

Doctor of Philosophy Board

AY 24/25 Report



JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY



Doctor of Philosophy Board

The Doctor of Philosophy Board advises the Provost about University-wide issues pertaining to the PhD. In addition, the Board approves new PhD programs, recommends Ph.D. candidates for conferral to the president, conducts program reviews, and sets guidelines and policies that enhance the experience of all PhD students. The Board identifies and disseminates best practices in PhD education to programs and seeks to enhance the visibility and prominence of PhD education across the University.

Best Practices and Recommendations in PhD Education:

These recommendations come from conversations with programs during the review process and higher education research on doctoral education.

Academics and Admissions

1. Utilize best practices in PhD admissions, with [strategies and guidance](#) from the Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education office.
2. 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.
3. Ensure that all scholars have completed any necessary research training, including Responsible Conduct of Research ([RCR](#)) and Institutional Review Board ([IRB](#)).

Handbooks, Policies, and Documentation

4. Confirm that all handbook language is accurate and clear and aligned with divisional policies and Collective Bargaining Agreement.
5. Incorporate the following into your handbook:
 - a. The University's [Policy on Annual Academic and Professional Development Discussions](#)
 - b. The policy on [Mentoring Commitments for PhD Students and Faculty Advisors](#). We also suggest circulating this information to faculty and students
 - i. Connect with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to learn more about the faculty mentor training.
 - 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.

Well-Being and Student Feedback

6. 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.
7. Integrate proactive feedback solicitation from students, including annual surveys and inviting students to participate in faculty meetings (when appropriate).
8. Build community and belonging among your PhD students, particularly with small cohorts and with different tracks.

Professional Development

9. Meeting with [Doctoral Life Design Studio \(DLDS\)](#) to learn more about the professional development staff, opportunities, and programming.
10. Training students as teaching assistants/instructors at a departmental/program-level, in collaboration with the [Teaching Academy](#) resources and opportunities.
11. Examine and enact 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 24/25

Anthropology (KSAS)
 Cellular and Molecular Physiology (SOM)
 Cross Disciplinary (XDBio) Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences Neuroscience (SOM)
 English (KSAS)
 Graduate Program in Immunology (SOM)
 History of Art (KSAS)
 Material Sciences and Engineering (WSE)
 Modern Languages and Literatures (KSAS)
 Physics and Astronomy (KSAS)

Outcomes of AY 24/25 program review

- Seven (7) programs received recommendations with a request for a one-year follow-up report
- Two (2) programs 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 24/25:

- Responding swiftly to student concerns.
- Developing appropriate strategies for meeting time to completion goals.
- Defining program goals and resources in emerging and merging departmental and divisional structures.
- Utilizing feedback on Individual Development Plans to enhance professional development and mentoring experiences.
- Partnering with Doctoral Life Design Studio (DLDS) unit on career and professional development opportunities, in various industries and fields.
- Enhancing community and intellectual exchange among PhD students.
- Using the JHU resources for mentoring guidance to provide faculty with expectations for communication with advisees.
- Increasing student-advisor and Thesis Advisory Committee engagement and outlining the expectations of Thesis Advisory Committees for faculty and students.
- Examining curriculum for potential revisions, particularly elective courses, language requirements, and skills development, often to align with a program's time-to-degree goals.
- Creating mechanisms to increase faculty awareness of, and address, student mistreatment.
- Providing information about the Ombuds resources available to current students.
- Exploring interdisciplinary, inter-divisional, and inter-University collaborations.
- Requiring mentor training for all PhD advisors and encouraging conversations among faculty on best practices for mentoring.
- Considering methods for increasing applicants and enrolled students from various groups and backgrounds.
- Clarifying handbook language and aligning with collective bargaining agreement.



Conferral AY 24/25

- The DPB voted to approve conferral for
151 students in August 2024
166 students in December 2024
222 students in May 2025

Other DPB business in AY 24/25

- One (1) 6-month follow-up and fourteen (14) 1-year follow-up reports reviewed from DPB reviews in AY 23/24 and AY 24/25.
- Continued refinement of the review process and the accompanying documents and resources.

Doctor of Philosophy Board Members for AY 24/25

Faculty Members:

Kate Smith, Chair • Professor, Department of Health, Behavior and Society, BSPH
 Kamila Alexander • Associate Professor and Director of PhD and Postdoctoral programs, SON
 Judy Bass • Professor, Department of Mental Health, BSPH
 Peter Espenshade • Professor and Associate Dean, SOM
 Hunter Gehlbach • Professor, Education, SOE (Spring 2024)
 Feilim Mac Gabhann • Associate Professor, Biomedical Engineering, WSE
 Matthias Matthijs • Associate Professor, International Political Economy, SAIS
 Sean Prigge • Professor, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, BSPH
 Derek Schilling • Professor, Modern Languages and Literatures, KSAS
 Adam Sheingate • Professor, Political Science, KSAS
 Trina Schroer • Professor, Biology, KSAS

PhD Student Members:

Aisha Ellis • Nursing, SON
 Namitha Guruprasad • Electrical and Computer Engineering, WSE
 Stacy Lu • Population Family Reproductive Health, BSPH

Staffed by:

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