

Doctor of Philosophy Board

AY 23/24 Report



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Best Practices and Recommendations in PhD Education from AY 23/24:

Academics

1. In general, consider how to balance the need for flexibility in the program with the need for clear expectations with deadlines to ensure student success.

Handbooks and Documentation

2. Ensure that all handbook language is accurate and clear
3. Please incorporate the following into your handbook:
 - a. The University's [Policy on Annual Academic and Professional Development Discussions](#)
 - i. The Board suggests using one IDP form for all members of the program.
 - b. The policy on [Mentoring Commitments for PhD Students and Faculty Advisors](#). We also suggest circulating this information to faculty and students
 - c. Information on the University's Ombuds: [The Ombuds Office](#) is a place where people can confidentially and informally raise any issue of concern involving Johns Hopkins doctoral and postdoctoral students, fellows and programs.

Advising and Mentoring

4. Connect with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to learn more about the faculty mentor training.
5. Design a process for switching supervisors with clear timelines and student funding protocols.
6. Decide how students and faculty will select DBO/GBO committee. Develop rubrics for the DBO.GBO exam and other curricular requirements to better help faculty and students understand the expectations. Consider publishing these rubrics in the handbook.
7. Consider requiring all advisors/mentors to participate in regular program meetings to discuss student academic progress and program policies/goals (similar to a faculty meeting).

Well-Being and Student Feedback

8. Develop mechanisms for addressing student well-being. Consider procedures for identifying and treating mistreatment by advisor/research mentor. Consider co-advisors or multiple mentors to reduce student mistreatment.
9. Consider proactive feedback solicitation from students, including annual surveys and inviting students to participate in faculty meetings (when appropriate).
10. Consider ways to build community and belonging among your PhD students, particularly with small cohorts and with different tracks.

Professional Development

11. In collaboration with all divisions, the University has professional development staff and programming to help students. We suggest meeting with Executive Director [Roshni Rao](#) or Director [Doug Dluzen](#) to learn more about the opportunities and the ways the program can facilitate professional development, including connections with industry for potential internships, as you discussed.
12. Consider how you will help students who want to have teaching opportunities/teaching assistant roles. If students do wish to learn more about pedagogy, the [Teaching Academy](#) has resources and opportunities.
13. Consider ways to track and engage future alumni (newsletters and communications, speaker-panels, internships, research trainings, etc.)



Programs reviewed by the Doctor of Philosophy Board in AY 23/24

Cognitive Science (KSAS)
Philosophy (KSAS)
Computer Science (WSE)
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BSPH)
Neuroscience (SOM)
Economics (KSAS)
Applied Mathematics and Statistics (WSE)
Nursing (SON)
History of Science and Technology (KSAS)
History of Medicine (SOM)

Outcomes of AY 23/24 program review

- Nine (9) programs received recommendations with a request for a one-year follow-up report
- One (1) program received recommendations with a request for a six-month follow-up and one-year report

While most programs reviewed by the DPB are performing well, all programs receive recommendations for continued improvement in PhD education.

Frequent Discussion Topics in DPB PhD Program Reviews in AY 23/24:

- Understanding how the recent PhD student collective bargaining agreement ratification affects PhD programs, particularly in financial, curricular, and professional development realms.
- Sharing best practices among PhD programs and divisions on a regular basis.
- Considering methods for increasing applicants and enrolled students from underrepresented groups.
- Examining curriculum for potential revisions.
- Exploring student satisfaction with advising and mentoring, including implementing thesis committees early in graduate careers.
- Clarifying handbook language and aligning with collective bargaining agreement.
- Needing additional faculty and staff support for PhD program operations.
- Increasing awareness for faculty and students on expanded careers, additional support available with doctoral life design programming.
- Improving the student life experience, culture, and community, specifically supporting referral and access to mental health and supportive services.
- Identifying and implementing appropriate incentives/repercussions for faculty to complete annual reviews in collaboration with PhD students.
- Addressing faculty and student expectations of time to degree to ensure alignment.
- Increasing alignment and coordination among cross-divisional programs with similar disciplinary focuses.
- Inviting the Ombuds to discuss her role with current students.



New PhD Program

- The School of Medicine faculty proposed a new PhD program in Medical Physics. The Doctor of Philosophy Board approved the proposal and the proposal is now with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC).

Conferral

- The DPB voted to approve conferral for 147 students in August 2023, 124 students in December 2023, and 247 students in May 2024.

Other DPB business in AY 23/24

- Four (4) 6-month follow-ups, two (2) delayed 1-year follow-ups, and eleven (11) 1-year follow-up reports reviewed from DPB reviews in AY 21/22 and AY 22/23.
- The Board standardized their conflict of interest framework to better understand which members should be recusing themselves from specific parts of meetings.
- Continued refinement of the review process and the accompanying documents and resources.

Doctor of Philosophy Board Members for AY 23/24

Faculty Members:

Kate Smith, Chair • Professor, Department of Health, Behavior and Society, BSPH
Judy Bass • Professor, Department of Mental Health, BSPH
Jonah Erlebacher • Professor, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, WSE
Peter Espenshade • Professor and Associate Dean, SOM
Hunter Gehlbach • Professor, Education, SOE (Spring 2024)
Devesh Kapur • Professor of South Asian Studies and Director of Asia Programs, SAIS
Niloofer Haeri • Professor, Anthropology, KSAS
Sean Prigge • Professor, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, BSPH
Adam Sheingate • Professor, Political Science, KSAS
Trina Schroer • Professor, Biology, KSAS
Jennifer Wenzel • Associate Professor, SON

PhD Student Members:

Prakhar Misra • International Studies, SAIS
Gabriel Kressin Palacios • Psychological & Brain Sciences, KSAS
Rodney Eric Williams • Neuroscience, SOM

Staffed by:

Sabine Stanley • Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education
Stephanie Brehm • Director of Graduate Education, Office of the Provost