

Graduate Degree Program Self-Study

Department

History

Degree Program

Master's (MA and MS)

For each graduate degree program in your department, complete this self-study by entering responses and data in the table boxes in this document. Please respond as concisely as possible. The total length of this completed document should not exceed 14 pages, 12-point font.

The self-study is organized into questions regarding the overall nature of each graduate degree program and the critical components of recruiting, mentoring, management, and funding.

Overall

What is the purpose and mission of this graduate degree program?

The history graduate program aims to foster a student's independent intellectual development within a particular field of history. We emphasize a scholarly tradition that privileges the careful interpretation and conservation of historical resources.

What are the core strengths of this graduate degree program?

The history graduate program's overriding strength is its small size, which allows a very low faculty to student ratio. Small classes are vital to the rigors of seminar teaching and Socratic discussion, which is our central pedagogical approach. Students also have direct access to faculty through one-on-one tutorials.

Areas of emphasis:

1. History of the American West

The history department has a national reputation for excellence in the study of the United States west. Four of the department's tenured professors specialize in western history, two of whom serve as editors for the *Western Historical Quarterly*, the premier scholarly periodical in western history. The journal is especially important to the graduate program in terms of recruiting, training and funding. Each year the editors of the *Quarterly* award a two year editorial fellowship to an incoming graduate student chosen from a national pool. The competition is far and away our most effective recruiting activity in terms of student quality. Even applicants who do not receive the fellowship often enter the program with funding as graduate assistants. The *Quarterly* fellows receive editorial training in the processes involved in publishing high quality scholarly essays and book reviews.

As a result of their association with *Quarterly*, the fellows read and critique the most current work of top scholars in western history. The fellows regularly present scholarly papers at the annual meeting of the Western History Association, where as part of the editorial staff, they enjoy a unique opportunity to meet leading scholars in their field, share research and network with other graduate students across the country. These connections often prove advantageous when students apply to Ph.D. programs.

2. Multi-disciplinary study of the past

Environmental history forms another strength area. Three tenured professors specialize in environmental history and supervise graduate students. Faculty links with the College of Natural Resources provide student access to expertise in geography, ecological science and Geographic Information Systems, as well as other appropriate fields in the natural sciences. Environmental history projects stress methodological innovation in the use of historical evidence. The environmental history emphasis currently has six students working at various stages. The Merrill Cazier library has an especially rich collection of sources relevant to environmental history of the Great Basin and the Colorado Plateau.

The history faculty consistently collaborate with other graduate programs in the college, including American Studies, cross-listing courses in the graduate seminar in the American West and Native American Studies. Four tenured professors serve on the American studies steering committee and routinely serve on American Studies graduate thesis committees.

3. LDS History – The history department’s Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture, Professor Phillip Barlow offers graduate seminars in the biography of Joseph Smith. Dr. Barlow chooses one student per year from among our pool of graduate applicants who have expressed an interest in studying LDS history. Dr. Barlow’s students serve as Graduate Assistants and his research assistants in alternate semesters. These students regularly take work as interns and employees of the various libraries and archives of the LDS church.

What are the primary needs to achieve and advance the purpose/mission of this degree program?

1. Stabilization of *Western Historical Quarterly* funding for graduate student fellows.

2. Increased funding for graduate assistantships and tuition waivers. We are not now competitive with peer institutions.

3. Develop an emphasis area in public history. Public history programs have access to extramural funding from a number of local, state, and federal entities

Public history is a growing specialization in the historical profession, with many scholars finding employment in non-academic environments. In order to address increased demand from students, the history department plans to develop an emphasis in public history, including museum/archival studies, historical preservation, and historical advocacy. Several faculty members have experience in museum work, historical editing, and historical preservation, and many of our students complete internships and associated training in the Utah State University Special Collections. But, the history department will need to hire an additional faculty member to fully develop the program.

