



## **M.A. Program in Political Science**

Welcome to the Master of Arts program in Political Science at Iowa State University. This handbook will provide you with information about our M.A. policies and procedures. Although many departmental regulations are specified within this handbook, you should be aware that there are additional requirements set forth by the Graduate College. These are outlined in the Graduate Student Handbook, which has information and guidelines to facilitate progress through the entire graduate program. The handbook is on line at:

<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/publications/gchandbook/homepage.html>.

There is a one-page "Procedures for Earning a Master's Degree at Iowa State University" that is an invaluable resource/checklist to follow as you work through your program. This is found in the Graduate Student Handbook and reprinted in this handbook.

As you begin your course of study there are bound to be questions or concerns you will have. We want to assure you that the faculty and staff will be available to assist you in any way we can. The program faculty and students welcome you and extend you to best wishes for success in your studies.

For further information about the M.A. Program contact:

Director of Graduate Education  
529 Ross Hall  
Iowa State University  
Ames IA 50011  
PHONE: (515) 294-3764  
FAX: (515) 294-1003  
tuckness@iastate.edu  
WEB PAGE: <http://www.pols.iastate.edu/>

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## **Guidelines for Pursuing a Master of Arts Degree**

The department offers work for a Master of Arts degree (M.A.), with a major in political science, and minor for students in other departments. The Political Science department additionally offers the Master of Science in Information Assurance (more in-depth information for the MSIA is presented later in this handbook). Detailed requirements for all graduate degrees may be obtained from the department office or at the department's web page: <http://www.pols.iastate.edu/gradhome.shtml>.

The M.A. program is designed to enable its graduates to engage in governmental research, enter public service or private industry, teach, or pursue further graduate study. Graduate students may also wish to work for certification for high school or junior college teaching.

A thesis is required for the M.A. degree. The department also has a joint Master of Arts/Juris Doctorate (M.A./J.D.) program with the Law School of Drake University. Detailed information for the M.A./J.D. can be found at the ISU Political Science webpage as well as the Drake Law School [website](#) (under Joint Degree): Students wishing to pursue this joint degree must submit separate applications to both Drake University and Iowa State University and be accepted by both institutions.

M.A. graduates have a broad substantive understanding of the political process and the academic study of politics. They also have in-depth knowledge of one or more subfields in political science. Graduates are skilled at conducting research and preparing thorough research summaries. They are able to identify and address complex political questions, taking into account related ethical, legal, economic, and social issues.

The usual prerequisites for admission to major graduate work in the M.A. program are completion of at least 12 credits in political science, the GRE (Graduate Record Examination), one year of a single foreign language (equivalent to 8 semester hours) and a course in basic statistics (equivalent to Stat 101). If the basic statistics requirement has not been met, the student may remedy the deficiency by passing equivalent courses, for which no graduate credit will be received.

Students in other graduate programs may obtain a minor in political science by completing at least 9 credits of political science courses, including one of the proseminars. Interested students should consult the Graduate College Handbook for additional information on graduate minors.

### **Admission/Application Requirements**

#### **Admission Requirements**

Prospective students seeking full status admission (non-provisional) are encouraged to have completed 12 semester hours of undergraduate course work in political science. It is highly recommended that students also have one year of a single foreign language (equivalent to eight semester hours) and a course in basic statistics (equivalent to Statistics 101) before entering the program. Students can submit a free preapplication at this address: click

[college.iastate.edu/](http://college.iastate.edu/) and select “Political Science.” Students who are tentatively accepted are encouraged to fill out the full application.

### **Application Requirements**

1. Verbal and quantitative Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are optional for admission but required for incoming students who wish to be considered for an assistantship. LSAT and GMAT scores may be accepted with the permission of the Director of Graduate Education.
2. At least three letters of recommendation. Normally these would be from individuals who are competent to evaluate the applicant’s past academic performance and potential for graduate study.
3. A 250-500 word essay. This essay should explain why the applicant wants to pursue the Master of Arts degree and what areas or topics in political science he or she would like to study in the program.
4. Transcripts from previous undergraduate and graduate institutions.
5. Application fee.

International Students: The department normally does not consider applicants whose native language is not English with a TOEFL score less than 85. Nonnative English speakers with undergraduate or graduate degrees from the United States are not required to take the TOEFL. Students with degrees from comparable English speaking colleges and universities can contact the DOGE about whether a TOEFL score is needed.

