



Ethics & Applied Philosophy MA Program & Graduate Certificate Handbook

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**Table of Contents**

I. Introduction and General Information	3
A. Communication	3
B. Involvement	3
C. Self-Direction	4
II. Program requirements	5
A. Course requirements	5
B. Grading, Assessment, and Advising	5
III. Student resources	7
A. Funding	7
1. Stipends	8
2. Additional Scholarships	8
3. Graduate Student Travel Support	8
B. Graduate Student resources	9
C. Forms	9
IV. Policies and Procedures	10
A. Grading	10
B. Courses/Thesis/Graduation	10
C. Transfer Credit	10
D. Incompletes and Leaves of Absence	11
E. Respect for Diversity	11
F. Conduct	11
1. Academic Integrity	11

2. Professional Conduct	11
G. Suspension/Termination/Course expiration	12
H. University Policies	13
I. Teaching Assistants	13
V. Appendix: TA Assessment Form	14

## I. Introduction and General Information

Welcome to the graduate program in philosophy at UNC Charlotte! We have a Certificate in Applied Ethics and an MA degree in Ethics and Applied Philosophy. If you're not familiar with our campus, here's a map to help you find your way: <https://maps.uncc.edu>. The Philosophy Department is in the Winningham building, Room 103. (For 2018–19 we have moved temporarily to the Cedar building, Room 23B.)

This Handbook is designed to point out some of the important things you'll need to know to succeed in the program. You can also find some of this information at our graduate program page, <http://philosophy.uncc.edu/graduate>. And if you missed some of the background information about the program, please see our “graduate program information” page on that site.

Of course, we are also governed by the University's rules and requirements, which you'll find at <https://catalog.uncc.edu/index.php>. Just click on the current year's link. We'd like to draw your attention to a few sections in particular: “University Regulations of Student Conduct”; “Financial Information” (which includes information on financial aid, parking, and residency); and “Student Resources and Services” (which includes information about the health center and student activities). If you have remaining questions about the program, please feel free to contact the Graduate Program Director, Dr. Trevor Pearce, at [tpearce6@uncc.edu](mailto:tpearce6@uncc.edu) or 704-687-5559.

### A. Communication

We communicate mainly via our graduate student philosophy listserv, Facebook page (UNC Charlotte Philosophy), Twitter (@UNCCPhilosophy), and home page ([philosophy.uncc.edu](http://philosophy.uncc.edu)). Please like/follow/visit us to keep informed.

Also, feel free to talk with faculty and be present in the department for conversation with fellow graduate students. There a graduate student office in the department, so you will be able to have office hours as a TA and use the office for study. You will also have a mailbox in the department's mailroom for paper communication (so please check your box from time to time for paper communication) and access to the department's copy machine for copying. The departmental administrative assistant will help you get access.

### B. Involvement

Learning philosophy, and doing philosophy well, requires interaction with others. Therefore, you should plan to participate actively and constructively in your classes. Some faculty will even make this a part of your course grade. Class participation will significantly help your own learning and the learning of others in the class.

For the same kinds of reasons, we also strongly encourage you to attend functions sponsored by the department and by the Center for Professional and Applied Ethics as

often as you can, because this will help you to learn the variety of ways in which philosophy can be done at the professional level. We do recognize that our students have personal lives and may be working full time, so there are no requirements in this regard, but you are missing a significant portion of your education if you do not attend some of these functions. Please visit the Center's web page (<http://ethics.uncc.edu/>), e-mail [ethicscenter@uncc.edu](mailto:ethicscenter@uncc.edu) to be added to the event email list, then attend some events!

We also have a graduate student philosophy club, the Philosophical Union. The club elects officers each year and coordinates social events, and in the past, it has often helped to arrange the student philosophy conference in the spring. It is also necessary that we have our own graduate student group to make our students eligible for university funding for travel to conferences (see section III.A.3 below for more information).

### C. Self-Direction

One of the biggest differences between undergraduate and graduate study is that graduate students are expected to be in charge of their own education. Faculty are obviously specialists in their areas, but we cannot determine your interests for you, or force you to learn course material. You should, therefore, think of yourself as the director of your own education: read on your own, form your ideas, challenge yourself, and establish one or more areas of specialization. You will then be able to educate your fellow graduate students and the faculty in your area of expertise.

This has implications for how you conduct yourself in graduate seminars. Of course we expect that you complete the reading and assignments. In addition, however, we expect you to participate actively in discussion and even to lead it from time to time. Sitting in the graduate student equivalent of the back row of classes will likely not lead to graduate school success.

The article "Welcome to Graduate School" by David Shorter (in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*) has a VERY helpful set of recommendations for succeeding in graduate school; you can access it for free here: <http://chronicle.com/article/Welcome-to-Graduate-School/148775/>.

