

***May 2021***

***Graduate Assessment Practices and Plans for the***

***M.A. in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (REEES)***

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The REEES M.A. is a two-year interdisciplinary program that promotes the study of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia in a broad, multidisciplinary context. The program strives to illuminate the complex ethnic, racial, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity of a vast geographical region spanning from Eastern Europe to the Russian Far East. At the core of the program is the study of the Russian language, which is available through the fifth-year level. In addition to taking an array of REEES electives drawn from across the humanities and social sciences, students are expected to pursue a concentration in one of three fields:

1. Russian Literature
2. Russian History
3. Contemporary Russia, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia

The program has a well-developed assessment plan in place that tests professional competency in the Russian language (or in another relevant language of the region); knowledge of the main primary texts, scholarly debates, and methodologies in the field of concentration; and the ability to produce an extended piece of scholarship capable of making a contribution to the field of study. The specific ways in which these skills and competencies are assessed are as follows:

1. By the end of the fall term of their second year, students must take an examination in which they demonstrate the ability to translate a specialized text in their field of concentration from Russian (or another relevant language of the region) into good professional English.
2. By the end of the winter term of their second year, students must take a battery of exams in which they demonstrate knowledge of the main primary texts, scholarly debates, and methodologies in their field of concentration, as well as in a more specific field related to the topic of their M.A. thesis.
3. By the end of the spring term of their second year, students must write and defend an M.A. thesis consisting of at least sixty pages that is based on relevant primary and secondary material and that makes a contribution to the field of study.

Thanks to the rigorous nature of the REEES M.A. program, all of our recent graduates have done extremely well. A number of our students have gone on to successful careers in education, diplomacy, health, social work, translation, and the arts in the U.S., Russia, and the countries of the former Soviet Union, while others have opted to pursue doctorates or professional degrees in a number of allied fields. In the past decade, our M.A. graduates have entered doctoral or professional programs at the following institutions:

Harvard University (History, Ph.D.)—1 student

Harvard University (Slavic Languages and Literatures, Ph.D.) – 1 student

Northwestern University (Media, Technology, and Society, Ph.D.)—1 student

Northwestern University (Slavic Languages and Literatures, Ph.D.)—1 student

University of California, Berkeley (Slavic Languages and Literatures, Ph.D.) – 1 student

University of Chicago (Linguistics, Ph.D.)—1 student

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (Slavic, Ph.D.)-1 student

University of Oregon (Comparative Literature, Ph.D.)—2 students

University of Oregon (History, Ph.D.)—1 student

University of Oregon (Linguistics, Ph.D.)—2 students

University of Washington (Public Policy, M.A.)—1 student

University of Wisconsin, Madison (Second Language Acquisition, Ph.D.)—1 student

To put these numbers in context, I should note that, in recent years, we have only been able to accept two students per year into the program with funding, resulting in entering classes of two students and, on very rare occasions, three students. Taken in this light, we have amassed an exemplary track record of producing students, who are qualified not only to enter the work force but also to enter top-notch doctoral and professional programs.[[1]](#footnote-1) We have, furthermore, maintained this excellent record within the extremely challenging conditions of the COVID-19 global pandemic. In 2021, we placed one M.A. graduate in the Slavic Ph.D. program at Harvard and another in the Slavic Ph.D. program at UC-Berkeley.

Given the success of our program, and the fact that we have adopted assessment practices that are far more rigorous than those in most other M.A. programs, REEES does not have any plans to make any additions to its current assessment practices. If any changes are implemented, it is likely that we will scale back our required assessment tools and give students the option at the end of their second year either of taking a battery of comprehensive exams or of writing an M.A. thesis, so as to be in line with the assessment practices in other M.A. programs at the UO and across the nation.

1. Please note that M.A. is the highest degree offered in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies nationwide and is intended to enable students to put the knowledge acquired in the program to use on the job upon graduation. Therefore, students wishing to pursue a doctorate must do so in an allied field at the UO or elsewhere. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)