

UNM Graduate Programs in History: FAQ

How long does it take to get an MA?

There are two options: thesis (total of 30 credit hours) and non-thesis (total of 32 hours). The non-thesis option typically takes two years. The thesis option often takes a bit longer, five semesters or sometimes six. 24 credits of MA thesis credits may be rolled into the PhD should you decide to continue to the doctorate at UNM.

How long does it take to get a PhD?

This varies somewhat according to the field chosen. Fields like medieval Europe where multiple foreign languages and specialized skills like paleography are required will take longer than US history. Generally speaking, if the PhD student has an MA in history, coursework typically takes four to five semesters to complete with comprehensive exams taking place at the conclusion of that coursework. The development of a prospectus, a period of archival field research, and writing the dissertation should take an additional two to three years. Five years is a reasonable expectation if you are motivated and efficient.

How do you award departmental fellowships?

Departmental fellowships are merit based and may be single or multi-year packages. They are awarded to both MA and PhD students. The maximum for MA students is two years of departmental funding; for the PhD, the maximum is three years. Graduate assistantships typically involve either teaching or administrative duties within the department. They offer an annual stipend between \$11,000-14,000, health insurance, and tuition.

Departmental funding decisions are made once per year, coinciding with the January 15 applicant pool for admission the following fall. **Should you apply at the October 15 deadline for admission the following January, you would not be considered for funding at that time.** However, your application would be considered with the fall applicant pool.

Students who do not enter UNM with departmental funding are eligible to reapply every year for as long as they are enrolled in the graduate program.

How many applications do you receive? How many are accepted? What is the typical size of the new graduate student population each year?

These figures vary but in recent years, we typically have received 60 to 80 applications. US West and Latin America are the most popular fields but we also get significant numbers of aspiring Europeanists, particularly at the MA level. Of those students, we accept around half. The typical incoming class of MA and PhD students varies between 15 and 20.

How many fellowships are available?

This also varies from year to year but on average, we offer 8 to 10 multi-year packages. Given current fiscal constraints that are affecting graduate education nation-wide, that number may decrease.

Qualifications for the PhD program:

I have a master's degree in a field other than history and I would like to apply to the PhD program. What are my chances for admission?

There is no hard and fast answer to this question. Lacking an MA in history, the Graduate Entrance Committee looks for a significant commitment to historical studies at some point in the academic career. This could be an undergraduate history degree or a significant number of credit hours in history (30+ hours) while pursuing another degree. Additionally, an MA degree that has some relation to the historical field such as American Studies, Native American Studies, Latin American Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science or Law would be viewed more favorably than a master's degree that has little direct bearing on historical training (medicine, physics, interior design).

We are working at developing a fast track PhD which would not require an MA in history as a prerequisite. That option is still in the planning stages. For the moment, if you aspire to a PhD and lack only a sufficient formal background in history, you are welcome to apply to the doctoral program. If the admissions committee has reservations about your preparation, it might decline admission to the PhD program but recommend to admit you as an M.A. student.

Be advised that a significant number of graduate credits taken at the MA level in history can be applied to fulfilling the PhD requirements. Up to 24 MA credits in History can be counted towards the PhD, resulting in a significantly shorter time in course.

If you would like to enhance your credentials, you may enroll in graduate courses in history at UNM as a non-degree student. You could also pursue undergraduate or graduate courses in history as a non-degree student at another institution near your place of residence, should you not live in Albuquerque. Some of these credits may be transferable.

I want to pursue a graduate degree in history but I lack expertise in a foreign language. What should I do?

Prior study of a foreign language (or more than one) is viewed favorably by the admissions committee. However, not having that background does not preclude admission to the program. One can demonstrate mastery of a foreign language in two ways. 1) to pass a translation exam of 600 words from the target language into English. The exam lasts two hours and one may consult a dictionary. The passage is generally selected from a modern academic text. Two years of foreign language study should be sufficient to pass this test. 2) **AFTER admission to the graduate program in History**, you may take 12 credits in a single foreign language earning a B or better. They can be at any level, 100 or higher.

Does a B- count? No, it must be a B or better.

Can language credits taken prior to admission to the graduate program in History be used to fulfill the language requirement? No.

I didn't major in History as an undergraduate, but now I want to get an MA degree? What kind of preparation do I need?

Generally we like to see 30 hours of history credits including the basic courses you have already taken and some upper division work. We also strongly prefer (but this is not an absolute requirement) that you take Historiography 491 or a Senior Seminar (492) as part of your preparation. However, if other aspects of your academic background - strong grades, GREs, letters of rec., etc. are especially impressive, the admissions committee has been known to be flexible about prior formal training in history.

The GRE:

As of Fall 2017, the Department of History no longer requires GRE scores.