## II. Program requirements

### A. Course requirements

The Certificate program requires 15 credit hours (5 courses) and the MA requires 30 credit hours (10 courses).

#### *1. Certificate program*

Required course: Ethical Theory (usually offered in the Spring)

The remaining 4 courses are electives.

#### *2. MA program*

Required courses:

- \* Philosophical Methods (usually offered in the Fall)
- \* Ethical Theory (usually offered in the Spring)
- \* MA Research Paper Seminar (usually offered in the Fall)

The remaining 7 courses are electives, but keep in mind that MA students may take a maximum of two courses in the following group: courses transferred from another graduate program; courses offered by other departments and not cross-listed in Philosophy; and any Independent Study courses. A case for granting MA credit for one of these courses should be made to the Graduate Program Director by the student, supported by the student's main research adviser. The case can be made informally but should be officially submitted—for example via a brief email explaining the request and justification.

### B. Grading, Assessment, and Advising

#### *1. Grading:*

UNC Charlotte graduate grades are assigned as follows:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Definition</b>
A	Commendable
B	Satisfactory
C	Marginal
U	Unsatisfactory
I	Incomplete
IP	In Progress
W	Withdrawal
P	Pass
N	No Credit
AU	Audit
NR	No recognition given for audit

Your expectation should be that the quality of your course work is such that it almost always earns 'A' grades; this is particularly important if you hope to attend a PhD program subsequently. We recognize that a variety of factors go into performance in a given course, so an occasional 'B' is not necessarily a cause for concern. However, repeated 'B' grades signal that you are not performing at the level expected in a graduate program.

According to university policies, receipt of a 'U' in a course, or a third 'C' during a graduate program, results in automatic suspension from the program. See section IV.G. below regarding how to appeal such a decision.

## *2. Graduate Student Progress Letters*

At the end of each semester, the department's graduate faculty members will meet to discuss the progress of each student. A few weeks after the semester concludes, you will receive a letter outlining the faculty's collective view of your work so far. This letter does not become part of your record; it is only an informal feedback tool. Our goal is to help you to develop your skills and abilities by offering you frank feedback on strengths and areas needing attention. This will both help faculty who teach you in future semesters to guide you most effectively and give you a sense of where you need to devote your own time and energy in the program.

## *3. TA Evaluations*

Teaching Assistants (TAs) will also be evaluated by the students of the course in which they serve as TA. Please see Appendix 1 for the evaluation rubric.

## *4. Advising:*

The Graduate Program Director is the advisor of record, and s/he will be able to advise you regarding the program, curriculum, paperwork, etc. However, you should always feel free to ask any other faculty for help or advice.

If you are interested in continuing on to a PhD program, it will be especially important to request guidance on how best to position yourself for the application process. It would also be wise to begin building a relationship with one or two faculty members whose work intersects with your own interests, so that they can give you more specific guidance and can be well-positioned to write you a letter of recommendation when the time comes.

### III. Student Resources

#### A. Funding

##### *1. Stipends*

In an ideal world, we would be able to offer tuition plus a stipend to all of our students. Unfortunately, though we are always working on getting more, our funding options are limited. They are also unpredictable, so we are often not able to plan our funding more than a semester at a time.

Stipends are usually a fixed amount per semester, paid out bimonthly by the university, and requiring a modest amount of work (e.g., 5-8 hours/week) within the department. In assigning funding, one of our main overall goals is equity and another is our priority in funding MA students over Certificate students. Funding amounts may vary between semesters and between students with funding availability, number of students, or required responsibilities

According to university policy, in order to be eligible to receive and retain graduate assistant (GA) funding, students must:

- a) be enrolled in at least six credit hours (two courses) for the semester in which they receive funding;
- b) complete INS paperwork required for employment on campus;
- c) have a 3.0 GPA or better in any completed graduate coursework;
- d) participate in any required orientation program;
- d) have completed their previous semester's assigned work satisfactorily, according to the supervising faculty member and/or the Graduate Program Director.

##### *2. Additional Scholarships*

The Graduate School keeps an updated list of financial opportunities at:

<http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/funding/how-graduate-student-funding-works>. The Department also has a scholarship available in the area of Peace and Social Justice. Please contact the Graduate Program Director for more information.

##### *3. Graduate Student Travel Support*

We want to help as much as we can with supporting graduate student travel to present work at conferences or, in rare cases, other forms of travel that contribute directly to a student's area of research. Listed below ((a) through (c)) are the sources of travel support available to graduate students in our department; they should be utilized *in the order in which they appear*.

Please note that the University requires that travelers complete a Travel Authorization Form at least two weeks prior to travel (this should be turned in to the Philosophy Administrative Assistant along with any supporting documents). After you return, you will need to fill out, within 30 days, a Travel Reimbursement Form with actual expenses and supporting documents for everything except “per diem” meal costs. Please see <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-602.7> for complete details regarding the University’s travel policies.