Recruiting

Recruiting criteria include, but are not limited to, academic preparedness (GPA, standardized test scores, prerequisite degrees); diversity (gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship); number of applied/admitted/enrolled students

What types and numbers of students are you targeting for this graduate degree program?

The graduate program seeks students with an excellent undergraduate record to work in a core strength areas of western, environmental and LDS history. We generally admit between 8 and 12 students per year depending on the quality of the applicant pool.

What recruiting strategies are you currently using?

The *Western Historical Quarterly* editors recruit nationally for their fellowships by directly soliciting members of the Western History Association, readers of the journal and other networks of scholars. In 2012, one quarter of all applicants to the MA program applied a result of the WHQ's direct recruitment outreach. Others mention the WHQ as one factor that sparked their interest in the department..

The Graduate Program website contains a number of recruiting materials, including an accounting of how former students have fared in academe, as well as in the professional sector.

Our own professors draw USU students into the graduate program through the History Honor Society.

Former students now working in academia often direct students to our program.

How effective are these strategies?

The graduate admissions committee has seen the quality of our applicant pool increase substantially over the past three years.

The history department is rapidly developing a reputation for excellence in mentoring of graduate student in environmental history. To date, most of these

students have taken environmental history as USU undergraduates, or they have entered as students in western history and have branched into reading with professors Culver, Conte and Lewis. These students are often attracted by the opportunity to work across campus with professors in the College of Natural Resources.

In the realm of LDS history, Dr. Barlow's national reputation and connections with scholars of Mormon history and culture consistently draws applicants from Utah's institutions of higher education and BYU Idaho.

How do you evaluate recruiting effectiveness?

Quality of the applicant pool in terms of undergraduate institution, reputation of referees, GRE scores, and writing ability. See below for a list of this year's applicants.

In-State Students

Name	Institution	GRE Verb/An %	GPA	Area	Status
Edwards, Clint	USU	90/48	3.58	None	C
England, Jon	USU/U	70/45	3.07/3.6	LDS/West	C
Stromberg, Alex	BYU-I	35/45	3.56	West	C
Schaefer, Michael	BYU	51/72	3.6	LDS	C
Keller, Ian	Reed	99/96	3.2	West	C
Thompson, Nicole	Weber	48/96	3.5	West	C
Marianno, Scott	BYU	89/67	3.9	LDS	C
Otteson, Michael	USU	88/48	3.8	Classics	C
Foster, Stuart	Clemson	64/48	2.72	US	C
Swift, Jessica	USU	77/72	3.09	West	I
Tonnies, Carol	BYU	69/48	2.11	West	C
Waltz, Alexandria	WSU	94/96	4.0	US	C
Nani, Cori	USU	93/99	3.97	LDS	C
Cobia, Aaron	BYU	64/29	3.5	West	C
Farnsworth, Casey	BYU	70/45	3.95	Iberia	C
Burd, Camden	U of U	72/48	3.1	ENV	C
Parr, Samuel	BYU	84/96	3.62	West	C
Williams, Jacob	U of U	86/72	3.5	West	C
Bolingbroke, David	BYU	93/48	3.67	West	C

Out of State Students

Name	Institution	GRE Verb/An	GPA	Area	Status
Jenkins, Stephanie	BYU-ID	62/48	3.19	Euro	C
Bedall, Lenora	Memphis	NA	NA	NA	I
*Johnson, Amanda	Notre Dame	93/94	3.7	West	C
Carpenter, David	CalSac	31/48	2.86	West	C
*McQuilkin, Christopher	UCLA	96/87	3.67	ENV	C
Frazier, Chelsea	Wyoming	56/48	3.68	West	C
Joesten, Daniel	De Anza, CA	77/48	2.64	Brit.	C
*Atwood, Kelly	NAriz U	84/48	3.58	US 20 th	C
McKee, Kathryn	N. Carolina	42/48	2.9	West	C
Canny, Jamie	Cen. Conn	48/48	3.8	West	C

*Gerhardt, Alyssa	Ill Coll	93/87	3.86	US	C
*Sheetz-Williard	Hamilton	98/72	3.87	ENV	C

What would be required to be more effective in recruiting students for this graduate degree program? (list in rank order)

1. Increased funding for ads, trips to campus for out-of-state applicants. Otherwise, the reputation of the graduate program serves us well.

