

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I want to earn a PhD, but I don't have a master's degree. Should I apply to the master's program?

You do not need a master's degree in order to be admitted into the PhD program. You only need to have completed a bachelor's degree before enrolling in classes. If you want to earn a PhD, it is important to apply directly to the PhD program so that you will be considered for funding.

Q: What are the admissions standards for the graduate program?*

Ideally, students entering the MA and PhD programs will meet the following standards:

- Scoring at least 156 on the verbal portion and 148 on the quantitative portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

- An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.3 overall and 3.5 in their major, or higher. - A GPA in graduate courses taken elsewhere of 3.6 or higher.

Q: What does a strong application look like?

As you can imagine, being admitted into the graduate program is a competitive process. You will be up against many other applicants who have strong grades and GRE scores. Consequently, a strong application is more than just good grades and test scores. The following are the ingredients for a strong application:

- Well-written statement of interest that clearly explains why you want to go to graduate school. What are your goals? What motivates you to study political science? Why do you think Temple's department would be a good fit for you?

- Choose a writing sample that exemplifies your best work. The paper need not come from a political science class but it should be a research paper that demonstrates your ability to synthesize and analyze arguments and evidence.

- Ask letter writers who can write you a strong letter of recommendation and speak to your potential as a graduate student. To this end, letters from faculty members with whom you have worked will be more informative than letters from non-academics. For example, if your GPA and GRE are not perfect indicators of your potential as a student, your letter writers can help us place these scores in context to you.

Q: What funding opportunities are available?

Funding is available to a select group of PhD students that includes a monthly stipend for your living expenses, tuition remission for full-time enrollment in coursework, and health insurance. Funding is determined through a competitive process. In general, there are two types of funding:

- Graduate Assistantships: these are provided by the College of Liberal Arts and the department allocates assistantships each year. In return for the assistantship, students serve as teaching assistants, research assistants or as instructors of record.

- University Fellowships: these are allocated each year by the central graduate school. To be considered for a university fellowship, you must submit your application by the December 1 deadline, as these decisions are made early in the year. University fellows receive funding in their first and fourth years and are not expected to serve as a teaching assistant or research assistant; the stipend is also a bit higher than the graduate assistantships stipend. In their second and third years, university fellows who remain in good standing can expect to receive a graduate assistantship (see above).

Students who receive assistantships must remain in good standing within the department in order to be considered for continued funding. Funded students are also expected to take a full course load (9 credit hours prior to passing exams and 1 credit afterwards).

Once admitted, students may also be able to obtain funding by serving as a research assistant on an external grant obtained by a faculty member or through a university research center. However, these types of funding are more ad hoc and less regular than the assistantships and fellowships.

Q: I'm applying to the master's program. Can I receive funding?

Unfortunately, funding is only available for PhD students.

Q: If I am admitted but do not receive funding, how much does tuition cost?

Tuition can vary from year to year. For current rates [see tuition and fees](#) on the admissions page.

Q: What are the requirements for the MA degree? For the PhD degree?

Current MA requirements can be found in the [university bulletin](#). Current MA requirements can be found in the [university bulletin](#)

Q: How many classes do I have to take each semester to be a full-time student?

While students are actively taking classes (i.e. before taking comprehensive exams), a full course load in a semester is 9 credit hours or 3 courses. Students on assistantship have the option of taking 6 credit hours, but are strongly encouraged to take a full load in order to finish the PhD on time and maximize the benefits of funding.

Q: If I am admitted, can I start in the spring semester? No. Students must begin in the fall semester.

Q: If I am admitted, can I defer my admissions?

Yes, but only for one year. If you wish to defer your admissions by more than one year, you must reapply. Moreover, if you received an assistantship, you will be re-entered into the potential funding pool and there is no guarantee that you will be awarded funding for the next year. If you wish to defer your admission, you must notify the director of graduate studies in writing and receive permission.