

ICIVS Student Handbook
Islamic Civilizations Studies Program
Laney Graduate School, Emory University

The Islamic Civilizations Studies (ICIVS) program is based in Laney Graduate School (LGS) and thereby operates in accordance with LGS administrative and procedural policies, rules and regulations. Faculty, staff and students should refer to the comprehensive LGS Student Handbook for official policies that extend beyond the limited supplemental scope of program specific information that is included in the ICIVS Student Handbook.

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The LGS Student Handbook is available on the LGS website [here](#).

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Section 1. ICIVS Overview

A. Purpose and Interdisciplinary Approach

Islamic Civilizations Studies (ICIVS) at Emory University is a unique Ph.D. program that investigates Islamic civilizations through trans-regional and multidisciplinary perspectives. By concentrating on the cultural, social, economic, and linguistic interconnections that characterize the Islamic world, ICIVS prepares its graduates to engage intellectually across the humanities and the social sciences in a wide range of professional capacities. This innovative interdisciplinary program is designed to serve as an incubator for emerging new fields of Islamic Studies scholarship. Emory University's multidisciplinary and highly integrative approach to Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies allows it to offer a unique academic environment for the pursuit of research projects that cut across conventional regional and disciplinary boundaries.

The ICIVS program is devoted to exploratory, problem-based interdisciplinary graduate education. ICIVS graduate students work with a faculty committee on specific research questions and theories of interpretation and are encouraged to conduct innovative and interdisciplinary research that highlights trans-regional and transnational connections between the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and beyond. Students accepted into the ICIVS Ph.D. program design their own programs of study under the guidance of faculty advisors. They receive language training that prepares them for textual or field research; training in research methods, historiography, Islamic Civilizations Studies as a field of study; and teacher training focusing on the pedagogy of Islam and Islamic civilizations.

B. ICIVS Faculty

Faculty from the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (MESAS) of Emory College comprise a plurality of ICIVS graduate faculty members. However, more than half of the ICIVS graduate faculty are based in other Emory College departments, Laney Graduate School programs, and the Emory School of Law. Representative departments and programs include: Anthropology, Art History, Comparative Literature, History, Jewish Studies, Religion, and Russian and East Asian Languages and Cultures.

Section 2. ICIVS PhD Degree Requirements

A. Coursework

The ICIVS program requires five (5) semesters of coursework including: core courses, elective courses, and language courses for a minimum of 45 hours. These courses are typically offered in fall and spring semesters, with students enrolling in courses during Year 1, Year 2 and fall semester of Year 3. The program also requires supervised pre-candidacy research and training (9 credit hours per pre-candidacy summer term) and supervised exam preparation (9 credit hours during the 6th semester of study). A minimum of 54 credit hours is the required total of credit hours to reach candidacy.

Core Courses

ICIVS required core courses include:

- ICIVS 505 – ICIVS Pedagogy

- ICIVS 510 – ICIVS Research Methods
- ICIVS 710 – Historiography of Islam
- ICIVS 720 – Islamic Civilizations Studies
- ICIVS 735 – Advanced Language Study (Arabic, Persian, Urdu or Judeo-Arabic)

Typically one (1) ICIVS core course is offered each semester (fall or spring).

Elective Courses

Students may choose from elective courses offered by ICIVS or other graduate programs related to their areas of interest, which may include: Anthropology; Art History; Comparative Literature; History; Philosophy; Political Science; Religion; Sociology; Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies; or other courses selected in consultation with ICIVS Director of Graduate Studies or ICIVS Faculty Advisor. In addition, directed study courses (typically offered under the ICIVS 797 course number) may count as electives.

Typically, students enroll in two or three (2 or 3) elective courses each semester (fall and spring).

Supervised Pre-Candidacy Research and Training

During the summer terms before candidacy, students will typically enroll in ICIVS 798R and engage in preliminary dissertation research and/or specialized training in preparation for dissertation research for up to 9 hours of credit per summer term.

B. Language Requirements

The ICIVS program requires advanced level proficiency in one (1) primary language; and reading/translation ability in two (2) additional, secondary languages. Languages are selected in consultation with each student's ICIVS Faculty Advisor.

Advanced Proficiency

Advanced proficiency in a primary language is demonstrated by successfully completing coursework for ICIVS 735, Advanced Language Study in Arabic, Persian, Urdu or Judeo-Arabic. Prior to enrolling in ICIVS 735, in order to prepare for advanced level coursework, students may complete beginning and/or intermediate level coursework at Emory, or an approved summer language program in the U.S. or abroad.

