

## **M.A. THESIS AND QUALIFYING PAPER PROCEDURES**

### **Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology, Bryn Mawr College**

Per the GSAS regulations, in addition to completing the necessary units of work and special skills as specified via the [M.A. Degree Requirements](#), every M.A. candidate must present a thesis or one or more qualifying papers in a special field in the subject studied for the M.A. The paper(s) shall be read, and approved or rejected, by at least two members of the department or one member of the department and one in an allied department. All papers must be completed to the satisfaction of the department before the candidate is admitted to the final examination.

The majority of students at Bryn Mawr choose to complete an M.A. thesis. Students who have previously completed an M.A. thesis at another institution may, however, choose to complete two qualifying papers in lieu of a thesis. When selecting qualifying paper topics, students are advised to complete qualifying papers in both Classical and Near Eastern archaeology.

#### **Initial Procedure and General Details**

1. Consult with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and your proposed dissertation director or qualifying paper advisors in order to select and develop a thesis field or two qualifying paper fields. As outlined above, if completing qualifying papers, one paper should be on a topic in Classical Archaeology, whilst the other should focus on Near Eastern Archaeology. Students will ideally start these discussions during the first year of the program. Feel free to discuss your choices at the End-of year Meetings with the entire faculty of your department.
2. Following these initial discussions and having selected an M.A. thesis or qualifying paper topic(s), in consultation with the DGS please complete and submit the [M.A. Candidacy Form](#). Due dates for these forms can be found on the [GSAS calendar](#).
3. During discussions with your proposed dissertation director or qualifying paper advisors, a second reader for each piece of work will be identified. These can be faculty in your own department or a faculty member from an allied department.
4. The M.A. candidate should work in close consultation with their MA supervisor/qualifying paper supervisors during the completion of the M.A. thesis/qualifying papers. Submission should only take place once the MA supervisor/qualifying paper supervisors have agreed that the thesis/qualifying paper is ready.
5. Once the MA thesis/qualifying papers are ready for submission a digital (and/or if requested by the supervisor/second reader a hard) copy should be sent to the MA supervisor/qualifying paper supervisor. Once approved and submission is confirmed by the supervisor, a copy (either digital or hard copy) should be made available to the second reader.
6. Following the submission of the thesis/qualifying papers a date and time for the oral exam(s) should be scheduled. For the thesis, a single oral exam will be required, lasting no less than one hour. Two oral exams, one for each paper, will be scheduled for those completing separate qualifying papers. The date and time of these should be mutually agreed upon by the student, primary supervisor for the thesis/qualifying paper and second reader. The departmental administrator can, if necessary, help with scheduling and the booking of rooms for the oral exam.

## **Further Guidelines**

M.A. theses are generally expected to be around 50-60+ pages, with MA qualifying papers being around 40 pages each. These are general guidelines only, and the exact M.A. thesis/qualifying paper format—including citation style and final length is determined individually by each supervisor in conversation with the student, and as appropriate to the field of study. Any questions regarding thesis/qualifying paper format and expectations should be directed to the faculty member supervising the work.

## **Taking the Oral Exam**

The oral exam lasts a minimum of one hour and is generally conducted in person in a private room on the College campus. Questions might cover a closer reading of specific texts, images or datasets, a follow-up regarding the substance of the thesis/qualifying paper, or other topics. Generally, each examiner is given 15-20 minutes to ask questions, although this structure may vary. Upon successful completion of this oral exam, the examiners will sign off on the [Record of M.A. Completion](#) Form indicating that all the requirements for M.A. degree have been met and return the form to the GSAS office.

*Last updated 9/20/2023 by Jennie Bradbury.*