DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN PALEOBIOLOGY

The human paleobiology doctoral program is the graduate education and training effort of GW’s Center for the Advanced Study of Human Paleobiology (https://cashp.columbian.gwu.edu/), which promotes interdisciplinary research on human evolution. Because fossils, artifacts, and genomes are complex and mostly indirect sources of data for testing evolutionary hypotheses, research questions in human evolutionary studies exemplify the importance of an interdisciplinary approach.

This five-year program features rigorous core training in human paleontology, archaeology, molecular biology, genomics, behavior, ecology, and statistical methods. It emphasizes problem-based learning and training and internships in how science is communicated to the public—for example, through television, news media, museums, and the internet. The first two years of the program primarily consist of coursework, a professional skills and ethics seminar, a grant-writing course focused on preparing a dissertation proposal, and practical experiences that integrate original research and coursework from the earliest stages of graduate training. During the second and third years, students participate in two topically distinct laboratory rotations to broaden their research skills. Following the second year, students begin directed research on their doctoral dissertations while participating in a capstone seminar. Students are encouraged to submit their dissertation in a ready-to-publish format by the end of the fifth year.

There are two separate PhD programs affiliated with the Department of Anthropology, in the fields of anthropology (http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/anthropology/phd/) and in human paleobiology (p. 1). These programs have separate admissions procedures; prospective students should be sure to submit their application to the correct program.

This is a STEM-designated program.

Visit the program website (https://anthropology.columbian.gwu.edu/phd-human-paleobiology/) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Admission deadlines: Fall – January 15

Standardized test scores: The GRE general exam is not required.

Statement of purpose: In an essay of 250 – 500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in your chosen field. Include your academic objectives, research interests, and career plans. Also discuss your related qualifications, including collegiate, professional, and community activities, and any other substantial accomplishments not already mentioned on the application.

Recommendations required: Three (3) recommendations required.

Prerequisite: A bachelor’s degree in anthropology, biological sciences, geological sciences, psychology, or other cognate discipline from an accredited college or university. Advanced undergraduate coursework in one or more of the following subjects is desirable: biology, chemistry, biochemistry, physics, geoscience, and calculus.

Prior academic records: Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission. If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

International applicants only: Please review International Applicant Information for details on required documents and English language requirements.

For more information on the admission process, please visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (http://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate/admissions/faqs/) page.
Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:
Columbian College of Arts and Sciences – Graduate Admissions Office
The George Washington University
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 215
Washington DC 20052

Contact for questions:
askccas@gwu.edu ~ 202-994-6210 (phone) ~ 202-994-6213 (fax)
8:30 am - 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#degreeregulationstext).

The requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy program (http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#doctoraltext).

72 credits, including a minimum of 45 credits in courses selected in consultation with the advisor prior to advancing to PhD candidacy and 6 to 27 credits in dissertation research.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOMP 6202</td>
<td>Lab Techniques: Paleoanthropology</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOMP 6203</td>
<td>Ethics and Professional Practice I</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH 6413</td>
<td>Analytical Methods in Human Evolutionary Studies (or an alternative course selected with the approval of the advisor and program director)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTH 6491</td>
<td>Topics in Biological Anthropology (Topic: Grant Writing)</td>
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<td>HOMP 6995</td>
<td>Independent Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOMP 8998</td>
<td>Advanced Reading and Research (Taken for no more than a total of 6 credits. This course is graded on a CR/NC basis.)</td>
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Dissertation research

HOMP 8999 Dissertation Research (taken for 6 to 27 credits)

Advanced Requirements

Students must successfully complete general comprehensive examinations, a dissertation proposal defense and examination, and a final dissertation defense and examination.

General examinations prior to PhD candidacy

General examinations must be successfully completed before the end of the third year of the program, prior to advancing to candidacy. These comprise two written comprehensive examinations, and a dissertation proposal defense and examination.

The first comprehensive examination includes written questions that integrate comprehension across all thematic areas in the modern and paleobiology core and tests foundational knowledge, concepts, theory, and/or methods learned in the core curriculum.

The second comprehensive examination is written in the form of an authoritative review of a chosen topic, including a history of previous relevant research, discussion of theoretical issues, and identification of outstanding questions or directions for future research.

For the dissertation proposal defense, students must prepare a research proposal that meets funding agency guidelines and
successfully complete an oral defense and examination of this proposal.

*After PhD candidacy*

After candidacy, students proceed to completing their doctoral research plan and writing the dissertation, in consultation with their dissertation committee. Successful completion of a final dissertation defense and oral examination is required to earn the PhD degree.