In many cases, the Department or Center (whichever is providing funds) may be able to purchase tickets or hotel stays with a purchase card (“P-card”) so that you will not have to pay up front and await reimbursement. Please see the Center or Department Administrative Assistant for further information, or for help if you have questions.

*a) Graduate and Professional Student Government*

<https://gpsg.uncc.edu/travel-funding>

This organization has some funds available to help graduate students attend conferences. There are restrictions, such as applying within a certain application window and receiving approval for your travel. There is also an annual maximum and it is first-come, first-served. For more details, see their website and plan ahead of time so that your application has time to be reviewed. (Also, more funding is made available to students who are part of a chartered grad student organization, so this is reason to make sure our own organization is active.)

*b) Center for Professional and Applied Ethics*

The Center has agreed to commit up to \$500 annually per student to support graduate student travel to ethics-related conferences.

*c) Department of Philosophy*

The Department works with a very modest travel fund that supports our faculty. When it has funds available, the department will consider supporting graduate student travel costs up to \$100 for expenses beyond what is covered by the previous two sources. Here, too, you should plan ahead of time, because the travel fund is exhausted before the end of the fiscal year (June 30).

## B. Graduate Student resources

There is a wide variety of resources available via the UNC Charlotte Graduate School. Information on things like housing, financial aid, etc. can be found at <http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/current-student-resources>. We also have a Center for Graduate Life, where you can find professional workshops and social events for graduate students. Please see <http://gradlife.uncc.edu> for further information.

You can receive a limited amount of free individual counseling and unlimited group

counseling at the counseling center (<http://counselingcenter.uncc.edu/>). The student health center is also available for students; see <http://studenthealth.uncc.edu/general-information/faq> for frequently asked questions about the Health Center and eligibility issues. (Students may purchase health insurance if they are not already covered.)

Information on other options such as student housing are available here:  
<http://housing.uncc.edu/housing-options/communities/graduate-student-community>.

### C. Forms:

You will need a variety of forms while in our program. Most forms can be found here:  
<http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms>.

Important forms include:

- transfer credit
- appeal of suspension
- application for candidacy for a degree
- application for graduation

## IV. Policies and Procedures

A. Grading – see grading information above (II.B)

### B. Courses/Graduation

#### *1. Courses*

See Section II above for specific program requirements. We strongly recommend that you take Philosophical Methods during your first semester and Ethical Theory during your second semester, to help prepare you for your other courses.

A ‘full-time’ load, which would allow you to finish the program in two years, might look like this (but you may want to move electives around depending on course offerings):

- 1<sup>st</sup> semester: Philosophical Methods; one elective
- 2<sup>nd</sup> semester: Ethical Theory; two electives
- 3<sup>rd</sup> semester: MA Research Paper; two electives
- 4<sup>th</sup> semester: Two electives.

Notice that in two of the four semesters you must take three courses—which semesters these are is up to you. If summer courses are offered, this might allow you to finish in two years while taking only two courses per semester.

#### *2. Graduation*

The university requires you to file for graduation surprisingly early in the semester in which you plan to graduate; it’s often the fourth week of classes. The Graduate Program Director will usually send out reminders, but the best way to make sure you don't miss this deadline is to plan ahead.

### C. Transfer Credit

Students may transfer credit from previous graduate level work only if these courses are appropriate for the Philosophy program and meet the guidelines established by the Graduate School (see the current year’s Graduate Catalogue for specific instructions: <https://catalog.uncc.edu/index.php>). Keep in mind that no more than six credit hours may be applied to the MA degree (or one to the Certificate) from the following set of courses: courses transferred from another graduate program and approved by the MA Graduate Program Director; courses in other departments not cross-listed in Philosophy; and any Independent Study courses.

### D. Incompletes, Withdrawals, and Leaves of Absence

The program is governed by the University's policy on withdrawal from courses and "Incomplete" grades (which you can find here: <http://provost.uncc.edu/policies/grading>; look under section II). We are also governed by the University's policy on Leaves of Absence. You can find that here: <http://registrar.uncc.edu/students/registration-information>. (Scroll to the bottom; you will find it under the section entitled "Graduate Level Students.") Please see the Graduate Program Director if you have further questions.

#### E. Respect for Diversity

Diversity is one of the top priorities of the program, of the Department, of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and of the University. UNC Charlotte strives to create an academic climate in which the dignity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore, we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and socio-economic status. The UNC Charlotte Diversity website is <https://diversity.uncc.edu/>. A link to the Philosophy Department's own statement can be found on our home page.

#### F. Conduct

##### *1. Academic integrity:*

The program adheres to the code of conduct established by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the Graduate School with respect to academic integrity, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, etc. See full academic integrity policy here: <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>.