### **Application Deadlines**

The application deadline for fall admission is May 1 and the deadline for spring admission is October 1. The departmental financial aid deadline for students wishing to be considered for an assistantship is March 1. Assistantships are not generally awarded to students entering in the spring. The department does sometimes accept late applications for admission and financial aid, so contact the Director of Graduate Education if you are considering applying after the deadline.

#### ***Deadlines***

Fall by May 1  
Spring by October 1  
Summer by March 1

#### ***Department Financial Aid Deadline***

Fall/Spring by February 1  
(complete application: all requirements fulfilled and in Political Science office)

### **Class Registration Process**

The following information on registration policies and general “how to register” for classes can be found at this web address: <http://www.iastate.edu/~registrar/registration/>.

You might want to check out the ISU home page (<http://www.iastate.edu/>) and review the Students section as well as the Graduate College home page (<http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/>).

## **Canceling**

Canceling your registration means you are dropping ALL your courses before the first day of the term. Other deadlines apply for some courses, such as half-term courses that do not begin at the start of the semester. Download the [cancellation form](#) and follow the instructions printed on it. A Tuition Adjustment Schedule is also found there. Call 515-294-1889 for more information.

## **Withdrawing**

Withdrawing from the university means that you are dropping ALL your classes on or after the first day of the term. You must notify your adviser and your college when you decide to withdraw from the university. Contact your adviser to complete a “Request for Withdrawal” form. Your tuition adjustment is based on the date you begin the withdrawal process.

## **Degree Requirements**

There are various requirements for each student progressing through the program. A brief description of these requirements, as well as the Procedures for Earning a Master’s Degree, is found in this section. The Procedures sheet is also listed on the Graduate College webpage, where each box has a link to help with any questions you may have. The Procedures page is a very important resource and serves as a road map through the degree program.

During the academic year, graduate students must be registered for a minimum of nine credits to be considered full-time students or five credits to be considered half-time students. During the summer term, graduate students must be registered for a minimum of five credits to be considered full-time students or three credits to be considered half-time students.

The master’s degree student is expected to complete the degree program within five years.

## **Graduate English Exam/English Proficiency Testing**

Reading and writing in the English language are essential skills for succeeding in graduate school at Iowa State University and equally essential for future success in careers that require a graduate degree. An English examination is only required for students whose native language is not English.

*Nonnative Speakers of English*—**Graduate students whose native language is not English and who did not graduate for a U.S. High School must take the English Placement Test at the beginning of their first semester of enrollment.** This test is administered by the Department of English. It must be taken in addition to TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is taken as part of the

admissions process. A student who does not pass this examination is assigned to one or more courses in the English 101 series. This course work must be completed during the first year of study.

### **Oral English Certification Test (International TAs)**

All international graduate students who are offered or considered for a teaching assistantship are required to take the **Oral English Certification Test (OECT)**. The OECT consists of 2 sections: the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) section and the TEACH teaching-simulation section. The OPI is rated by an interviewer and 2-3 other raters, and for TEACH “the class” usually consists of 2-3 raters and a proctor, including at least one ISU student. The raters individually assign a score for the overall comprehensibility and effectiveness of the spoken language and listening ability. The scores of OPI and TEACH are combined, and the result is reported to students and departments as one of four possible levels of certification:

- Fully certified (Level 1)
- Conditionally certified (Level 2)
- Certified with restrictions (Level 3)
- Not certified (Level 4)

Potential ITAs who demonstrate English proficiency on the TOEFL iBT, IELTS, or TSE are exempt from taking one or both sections of the OECT. Students in these four categories are each appointed to different teaching duties..

### **Program of Study Committee/Program of Study (POS)**

The Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) will assist incoming students in outlining an academic program of study and in constituting a Program of Study Committee. A student’s POS Committee consists of the major professor and a minimum of two other committee members (one member must be from outside the major). The major professor, who must be a member of the graduate faculty in the student’s declared major, serves as chair of the POS committee. The outside member(s) of the POS committee provide relevant specialized knowledge or a different perspective helpful to the planning, execution, and reporting of research. If a graduate minor has been declared, a graduate faculty member from the minor program or interdepartmental minor must serve on the POS committee. The major professor and the representative from the minor field may not be the same person.

The student and the major professor develop the program of study with the consultation and approval of the POS committee. This agreement between the student and the Graduate College should be submitted as early as possible for approval. It is recommended that the committee be formed as early as the second semester of graduate study. At this time, the student needs to meet with his/her POS Committee to plan the remainder of courses in the selected degree program. In no case can the committee be formed later than the term before the final oral examination. POS forms are available. Each student’s program of study should be designed to correct deficiencies in academic preparation, allow study of subject matter that most interests the student, and avoid

repetition in areas where the student is well prepared. The POS committee assures that program requirements are met before signing the POS form. The Committee Appointment Form and the Program of Study form are available through Access Plus as of September 2014.