Mentoring

Mentoring criteria include, but are not limited to, preparation for future career; scholarly development; professional community participation; appreciation for diversity; collaborative opportunities

Please provide the following supporting data on students in this graduate degree program:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Number of research/scholarly presentations (or exhibitions, performances, etc. as appropriate) made by students in this program at state, regional, national, or international meetings	10	9	10
Total number of peer-reviewed publications whose primary author is a student in this program			
Total number of peer-reviewed publications where a student in this program is a co-author			
Number of students from the previous year's graduating class that have found employment in the field			

Comment on data relevant to mentoring students in this degree program not captured in the table above.

Since the history department offers a terminal masters degree graduate students occasionally publish in professional journals. However, we see often see their research appear in later work, including conference papers, and publications at the doctoral or professional level. Many of our students do, however, gain valuable professional experience as interns or fellows in the department's highly acclaimed journal, the *Western Historical Quarterly*. That editorial experience has created opportunities for our students to become professional editors or work in other fields beyond academia. Our students have also worked as interns and employees in USU's Merrill-Cazier library's Special Collections and Archives unit.

These work experiences place our students in excellent positions to qualify for top Ph.D. programs, or to work professionally in archives management.

Besides this professional mentoring, our students often engage in one-on-one tutorials with professors to develop a particular expertise in specific fields of historical scholarship. Students are thus able to read extensively and discuss at length ideas, theories and methodologies vital to the completion of a substantial masters thesis. Our seminars are small, usually containing eight to ten students. This forum allows student to engage in scholarly debate from the outset of their masters program. The professors who conduct these classes require extensive writing and revision in order to foster the skill necessary to succeed professionally. In this way our students receive constant feedback on their performance.

By participating in the design and delivery of lower and upper division classes, graduate assistants and teaching interns also receive important mentoring vital to their professional success.

History graduate students thus receive constant mentoring in order to emerge from our program as independent thinkers who propose and complete their own individually-driven research and writing. Since those who pursue doctoral studies will most likely be funded through teaching positions, this experience is essential to career training. It also makes them far more competitive when applying to doctoral programs, or teaching positions in secondary schools.

How effective are these strategies?

We measure our efforts by the individual successes of our students. This may mean acceptance into a highly-ranked Ph.D. program. Or, a student may gain employment in the public or private sector jobs that match their expertise. Beyond their immediate placement, we follow our students' progress as professionals and scholars throughout their careers.

Former students who now hold advanced degrees and positions at major institutions of higher education:

Lawrence Culver (1997) – Ph.D. UCLA, current position, Associate Professor, Utah State University

Steve Ammerman (1996), Ph.D., current position, Associate Professor, Southern Connecticut State University

Jim Feldman (1996), Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison, current position, Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh

Michael Lansing (1998), Ph.D., Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Kyle Bulthuis (1997), Ph.D. University of California-Davis, current, position, Assistant Professor, Utah State University

Bret Rushforth (1997), Ph.D. University of California-Davis, current position, Assistant Professor, William and Mary
Christopher Hodson (1999), Ph.D. Northwestern University, current position, BYU
Clayton Brown, (1999) Ph.D. University of Pittsburgh, current position, Assistant Professor, Utah State University, Vernal campus
Kathy Morrissey, (1980) Ph.D. Yale, University of Arizona.
John Heaton, Ph.D. Arizona State University. University of Alaska, Fairbanks and Executive Director of the Western History Association
Brian Cannon (1986), PhD. University of Wisconsin - Madison. Director of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, at BYU

Students who have been accepted to Ph.D. programs since 2005:

Christopher Blythe (2010), History, Florida State University, History
Sarah Gawronsk (2009), History, University of Warwick, UK
Philip Lockette (2008), History, UNLV
Lafe Connor (2007), Conservation Biology, BYU,
David Vail (2003), History, Kansas State University
Joel Myasaki (2005), History, University of Illinois
Jennifer Holland (2006), University of Wisconsin -Madison

Students working in, or pursuing degrees in professional fields:

David Bigger, Law, University of Montana
Adam Luke, (2007), Masters in Library Science, University of Texas-Austin,
Mark Buchanan (2011), LDS Church History Library
Sarah Austin, (2008), Editor, United States Army Proving Grounds, Tooele, Utah
Clint Pumphrey, (2009), Manuscript Curator, Utah State University Special Collections and Archives
Jami Van Huss (2009), Production Editor, Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies
Heather Block Lawton, Head of Special Collections for the Minneapolis Public Library
Troy Reeves (1996), Head, Oral History Program, University Archives and Records Management Services, UW-Madison
Garrit Voggesser (2000), Ph.D. University of Oklahoma, Senior Manager, Tribal Lands Conservation Program at National Wildlife Federation.

We are exceptionally pleased with the long-term career successes of our master's level students. To place this in perspective, over the last decade and a half, more graduates of our masters program have been placed in tenure-track employment than the total number of graduates from either of the University of Colorado's or University of Utah's History **doctoral** programs. This attests to the training, mentorship, and professionalization we believe our program offers students.

What would be required to be more effective in mentoring students in this graduate degree program? (list in rank order)

1. Graduate students receive formal mentoring in their introductory methods class, HIST 6000. But, in some cases, students require help pursuing their individual professional goals, such as crafting application statements for Ph.D. programs, creating conference proposals, and seeking out specialized funding support. The department will be implementing a more systemized professional development workshop, to supplement their training in historical research methodology to help students tailor specific strategies for pursuing career-oriented goals.

Management

Management data and criteria include, but are not limited to, the faculty and their scholarship, opportunities for and placement of graduates; average time to degree completion; degree completion rates; frequency of course offerings; graduate enrollment numbers (headcount and FTE); retention; number of degrees conferred; credit requirements; specializations offered; faculty resources

Please provide the following supporting data on faculty with a terminal degree who teach courses or mentor students in this graduate degree program:

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Number of faculty			
Average number of peer-reviewed publications (or books, exhibitions, performances, etc. as appropriate) per faculty member			
Number of faculty who received extramural grants for research			
Average dollar amount per faculty member of extramural grants received			

Comment on the data relevant to managing this graduate degree program not captured in the table above.

At one point or another, all of the history faculty teach graduate level courses and mentor graduate students. We are a small department and everybody pitches in when needed. Our problems stem from our size and the history department's commitment to teaching large undergraduate surveys. The situation takes faculty away from graduate teaching and there have been semesters when our graduate offerings have been quite thin.

To my knowledge, no history faculty has published a joint article with a graduate student. All the information regarding faculty publications is freely available on their CVs, which are posted online, or through digital measures. Extramural funds are also listed on those documents. Grants in the humanities rarely allow for

hiring graduate students, nor do they allow overhead deductions by the university. The grants are small and given to individuals.

History graduate students receive funding from graduate assistantships, university fellowships and scholarships and tuition waivers. Our faculty and graduate student manage very large survey classes that meet undergraduate requirements in general education and a variety of majors in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. As stated earlier, each GA represents roughly \$74,000 minimum in tuition dollars per semester

What are the professional/career opportunities for graduates of this degree program? Comment on the need for and viability of this program in terms of the graduate placement market.

The majority of our students seek to enter Ph.D. programs in history. Others seek work in the public history sector, which includes museums, archives, and government and NGO organizations that prepare historical materials for public consumption. I have included much information on our graduates' employment under other headings.

How is this information communicated to potential and current students?

All entering graduate students enroll in History 6000, a professional methods class that introduces students to methods of historical research and writing. They also receive information and guidance regarding the profession's job markets in higher education, and in museum and archives management.