Reading/Translation Ability

Reading/translation ability in two secondary languages is demonstrated by successfully passing written exams which involve translating two or three (2 or 3) pages of text from the secondary language into English. A pertinent scholarly text is selected by ICIVS faculty, and the written translation exam is proctored by a designated person during a three (3) hour period of time, with the aid of dictionaries allowed. In order to prepare for a reading/translation exam, students may choose to complete relevant language coursework at Emory or an alternative approved program.

C. Qualifying Examinations and Candidacy

After completing coursework, language requirements, and relevant TATTO and JPE requirements (see section D. below), the ICIVS program requires students to successfully pass Qualifying Examinations that include at least three (3) written exams and a related oral exam. Upon successful completion of the qualifying exams, students achieve Candidacy.

Preparation

At the beginning of Year 3, fall semester, students will confirm an Exam Committee, in consultation with their ICIVS Faculty Advisor. The Exam Committee may consist of three to five (3 – 5) faculty members including the ICIVS Faculty Advisor; one faculty member may be external to the ICIVS Faculty.

During Year 3, spring semester, students will enroll in ICIVS 790R, Qualifying Exam Preparation for nine (9) credit hours. Students will work with each Exam Committee member to define the respective exam field, specify a reading list, and prepare for the examination.

Written Exams

The ICIVS Faculty Advisor will coordinate with the other Exam Committee members to compose questions for each of the written exams, based on specified subject areas. Typically, each exam will include a choice of questions.

The series of subject area exams will be administered one at a time, by a designated proctor, on a weekly basis, on an agreed upon schedule. The student will have a 48-hour time period to complete each subject area exam, with access to notes, books and other scholarly materials, while preparing answers to the exam questions. Answers to each subject area exam should be 20-25 pages in length, including footnotes.

Oral Exam

The ICIVS Faculty Advisor will serve as Chair of Exam Committee for the oral exam. Once the written exams have been completed, the Faculty Advisor will consult with all Exam Committee members to determine whether the written answers merit proceeding to the oral examination. With the consent of the Committee, the oral exam will be scheduled for a date that is within two (2) weeks of the date of the last written/subject area exam. The oral exam session will not exceed 90 minutes. The purpose of the oral exam is for the student to clarify and/or expand upon the written answers, in response to questions posed by the committee members. At the end of the session, the Committee will vote on whether the student's responses to the written exams and the oral exam are adequate for Candidacy, and if so, approve the student to progress to the Prospectus writing stage.

Assessment

Successful completion of the qualifying examinations (written and oral) requires an overall grade of B or better. The following general rules also apply:

- No more than one exam grade can be less than a B.
- No exam grade can be lower than B-.

If the overall grade is lower than B, and if the Exam Committee agrees by a majority vote that the repetition of exam(s) would yield significantly better results, the following specific rules apply:

- Any exam(s) graded lower than B- must be retaken.
- An exam may be retaken only one time.

In some cases, if the overall grade is significantly lower than B, the Exam Committee may decide by a majority vote to discontinue the student from the ICIVS Ph.D. program.

In the case of a split decision, the student's advisor, in consultation with the DGS, will select an outside reader (an ICIVS faculty member who is not on the Exam Committee) to read the written exams and provide an additional opinion.

Timing Considerations

In order to meet the LGS due date for Candidacy, students and their Exam Committee should plan to complete the Qualifying Exam process by September 10, at the beginning of Year 4. Specific timing of exams may vary, based on student progress and faculty availability. One option is to complete the exam process in April-May of year 3 (end of spring); another option is to complete the exam process in August-September of year 3 (end of summer). Deadlines may be extended in exceptional cases with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

Example of "April-May" time frame for completing the Qualifying Exam process:

- April week 1 – Written exam #1
- April week 2 – Written exam #2
- April week 3 – Written exam #3
- April week 4 – Exam Committee reviews written exams
- May week 1 – Oral exam with Exam Committee

Example of "August-September" time frame for completing the Qualifying Exam process:

- August week 1 – Written exam #1
- August week 2 – Written exam #2
- August week 3 – Written exam #3
- August week 4 – Exam Committee reviews written exams
- September week 1 – Oral exam with Exam Committee

LGS Due Date

Following the completion of exams, LGS Candidacy Form is due at the beginning of Year 4, by September 15.