The POS form is approved by the student, committee members, and the DOGE of the major, minor or interdepartmental major/minor, if appropriate, before submitting it to the Graduate College. There the program of study is reviewed for adherence to the standards of the Graduate College and is submitted to the Dean of the Graduate College for approval.

A partial example of a completed POS form is shown below. A POS must be submitted to the Graduate College for approval listing all courses to be taken to fulfill the 30-credit requirement for the M.A. degree. This includes courses taken, to be taken with estimated semester, etc.

### Course Work

Students must complete at least 30 semester credit hours. A minimum of 21 of these hours must be taken in the Department of Political Science. Six credits (two classes) of 400-level course work and three credits of thesis credit (Political Science 699) may be applied toward the 21-hour minimum.

<b>II Planned Graduate Program</b>									
Line	University	*	Department Name	Course Number	Semester Credits	**	Course Title	Grade	Year
1	ISU		Pol S	502	3		Political Analysis & Research		F19
2	ISU		Stat	587	4		Statistical Methods		F19
3	ISU		Pol S	515	3		Biorenewables Law & Policy		F19
4	ISU		Pol S	508X	3		Policy Implementation		S20
5	ISU		Pol S	516	3		International. Biorenewables Policy		S20
6	ISU		Soc	540	3		Comparative Social Change		S20
7	ISU		Pol S	507	3		Proseminar in Public Policy		F20
8	ISU		Soc	549	3		Sociology of the Environment		F20
9	ISU		Pol S	590	2		Special Topics		F20
10	ISU		Pol S	699	3		Research/Thesis		S20
11				Total Cr.	<b>30</b>				

Students are strongly encouraged to complete nine credit hours in graduate courses outside the Department of Political Science that relate to their area of interest. These courses must be approved by the Director of Graduate Education or the student's POS Committee, and any exceptions to the nine-hour requirement must be approved by the student's POS Committee.

### **Creative Component and Thesis Requirements**

All students are required to write a creative component (599) or thesis (699). **For either option, the POS committee should approve a written proposal.** A thesis or creative component is considered complete when it is approved by the Committee and the Graduate College. In order to finish in a given term (Fall, Spring, or Summer) a student must have an approved POS the semester prior to the semester in which the student plans to graduate. The student must also defend and submit the thesis prior to the deadlines set by the university.

**A creative component (Pol S 599)** is a research project where students show the ability to take the knowledge and skills learned as part of their graduate work and apply that to a problem related to political science or public policy. A typical creative component would be a report, a program evaluation, or an instructional manual related to a student's current employment or desired future employment. It may also address topics similar to those in a thesis but in a way that shows solid understanding of the area but does not make a new contribution to the field as would a thesis. A creative component will show success in achieving the specified aims of the research project, typically in a document 20-40 pages in length. A Creative Component can be two or three credits. A student doing the creative component may have a POS committee of a single political science professor, though additional members are permitted.

**A thesis (POL S 699)** is supervised, original research that adds to the body of existing knowledge in the field of political science. It should contain a literature review and specify the new contribution that it makes to existing knowledge. It should have a methodology section that explains the qualitative and/or quantitative methods that are used to analyze the specified research question or questions. It should also include an explanation of the limitations of the findings of the thesis and possible avenues for future research. A passing thesis shows a student has demonstrated successful commitment to advancing scholarship in political science. The ultimate criteria is success in adding to the body of knowledge in the field, typically in a document of 50-80 pages. A student may register for six credits of 699 thesis with the permission of the committee which will consist of at least three members (a major professor from political science, a second member from political science, and a third member with an appointment outside of political science). A student would normally register for three credits of 699 at least one semester prior to the semester in which the student registers for three more credits of 699 and graduate. The total number of 590 and 699 credits should not exceed nine. It is possible for a student pursuing a thesis to switch to a creative component with the permission of the POS committee, but any 699 credits already earned may not be used on the POS. A thesis must meet the formatting requirements specified by the Graduate College (<https://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/thesis/>).