What strategies are used to keep this degree program current in terms of its:

a) Philosophy?

History is the study of change in human societies over time. We equip our students with the methodologies, theoretical approaches, and content knowledge to evaluate historical evidence, and use it in their own research and writing. We ensure that as those components of research change, that our teaching and mentoring evolve as well. We also strive to keep students abreast of technological change, particularly the digitalization of historical documentation, and the increasing trend towards digital publication in academic disciplines.

b) Methodology?

Interdisciplinary methodologies in environmental history. Current students in environmental history combine the methods of landscape ecology, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), historical ecology, archaeology, and anthropology in their research and reading.

Close links to Special Collections and Archives keeps not only exposes our students to the contents of this vast collection, they learn the methodology of indexing, cataloguing and storage of sensitive historical material.

c) Technology?

The history department instructs graduate students in the most up-to-date research technologies to access the latest scholarship in the field, including digital search engines, and primary sources available in digital and more conventional manuscript collections.

What is the targeted time to completion for students in this degree program?

Six semesters, including summers. First summer, students conduct thesis research. Second summer, students generally complete revisions of masters thesis or Plan B paper.

How is this information communicated to potential and current students?

Departmental orientation meetings.

In the past 3 years, how many students have completed their degrees within this targeted time? (numbers of students completing on time vs. total number of students)

Of the current 7 students accepted in 2010, I anticipate 5 will graduate by the end of summer 2012.

What are the factors that affect completion?

1. Student Status. Secondary education students pursuing a masters degree generally attend part-time and may take three years, or more, to complete a degree.
2. Funding. Nearly half of our GA funding stream depends on an annually renewable MOU with the Provost's office for staffing General Education (USU) courses. These monies become available only in late summer as fall enrollments in USU courses taught by the history faculty become clear. Furthermore, because of exigent financial circumstances at the university, we cannot count on a steady flow of tuition waivers, even for our funded students. Because of our generally uncertain funding stream, our students often take jobs outside the university in order to meet tuition demands and living expenses, a situation that can significantly prolong degree completion.

If improvements are needed, what are they?

What is the minimum number of credits currently required for this graduate degree program?

30

i) Combination of USU fellowships (b) <u>with</u> assistantships (c, d, e, &/or f))		Partial support (<0.5 FTE)			
j) Combination of different types of assistantships (c, d, e, &/or f)		Full support (0.5 FTE)			
		Partial support (<0.5 FTE)			
k) Other	Describe: Graduate Assistant	Full support (0.5 FTE)	22	18	21
		Partial support (<0.5 FTE)			
Number of <u>self-funded</u> students per year					
Total numbers of students per year					
Average amount of funding per student per year			\$	\$	\$
a) Full support (0.5 FTE)			\$8500	\$8500	\$8500
b) Partial support (<0.5 FTE)					

Comment on data relevant to funding students in this graduate degree program not captured in the table above.

Comment on the sources and relative proportions of funding available to students in this graduate degree program.

The vast majority of our funding comes from the history department budget, university fellowships and tuition waivers. As stated above, the funding structure of the discipline offers very little funding to sustain graduate students, other than small travel grants dispersed directly to individuals, to assist in archival research or attending conferences.

Describe the adequacy and appropriateness of the current level of funding for recruiting and retaining graduate students to completion in this degree program.

Inadequate. See student survey.

Describe the adequacy and appropriateness of the current level of funding for recruiting and retaining faculty to build and sustain this degree program.

Inadequate for faculty interested in graduate student mentoring.

What could be done to more effectively fund graduate students in this degree program? (list in rank order)

1. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies should recognize the important service provided by history department GAs as graders in large one thousand level undergraduate surveys, which serve university general education requirements. Tuition dollars generated by these surveys are nowhere recognized in this survey, nor is teaching generally.

Are there any important aspects in evaluating this graduate degree program that have not been captured in the information above? If so, please comment.