Terminal Master's Degree

Students who discontinue their graduate study for any given reason are eligible for a terminal master's degree. The ICIVS requirements for a terminal master's degree include successful completion of qualifying exams in ICIVS with an overall grade of B. For more information on the Terminal Master's degree, see the Laney Graduate School handbook.

D. Additional Requirements for Candidacy

To be eligible for Candidacy, LGS and the ICIVS program have additional requirements related to the Jones Program in Ethics (JPE) requirement and the Teaching Assistance Training and Teaching Opportunity (TATTO) requirement. Relevant sections of the LGS Student Handbook provide additional details about these programs.

JPE: Jones Program in Ethics

The general requirements for the JPE program include:

- JPE 600 – LGS Core Class; one-day class required in August of Year 1
- JPE 610 – LGS Workshop; four (4) workshop sessions required over a period of several semesters

Students receive additional JPE training included in coursework for ICIVS 505–ICIVS Pedagogy, and ICIVS 510–ICIVS Research Methods.

LGS requires that JPE 600 be completed prior to Candidacy. The ICIVS program strongly advises its students to complete four (4) workshop sessions of JPE 610 prior to Candidacy.

TATTO: Teaching Assistance Training and Teaching Opportunity

The general requirements for the TATTO program include:

- TATTO 600 – LGS Workshop; two-day workshop required in August of Year 2
- TATTO 605 – ICIVS Teaching Assistantship; one (1) course required, typically in Year 2
- TATTO 610 – ICIVS Teaching Associateship; one (1) course required, typically in Year 2 or 3

Students receive additional TATTO training included in coursework for ICIVS 505–ICIVS Pedagogy.

LGS requires that TATTO 600 and TATTO 605 be completed prior to Candidacy. The ICIVS program requires its students to complete TATTO 610 prior to Candidacy.

In some cases, the ICIVS program may require a student to complete an additional course of TATTO 605 and/or TATTO 610, in order to obtain necessary teaching experience.

The assignment of courses for TATTO 605 and TATTO 610 is determined in consultation with the ICIVS DGS, the ICIVS Faculty Advisor, and instructors of undergraduate courses, typically offered by the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies (MESAS) or other departments with faculty participating in the ICIVS program.

For each TATTO 605 and TATTO 610 course, ICIVS students will receive a course evaluation provided by the Emory College reporting system, and a teaching evaluation report prepared by the course instructor.

E. Prospectus

After completing Qualifying Exams and achieving Candidacy, the ICIVS program requires students to prepare and defend a Dissertation Prospectus.

Preparation

At the beginning of Year 4, fall semester, students will confirm a Dissertation Committee, in consultation with their ICIVS Faculty Advisor. The Dissertation Committee may consist of three to five (3 – 5) faculty, with at least two (2) faculty being members of the ICIVS Faculty. Students may request one (1) additional faculty who is a member of another LGS graduate program. Students may request one (1) additional faculty member who is external to Emory, with the approval of the LGS Dean.

Beginning with Year 4, fall semester and each subsequent semester (as allowed by LGS rules and University rules), students will enroll in ICIVS 799R, Dissertation Research for nine (9) credit hours per semester.

Written Prospectus

With guidance from their ICIVS Faculty Advisor, the student will prepare a 20-30-page Dissertation Prospectus, with an appended bibliography. The Prospectus and bibliography should be submitted to the Dissertation Committee by March 1 of Year 4.

The Prospectus and bibliography should include the following elements, as a preliminary plan for the larger Dissertation project:

- Detailed presentation of the proposed topic, the project's thesis or hypotheses, and the project's significance and plausibility
- Existing scholarship related to the proposed topic
- Critical methods of approaching the topic
- Tentative chapter outline of the dissertation
- Selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources

Oral Defense of Prospectus

The ICIVS Faculty Advisor will serve as Chair of Dissertation Committee for the oral defense of the Prospectus. With the consent of the Committee, the Prospectus oral defense session will be scheduled for a date no later than March 10 of Year 4, in order to comply with LGS policies and procedures.

The Prospectus must be circulated to all committee members at least two weeks prior to prospectus defense

The Prospectus oral defense session will not exceed 90 minutes. At the end of the session, the Committee will vote on whether the student's responses are adequate and if so, approve the student to progress to advanced research and dissertation writing stage.

In the case of a split decision, the Faculty Advisor, in consultation with the DGS, will select an outside reader (an ICIVS faculty member who is not on the Dissertation Committee) to read the written exams and provide an additional opinion.

LGS Due Date

The LGS Dissertation Committee Form is due during Year 4, by March 15.