### **Final Oral Examination**

After completion of all the requirements for the Master of Arts degree, the student will be administered a final oral examination (approximately two hours) by his/her POS Committee. The examination may cover all courses taken by the student and the material related to his or her thesis. There are several important deadlines for the final oral and for graduation. The Application for Graduation (Diploma Slip) must be turned in by the first Friday of the semester in which a student is planning to graduate (if not before). The Request for Final Oral form must be turned in three weeks prior to actual date of exam. In addition, there is a Graduate College deadline each semester for the last date to take the final oral examination.

### **Registration for Classes**

Admitted students should consult the M.A. director or major professor prior to registering for classes. Students early in the program should give priority to core and methodology classes when

making course selections. Advanced students should focus on connecting the concentration and thesis, in conjunction with the POS Committee. Courses related to the M.A. program and political science generally are listed on the Department's web page. Additional classes are available at other university internet sites ([www.iastate.edu](http://www.iastate.edu)).

Registration can be accomplished on line through the Access Plus system. To use this system, the students will need their ISU ID and password. (Access Plus does have a deadline for use—check University Calendar for dates.)

An alternate registration procedure is a walk-through system to Room 10, Enrollment Services Center. Many students take some of their courses off-campus. Registration for off-campus classes can be done through the Registrar's Office at [this link](#).

Non-admitted students may register for graduate classes as well (non-degree program). However, students who are not admitted should be aware that a strict limit of 9 credits may be transferred into the course of study after acceptance into the M.A. program. Credits transferred from another institution must be approved by the student's POS Committee. (See the Graduate College Handbook for more information on transfer credits.)

## The M.A. Curriculum Requirements (30 credits)

### Required Courses:

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| I. <u>Concentration Area Required Courses</u>                   | (6 cr)     |
| II. <u>Concentration Area Elective</u>                          | (3 cr)     |
| III. <u>Pol S 502 Political Analysis and Research</u>           | (3 cr)     |
| IV. <u>Statistics 587 (formerly 401) (Strongly recommended)</u> | (4 cr)     |
| OR  |            |
| <u>2 years of a single foreign language</u>                     | (16-20 cr) |
| V. <u>Thesis or Creative Component</u>                          | (2-6 cr)   |

### Concentration Areas:

Effective January 1, 2016 there will be three concentration areas: American Politics, Global Politics, and Public Policy. In each concentration area there will be two required classes offered alternate years, normally in the fall. There will also be elective courses, most of them offered alternate years. Deviations from the curricular requirements such as counting courses not listed below as concentration area electives require approval from the Director of Graduate Education or the POS committee. Students admitted prior to 2016 may use the previous requirements.

### Required Courses in each concentration:

American Politics: 560 American Political Institutions and 525 Mass Political Behavior.

Global Politics: 504 Proseminar in International Politics, 505 Proseminar in Comparative Politics.

Public Policy: 507 Proseminar in Public Policy, Policy Implementation 508X

### Elective Courses

American Politics: 510, 513, 587, 610 A

Global Politics: 544, 552, 581, 610 D, 610 E

Public Policy: 513, 515, 516, 534, 535, 542, 544, 571, 572, 574, 575, 577, 580, 582, 587, 610 G.

### Required Course Distribution:

*30 credits are required for the degree, of which 21 credits must be from political science.* Of the 21, up to 9 credits may be from 400-level classes in the Political Science Department. Note that the total number of credits from classes numbered below the 500 level and below that may be used on the POS is 15 and Stat 587 counts toward this total (eligible courses in political science must be 400 level and courses in other departments must be at least 300 level). The required courses above count toward this distribution based on the department in which the class is taken. It is important to understand that the credits for the two years of a single foreign language (e.g., 16 for German 101, 102, 201, and 202; or 20 for Chinese 101, 102, 201, and 202) are not acceptable for graduate credit, so do not count toward the 30 credits required to receive the M.A. The 4 credits for Stat 587 do count as graduate credit, and are applied toward the 30 credits required for graduation. Students whose first language is not English normally will not be expected to take two years of another foreign language, but in such cases are required to take Statistics 587. Some 300 level courses in other departments are eligible for the POS if they are not cross-listed with political science.

### Other Requirements Graduate English Placement Test.

(required for all international graduate students—to be taken before completion of 12 credits. International students may be required to take additional courses in English as a Second Language depending upon their scores.)