##### *2. Professional conduct*

While neither the University nor the Department has a code of professional conduct, we urge you to be thoughtful about how you conduct yourself. We strongly support academic freedom, so this is not a caution to guard what you say. Rather, we have in mind things such as how you treat your fellow graduate students or the undergraduate students for whom you are serving as a TA. For example, while you are a TA, do not discuss your students' work or behavior on social media. They have just as much need for a supportive learning environment as you do. Certain discussions of student work may also constitute a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to which you are held as a TA. See here for the full policy: <http://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-402>, and here for a Powerpoint presentation on FERPA by the University's Senior Counsel: <http://teaching.uncc.edu/learning-resources/articles-books/best-practice/ferpa>.

Another resource for professional development is the Center for Graduate Life (<http://gradlife.uncc.edu>). They regularly offer opportunities for professional development, for example workshops on CV preparation.

Professional conduct is not limited to your own conduct; we also expect faculty to behave professionally. Should you ever have concerns with processes or climate within the department, please know that the Chair and Graduate Program Director want to know about them and will work with you to address them. Should you wish to speak with someone outside the department on such matters, the Graduate School has a Graduate Student Ombuds. Further information on the Ombuds can be found here: <https://gradlife.uncc.edu/resources/ombudsman>.

## G. Suspension/Termination/Course Expiration & Time Limits

### *1. Suspension and Termination*

According to University Policy, any student who receives an Unsatisfactory ('U') grade or a third 'C' is automatically suspended from the program. The program may also recommend suspension or termination of a student who is not making adequate progress.

Such decisions may be appealed; the appeal process can be found here: <http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/suspension-and-termination-appeals>.

Note that suspension also means that you are not eligible for tuition or stipend support from the university; see section III.A.1 above for eligibility information

### *2. Course Expiration and Time Limits*

Regardless of academic progress, courses for master's students begin to expire after 6 years. Students have the option of revalidating those that are less than 8 years old. To revalidate a course, the student, along with the program coordinator and the course instructor, prepare a revalidation plan that must be reviewed and approved by the Graduate School. This plan often involves taking a special examination designed by the faculty of the graduate program. Once the plan has been completed, the program coordinator must notify the Graduate School in writing. The Revalidation Form is available on the Graduate School website at [graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms](http://graduateschool.uncc.edu/current-students/forms). Students may not revalidate courses with a grade of 'C' or lower, courses that are internships or other forms of practica, or courses taken at other institutions. Additionally, no more than 25% of the courses on a student's program of study may be revalidated and for master's students no course older than eight years may be revalidated.

## H. University Policies & Ombuds

We hope you will not need these, but in case you ever do, the full catalog of university policies (e.g., harassment; student grievance) can be found here:

<http://legal.uncc.edu/policies>.

In addition, we want to make you aware of the Graduate Student Ombuds. If you have a difficult issue that you are unable or choose not to address within the department, there is an Ombuds within the Graduate School who can help you. See here for more information: <https://gradlife.uncc.edu/resources/ombudsman>.

## I. Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Our aim is to allow all students who want a chance to serve as a TA to do so. Therefore, each semester we evaluate students eligible to TA and try to make assignments equitably and with an eye to fit between the student's research interest and the course material. Some students may have the opportunity to TA more than once. The Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Chair and the instructor of the course in question, will make TA assignments.

TAs must satisfy training requirements before serving as a TA the first time. Please see <http://gradlife.uncc.edu/teaching-assistants/ta-training-resources> for more information.

**Appendix:**  
**Graduate Teaching Assistant Evaluation**

**GTA Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course:** \_\_\_\_\_ **IOR: Yes\_\_ No\_\_**

**Please rate 1 to 5 the following questions, with 5 being the highest. If the item does not apply to the GTA, answer N/A.**

**Preparation**

The GTA follows the syllabus provided for the course.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA is prepared for class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA enforces the grading policies described in the syllabus.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA uses the grading rubrics provided for the course.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA enforces the attendance policies described in the syllabus.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA is available to the students on a regular, scheduled, and announced basis.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**Teaching**

The GTA presents information in a clear and easy-to-understand manner.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA is able to explain and reframe information when students do not understand.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA uses meaningful activities or in-class exercises when teaching.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA offers ample opportunities for meaningful discussion in the class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA offers opportunities for the students to engage in critical thinking in the class.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA guides class discussions in ways that are helpful to the students.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**Classroom management**

The GTA is sensitive when handling difficult classroom behavior.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA has appropriate control over the class and maintains boundaries when interacting with students.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA respects differences of opinion.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA is sensitive to differences of culture.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**Overall**

In general, the GTA takes their responsibilities seriously.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A
The GTA is effective as a teacher and is able to promote learning.	1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Comments or areas for improvement:

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_