F. Research

Students are encouraged to begin exploring research topics as soon as they enter the ICIVS program, with the guidance of ICIVS Faculty. Students should demonstrate independent research and creative thought which contributes to existing scholarship in a chosen sub-field of Islamic Civilizations Studies.

Examples of sub-fields include (but are not limited to):

- Classical Islamic Literature
- Modern Islamic Literature
- Judeo-Arabic Language, Linguistics and Literature
- Islam in the Mediterranean or Indian Ocean Basins
- Muslims and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa
- Mysticism and Society in the Islamic World
- Islamic Political Philosophy
- Muslim and Non-Muslim Minorities in Muslim Societies
- Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Societies
- Islamic Hybridities
- Gender and Society in the Islamic World
- Interactions between States and Peoples in the Islamic World

Prior to achieving Candidacy, during summer semesters (for Years 1, 2 and 3), students are enrolled in ICIVS 798R, Pre-Candidacy Research for nine (9) credit hours each summer semester. Students use this time to conduct preliminary research in their field of study, and/or pursue language study as needed.

After achieving Candidacy, students are enrolled in ICIVS 799R, Dissertation Research for nine (9) credit hours each semester – fall, spring and summer. Students dedicate this time for advanced research in their field of study.

G. Grants and Fellowships

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for grants, fellowships, and other funding opportunities to support their research. This additional funding is particularly important for later years that extend beyond the usual period of LGS standard stipend support. Applications are often due a year in advance of the actual funding cycle, so students are advised to explore options and plan in advance in consultation with their Faculty Advisor. The LGS website provides some information regarding funding opportunities and grant writing resources.

H. Dissertation

After completing the Prospectus, ICIVS program requires PhD candidates to consult with their ICIVS Faculty Advisor to plan for advanced research and to move through the dissertation process.

Preparation

The Dissertation is a long-term project based on extensive research, that involves:

- Identifying a worthy research question (topic)
- Reviewing what other researchers have found (existing scholarship/literature review)
- Designing and executing their own research (approaches/methods)
- Drawing conclusions and presenting their findings

There are ample resources available to provide additional information about the dissertation process, in addition to examples of ICIVS dissertations and dissertations in other fields based in humanities and social sciences.

Written Dissertation

Dissertations may vary in terms of their overall structure and specific format, as a reflection of the interdisciplinary nature of the ICIVS program and the variety of student research interests. Typically, the final version of the Dissertation will include:

- Title Page
- Acknowledgments
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Multiple chapters
- Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Appendices

The length of the Dissertation also varies, with a guiding rule of 200-350 pages for the combined sections of introduction, multiple chapters and conclusion.

Upon completion of the writing process, the PhD candidate will prepare for an oral defense of the Dissertation.

Oral Defense of Dissertation

The Dissertation oral defense is an important occasion for the presentation and recognition of the PhD candidate's completed doctoral work, and is therefore open to the ICIVS and Emory University community. It also serves as the opportunity for comprehensive discussion and evaluation of the dissertation.

The ICIVS Faculty Advisor will serve as Chair of the Dissertation Committee for the oral defense of the Dissertation.

Once the PhD candidate, the ICIVS Faculty Advisor and the other members of the Dissertation Committee agree on a defense date, the candidate will be required to submit a complete draft of the Dissertation a month in advance of that date. The ICIVS Program Administrator will announce the defense date to the ICIVS community. Non-Emory individuals may also attend the event by invitation. The session is typically structured as follows:

- The PhD candidate presents the Dissertation topic, findings, and thesis (in a formal presentation of approximately 20 minutes).

- Committee members offer comments and ask questions, which the candidate addresses in turn. Audience members may also ask questions at the end of the public portion of the session.
- The committee deliberates in private and votes to approve or reject the Dissertation. The result of the deliberation is communicated to the PhD candidate in private.

The Committee's vote on whether the student's written dissertation and oral defense are acceptable, will be based on the following criteria:

- Importance of topic
- Depth of research
- Mastery of issues and questions
- Originality of thought and argument
- Genuine contribution to a scholarly field
- Quality of writing

If the Committee agrees that the PhD candidate has passed the oral defense, they provide guidance for any minor revisions to be executed before filing the dissertation. The student may then proceed to complete the LGS filing requirements for the Ph.D. degree.

LGS Due Dates and Filing Requirements

Students should refer to the LGS website and the LGS student handbook for important information regarding "Degree Completion."