**Master of Arts in Political Science**  
**Graduation Check List**

Required Courses Checklist (Write course department and number in blank)

_____	<u>Concentration Required Course 1</u>	(3 cr)
_____	<u>Concentration Required Course 2</u>	(3 cr)
_____	<u>Concentration Elective</u>	(3 cr)
_____	<u>Pol S 502 Political Analysis and Research</u>	(3 cr)
_____	<u>Statistics 587 (401) (or 16-20 credits of a single foreign language)</u>	(4 cr)
_____	<u>Thesis or Creative Component</u>	(2-6 cr)

**Course Distribution Worksheet**

**In this column, list at least 21 credits taken in the Department of Political Science. Classes listed above may be repeated on this list. Only two 590 courses may be used on the POS. No more than 9 credits of 590 and 699 may be used on the POS. Exceptions require approval from the DOGE and POS Committee.**

**In this column, list at least 9 additional credits. These may be taken outside of political science and should be relevant to your field of study. Students who use a language in place of Stat 587 (401) will need additional credits in this section.**

Course	Credits	Course	Credits
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Total</b>	_____	<b>Total</b>	_____

**Other Requirements**

\_\_\_\_\_ No more than 9 credits below the 500 level used to reach total of 30.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Graduate English Exam** (required for all international graduate students, to be taken before completion of 12 course credits).

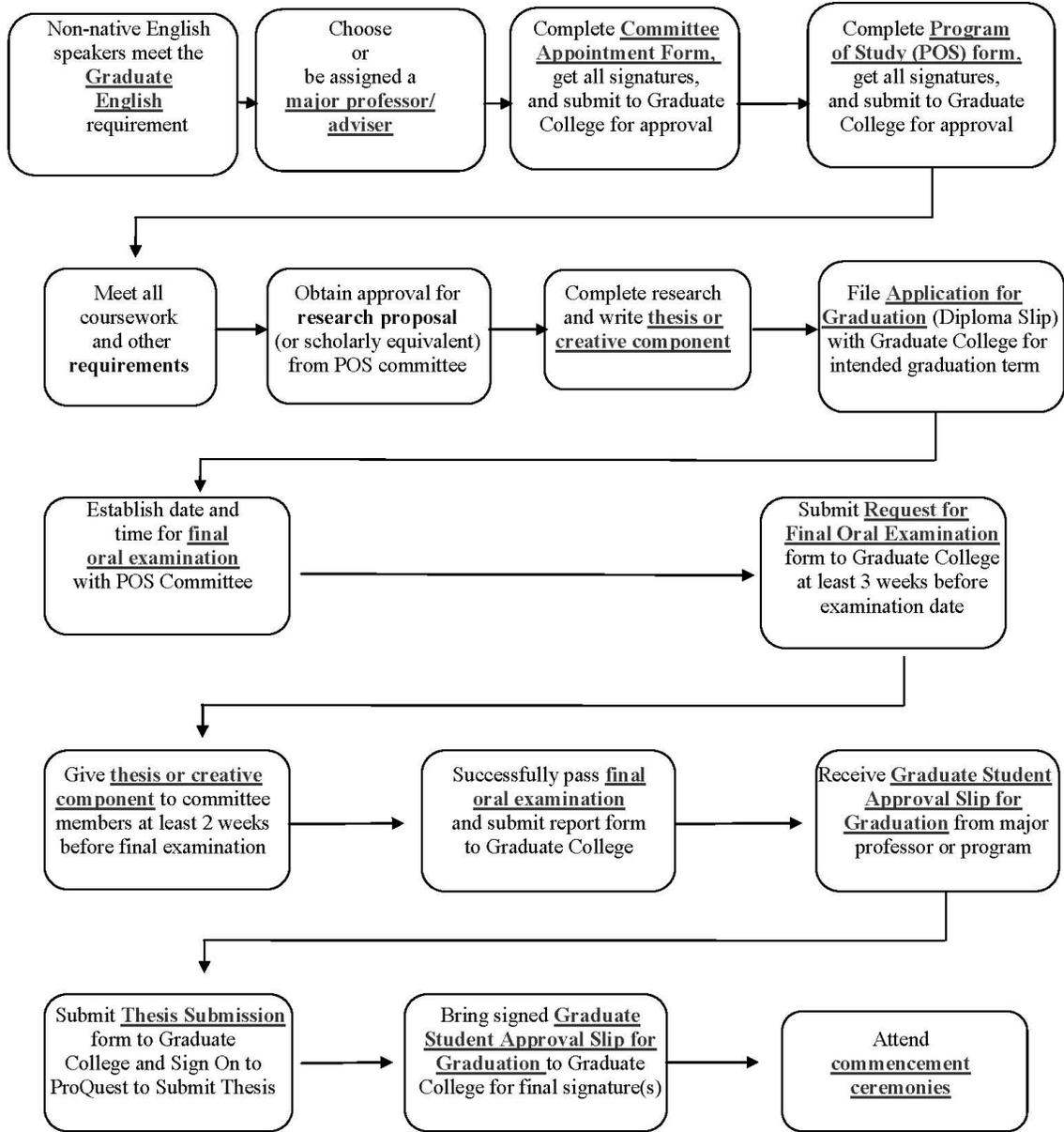
\_\_\_\_\_ **Meet** with DOGE and set up POS Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ **Meet** with POS Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ **Submit** written thesis proposal to POS Committee

