and discipline, including receiving an evaluation of “unsatisfactory” or below, the Department of History’s Graduate Committee may place the student on probation in the program and, if they see no substantive improvement after setting a clear path with listed objectives for the student to meet, move to dismiss the student from the program.

FUNDING, ASSISTANTSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

We know that financial security is an integral part of your graduate experience. Below, we list several funding opportunities that you may be eligible for.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate Assistantships are generally offered to doctoral students as part of an admission package; they are offered on a highly competitive basis and are subject to the regulations and policies set forth by the university and school. In some instances, additional funding may become available and MA students may be invited to apply for these opportunities.

You can learn more about these Graduate Assistantships on the [University Graduate School website](#). They are contingent on funding to our unit by the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs.

While the details are available on the UGS website, in broad strokes, these assistantships cover the following:

- Tuition waivers (except for some student fees)
- Stipends
- Heavily subsidized health insurance coverage

Graduate Assistants who are assigned to a particular class will be evaluated by their supervising professor each semester. The evaluation will be placed in the permanent student file. Students are encouraged to meet with their supervising professor as part of the Graduate Assistantship at the end of each semester to receive constructive feedback on their work and progress.

If Graduate Assistants receive more than two poor evaluations from the professor supervising their assistantship, the Department of History Graduate Committee will review their file and may rescind the student's assistantship.

Departmental Fellowships & Grants

We offer several fellowships and grants at the departmental level as well. For most of these opportunities, the department invites students to apply, often in the Spring. Other fellowships may be offered as part of a funding package at the admission stage to supplement a Graduate Assistantship. For more information, visit the [Department of History website](#).

Below is a list of some of the fellowships recently offered in the Department of History:

- Darden Pyron American Cultural History Fellowship
- Cook Scholarship for Research on the Colonial Iberian Atlantic World
- Aurora Morcillo Memorial Fellowship
- Henry J. Voegtli Fellowship on the History of Florida or Southern U.S.
- Chris Gray Memorial Scholarship

External Fellowships

Students are also encouraged to apply for competitive fellowships external to FIU. These are generally awarded by local, state, or federal agencies, or private foundations through a competitive merit-based selection process. Many external awards carry prestige and professional recognition, and many provide generous financial support. The size of the award, the specific costs it covers, and how it is to be administered varies and depends on the specific fellowship program guidelines.

We regularly send out information on external fellowships and grant opportunities; you can also find some others that UGS has [listed here](#). Please review them carefully before applying. If you are uncertain on how to proceed, speak to your advisor, the GPD, and/or the UGS Fellowships Office.

Either way, before applying to any external fellowship, students are required to fill out the [External Fellowship Information Form](#).

Public History Internships

As part of our robust program in public history, we regularly help identify and facilitate paid internships for student work at cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries, non-profits, historic houses, etc., where students gain meaningful experience in a professional environment. For help with this, students should contact the Department's Public History Coordinator, who is a member of the faculty designated to assist with such requests. You can find the Public History Coordinator's contact information on the History Department website. Please keep in mind: not all internships are paid.

COMMUNITY, STUDENT ASSOCIATION & STUDENT LIFE

DOHGSA – Department of History Graduate Student Association

All students currently enrolled in the MA and PhD programs in the Department of History at FIU are active members of DOHGSA. Alumni may participate in DOHGSA events as passive members with no right to vote or hold positions on the Executive Board.

DOHGSA complements academic programs by enhancing students' education experience through the development of, exposure to, and participation in academic, cultural, professional, and social activities.

Among its functions, DOHGSA:

- Serves as the central hub for graduate student community

- Hosts social and professional development events, including an annual scholarly conference
- Publishes a graduate student academic journal
- Provides networking and leadership opportunities

Why Get Involved?

- Build connections with peers and faculty
- Gain experience presenting research and publishing
- Stay informed about departmental events, funding, and internships

SELECT LIST OF UNIVERSITY-LEVEL SUPPORT

Resource	Purpose	Contact Info
<u>University Graduate School</u>	Graduate policies, forms, fellowships	ugs@fiu.edu , 305-348-2455, MARC 430
<u>FIU OneStop</u>	Tuition, payments, enrollment, financial aid	OneStop@fiu.edu , 305-348-7000; Financial Aid 305-348-7272
<u>Disability Resource Center</u>	Disability accommodations	disability@fiu.edu , 305-348-3532, GC 190
<u>FIU Libraries</u>	Research support, interlibrary loans, archives	askus@fiu.edu , 305-348-2695
<u>Career & Talent Development</u>	Career counseling, internships, CV/resume help	career@fiu.edu , 305-348-2600
<u>Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)</u>	Mental health support	caps@fiu.edu , 305-348-2277

Resource	Purpose	Contact Info
<u>Center for Excellence in Writing</u>	Writing tutoring, workshops, academic coaching	writingcenter@fiu.edu , 305-348-2899
<u>Student Health Clinics</u>	Affordable and easy-to-access care	305-348-8385
<u>Student Food Pantry</u>	Serves food for FIU students in need	pantry@fiu.edu , 305-348-6995, 305-348-3204
<u>Office of International Student & Scholar Services</u>	Visa guidance, immigration, advising	iss@fiu.edu , 305-348-2423