- At the beginning of the semester the student intends to defend their dissertation, LGS requires the student to submit an Application for Degree.
- After successfully defending the dissertation, the student must submit various forms and documents, according to [LGS due dates and requirements](#).

I. Student Advising and Progress

Advising

Upon entering the program, students are initially advised by the ICIVS Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), with administrative guidance from ICIVS Program Staff. Typically, by the beginning of Year 2, students establish a working relationship with an ICIVS Faculty member based on research interests, and officially declare that person as their Faculty Advisor. Faculty Advisor, DGS and Program Staff continue to guide students throughout all stages of the program, in consultation with Laney Graduate School (LGS) as needed, regarding academic matters and administrative processes.

Progress

ICIVS Program Staff track student progress by accessing information in the university OPUS system. For students beginning the program in August 2020 or later, milestones are recorded in the OPUS Degree Tracker system. LGS also has processes for tracking student progress and maintains official student records.

Students are expected to meet with the ICIVS DGS at the end of each spring semester, to review progress toward degree milestones related to coursework, qualifying exams, prospectus, research, and dissertation.

Also, at the end of each spring semester, ICIVS students are required to provide a written annual report of their activities related to presentations, publications, grant and fellowship applications, and additional pertinent information. ICIVS DGS shares this information in an annual program report required by LGS.

Degree Completion Time

LGS Student Handbook (2023-2024) states the following:

- Section 2.5: LGS expects students to complete their dissertations and apply for graduation within six years. If students do not complete their dissertation by the end of their sixth year, programs may grant a one-year degree extension without LGS approval. Degree extensions beyond the [seventh] year require LGS approval.
- Section 2.1: All degree requirements, including dissertation submission to LGS, must be completed within nine years of admission.

Given the rigor of the ICIVS program that requires five (5) semesters of coursework, in addition to substantive language study, students typically complete the ICIVS PhD degree in the range of six to eight (6-8) years. Students are encouraged to communicate regularly with their ICIVS Faculty Advisor, and to apply for external funding to support their research and dissertation work.

J. Grievance Policy

Students who have a grievance related to the ICIVS program should report their concern to ICIVS Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The student should describe the grievance and provide relevant details in a letter addressed to the DGS.

The DGS will try to resolve the grievance in conversation with the student and relevant parties, if possible. If that attempt is not successful, the DGS will appoint a committee of three (3) ICIVS faculty members, or faculty members outside the ICIVS program if the situation warrants, or refer the matter to the ICIVS executive committee, who will review the grievance and propose an appropriate response.

If the grievance cannot be resolved by the committee or within the ICIVS administrative structure, the DGS will forward the grievance to the Office of the Senior Associate Dean of Laney Graduate School (LGS). From that point forward, the grievance will be handled according to the Grievance Procedure outlined in the LGS Student Handbook. If the matter is related to the DGS or if the student believes that the issues cannot be reasonably resolved through the ICIVS program's channels, the student may bring the grievance to the LGS Committee on Grievances as outlined in the LGS Student Handbook.

Section 3. ICIVS Faculty Governance

A. Annual Meeting of ICIVS Faculty

ICIVS Faculty meet as a group on an annual basis, during the fall semester, to receive updates on the ICIVS program and student progress, appoint an Admissions Committee, and to conduct business related to:

- Adding new ICIVS faculty members, based on recommendations of the Executive Committee
- Recommending one member to serve as Director of Graduate Studies (three-year term); with approval required by the Dean of Laney Graduate School (LGS)
- Electing members to the Executive Committee (three-year term)

B. ICIVS Executive Committee

ICIVS Faculty elect five (5) members to serve on the Executive Committee for a three-year term. The Executive Committee is led by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS represents the ICIVS program at meetings of various LGS committees and councils.

The Executive Committee typically meets once a year, during the fall semester, or more frequently if needed, to conduct business related to:

- Proposing new members to be invited to join the ICIVS graduate faculty, based on their expertise in a relevant area of study and their research engagement with the Islamic World
- Reviewing the curriculum of the program
- Providing advice on student affairs and addressing grievances

C. ICIVS Admissions Committee

ICIVS Faculty volunteer to serve as members on the Admissions Committee for a one-year term. The Admissions Committee usually consists of five members and meets in the late fall and early spring semester for the following activities:

- Reviewing materials submitted by prospective student applicants
- Selecting a group of applicants for interviews, based on preliminary assessment of qualifications
- Interviewing selected group of applicants, for additional assessment of qualifications
- Deciding which applicants will receive offers of admission, within guidelines set by LGS