\_\_\_\_\_ **Final Oral Exam of Thesis or CC**

# Procedures for Earning a Master's Degree at Iowa State University



## **Financial Aid, Graduate Assistantships, and Scholarships**

Some students may be eligible for financial aid for all degree programs discussed in this handbook. Financial aid applications are available in the Student Financial Aid Office, Room 0210, Beardshear Hall. 515-294-2223. Departmental deadline for completed financial aid/graduate applications is February 1 for consideration for the next academic year.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

Two types of Graduate Assistantships are available: Teaching Assistantships (TA) and Research Assistantships (RA). These positions are limited so it is important that you apply for an assistantship early in the year. These assistantships provide a unique opportunity for students to gain valuable experience while providing financial support through the school year. The assistantships also include a medical insurance package through Blue Cross–Blue Shield. A dental plan is also available for an additional fee. Students may apply for assistantships by submitting completed program application by March 1 for consideration for the next academic year. Assistantships are sometimes available for students who start in January. All students who wish to be considered for an assistantship should submit GRE scores.

### **The Donald E. Boles Distinguished Graduate Student Award**

Awarded to recognize an outstanding graduate student in the Department of Political Science.

Application Deadline: March 1

Amount: \$500

To be considered for the Boles award, the applicant will need to submit: 1) a written statement formally applying for the award; 2) a statement outlining individual's plans for the next year, including graduation date, and 3) one or letters from faculty members who can give an appraisal of academic performance and promise for future excellence.

### **Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (IMPORTANT)**

**All student rights and responsibilities, information dealing with academic probation, grievance procedures, etc. can be found in the Graduate College Handbook, Chapter 9: Rights and Responsibilities (pages 58-70). Students must maintain a GPA of 3.00 or will be placed on academic probation which can affect an assistantship. The Political Science Department graduate program follows all rules and procedures as set forth by the Graduate College. Please be sure to review this information.**

## **Important Telephone Numbers and Contact Information** **Iowa State University**

**Iowa State University web site:** Most university information can be obtained at this site. Includes an index for easy tracking of information, student information, etc.:  
<http://www.iastate.edu>

**Liberal Arts & Sciences Online Learning** <http://www.eol.iastate.edu/> Main office: [elo@iastate.edu](mailto:elo@iastate.edu) Tech Support [elotech@iastate.edu](mailto:elotech@iastate.edu) Phone: (515)294-7470

**Drake University Law School, Drake University, Des Moines, IA 50311**  
Joint degree in Political Science: M.A./J.D.  
Website (under Joint Degree): <http://www.law.drake.edu/admissions/?pageID=jointDegrees>  
Admissions: (515) 271-2782

**Graduate College, Room 1137 Pearson Hall (515) 294-4531**  
Web site: [www.grad-college.iastate.edu](http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu)  
All graduate applications, forms, handbooks and general information can be found at the Graduate College website. The Graduate College has information on departmental deadlines, financial assistance, GRE requirements, etc., as well as a directory of graduate programs.

**International Students and Scholars, 3248 Memorial Union (515)-294-1120**  
International students should check out the web site for information on visas and other required procedures: <https://www.isso.iastate.edu/joomla/>

**Political Science Department, 503 Ross Hall (515) 294-3764**  
In-depth information on the Political Science graduate programs can be found at the departmental website: <http://www.pols.iastate.edu/graduate-students/>

**Office of Admissions, 100 Enrollment Services Center. 1-800-262-3810 (in U.S.) or (515) 294-5836** Website: <http://www.admissions.iastate.edu/graduate/index.php>  
Admissions questions can be sent by e-mail to: [admissions@iastate.edu](mailto:admissions@iastate.edu)

**Student Financial Aid Office, 0210 Beardshear Hall 515-294-2223**  
Website: <http://www.financialaid.iastate.edu/> email: [financialaid@iastate.edu](mailto:financialaid@iastate.edu)