Anthropology, Ph.D.

Requirements

The Ph.D. degree leads to the accomplishment of professional-level skills in conducting independent research, and normally features specialized training in one or two of the discipline’s subfields. Doctoral education is guided by a Ph.D. committee composed of members of the faculty competent in the particular areas and topics chosen by a student.

The doctoral program includes an integrated process of compiling annual portfolios that represent the development of knowledge, progressively developing and completing reading lists, developing and submitting research proposals to funding agencies, developing and defending a dissertation prospectus, and writing two comprehensive exam essays. Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination and the dissertation prospectus, a student advances to candidacy for the Ph.D. To complete the Ph.D. degree, all doctoral candidates are required to conduct independent anthropological research, write a dissertation, and defend it.

For students who enter the doctoral program with an existing M.A. (in anthropology or a related field), the faculty develop an individualized program of study based on a student’s existing course work and goals.

Ph.D. students also may elect to pursue an optional concentration in either feminist anthropology or paleoanthropology.

For program requirements, refer to the current Graduate Student Guidebook on the Department of Anthropology website.

Admission

Applicants for admission to the graduate program in anthropology are considered regardless of their previous field of training. Students without previous work in anthropology are expected to perform additional work as necessary to achieve competence expected for their degree objective.

Students normally are admitted under the assumption that they intend to pursue the Ph.D. degree, although the department does admit students seeking a terminal M.A. Students without an M.A. in anthropology devote the first two years fulfilling the M.A. requirements. After those requirements are completed, the student’s committee may award the M.A. with admittance to the Ph.D. program.

Students with an M.A. in anthropology from another institution may proceed directly into a Ph.D. program organized around their special research interests. If they lack any of the requirements of the graduate program at the University of Iowa, they are informed of those requirements when admitted. Acceptance of credit hours from other institutions will follow UI regulations.

Applicants for admission to the graduate program must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College.

Anthropology graduate program applicants are required to upload the following documentation to the University of Iowa Graduate Admissions online application:

- official academic records/transcripts;
- a brief statement of interest or intent regarding why graduate study in the Department of Anthropology is desired;
- three letters of recommendation;
- a writing sample (preferably a research paper or M.A. thesis);
- an application for graduate funding; and
- official Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test scores from the Educational Testing Service (University of Iowa institution code 6681).

International students must send their official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores from the Educational Testing Service (University of Iowa institution code 6681). Once recommended for admission, international students must send a financial statement.

Financial Support

Financial assistance, usually in the form of teaching and research assistantships, may be offered to doctoral and potential doctoral students in good standing for up to four years. Students making satisfactory and timely progress through the graduate program are in good standing. Eligibility for financial aid is reduced after two years in the M.A. program, after two years in the Ph.D. program, or after one year of postdoctoral fieldwork or research enrollment. The amount and types of aid depend on departmental needs.

Students are notified in writing of a provisional financial award before the semester or summer session for which the award has been granted. Although awards are made before the end of the previous semester, each award is contingent upon satisfactory completion of that semester’s work by the awardee.

Career Advancement

Graduates find rewarding careers in government, international affairs, conservation, economic development, public health, urban and regional planning, social work, museum work, and education. They might work to help resolve contemporary world problems by joining the Peace Corps, the Americorps program, or an international or domestic nongovernmental organization.