

Preliminary Research Track – 2025-2026

School of Political Sciences

Overview

1. Preliminary research refers to the assortment of academic requirements needed by candidates who wish to enroll in a doctoral program but have not completed their MA thesis in political sciences.

Admission Requirements

2. Eligible candidates for this track include:

- a) Recipients of an MA degree in political sciences who graduated with a final grade of at least 90, yet who did not write a thesis.

These students will be required to submit a thesis for which they receive a score of 90 or higher, and to complete the following: Research thesis writing workshop, Qualitative and quantitative research workshops, and Theories and Approaches in Political Science (divisional course, required only if not studied during the MA).

- b) Recipients of an MA degree in a field other than political science who graduated with a final grade of at least 90, and who wrote a thesis that received a score of at least 90.

These students will be required to complete the following courses in Political Sciences, and receive a weighted grade average of at least 85. Courses include: Introduction to Government and Politics, Theories and Approaches in Political Science, Research thesis writing workshop, Research Seminar B (qualitative and quantitative), and additional supplementary courses depending on the division that the student intends to join (international relations, public administration and policy, or government and political theory).

- c) Recipients of an MA degree in a field other than political science who graduated with a final grade of at least 90, and who did not write a thesis. These students will be required to complete the core political science coursework (as listed above), and write a thesis for which they must receive a grade of at least 90 before they can submit their candidacy to the doctoral program.

Application Dates

- Application to preliminary research track is available to fall semester only.
- Admission to preliminary research track is competitive. Up to 5 students will be accepted each year, with the highest averages in the master's degree, and no less than the average required for admission.
- The deadline for registration is August 1. Notices of admission to the track will be given to the candidates after the discussions in their cases, during the months of August-September.

Application Process

1. Applications to enroll in the preliminary research track shall be submitted to the department secretary and are to include the following documents:
 - a. Certificate of completion for BA / MA degrees, including grade transcripts.

- b. A written recommendation from an academic staff member, attesting to the candidate's research skills.
 - c. Submission of an example of a written research paper (e.g., a seminar paper).
2. A supervisory agreement: The candidate must find an instructor who is a senior faculty member at the School of Political Science. The instructor must attach a letter of consent to the instruction and forward it to the department coordinator. To view the list of faculty members and their research fields on the school website - [click here](#). (Use google tools to translate the page to English.)
3. A statement of intent (up to 350 words in English, or up to 200 words in Hebrew). Statements that exceed these quotas will be returned to the student and will not be forwarded to the Graduate Studies Committee.
Statements must include the following elements:
 - a. A description of the research topic.
 - b. The central research question.
 - c. The methods and techniques through which the student intends to analyze the research question.
 - d. The potential contribution that this research will make to the field.

Admission of the student to the track involves the approval of a statement of intent by the supervisor, the school MA advisor, and the advanced studies committee.

Study Framework

3. Holders of an MA degree in a field other than political science, and with a grade average of at least 90, will be required to complete a series of political science courses as listed above in under the heading of admission requirements.
4. Department seminars – Each student in this track is required to attend no less than 80% of the seminars given in each academic year.
5. Students who are required to write a thesis as part of this track will be required to submit a research proposal to their supervisor prior to the beginning of the second semester of the academic year.
6. Once the research proposal is approved by their supervisor, the department secretary will forward the proposal for external review by a single reviewer at the recommendation of the supervisor. The reviewer will not be from within the School of Political Science. The reviewer may be from another department within the University of Haifa, or from another university.
7. The proposal will incorporate all of the above listed elements that were included in the statement of intent, but will expand upon each of the components, and will abide by the following structure:
 - a) Introduction.
 - b) Research question and an explanation of its importance.
 - c) Literature Review and Theoretical Framework: An up-to-date literature review that maps the current state of theoretical and empirical research relating to the research topic. The literature review will form the basis of the theoretical and conceptual framework of the research, and will in turn generate the research hypotheses that are to be tested.

- d) **Research Methods and Analytical Strategy:** A description of the proposed techniques and research methods that the student intends to use to test the research hypotheses (qualitative or quantitative). This section will include the following components:
- Variables (nominal and operational definitions).
 - Data collection strategy, the research sample and population, and a description of how the sample will be approached.
 - Research technique: a description of the proposed study tools (surveys, experiments, observational techniques, analyses of secondary source material, simulations, etc.)
- e) **Conclusion:** The potential contribution of the research and anticipated obstacles.
8. The length of the research proposal shall not exceed 6,000 words in Hebrew (double spaced) or 7,500 words in English (double spaced). This figure does not include the bibliography, which is to be submitted as an appendix to the proposal.
9. Only after the thesis proposal has been approved by the external reviewer will the student be permitted to begin writing the thesis.

Duration of studies

10. The Preliminary Research Track runs for one year, during which time students must complete the course requirements and complete the thesis.
11. Thesis submission date - until November 30 in the following year. After the approval of the supervisor and a formal examination by the Authority for Advanced Studies, the thesis will be submitted for external review.
12. Only students who meet the supplementary coursework requirements will be able to submit their candidacy for doctoral studies and have their application reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Please note - one of the requirements for admission to the doctoral program of the School of Political Science is **evidence of research and publishing abilities**. The candidate shall submit one of the following two documents in support of their application:

- a. A published academic article in a scientific journal or a copy of a research article that has been submitted for review at a scientific journal (and which was not desk rejected). Articles may be in English or in Hebrew. The candidate can be a single writer or with co-writers, as long as the name of the candidate appears on the article. Permissible journals include any journal that is ranked by the Institute for Scientific Information or the Council of Higher Education. The details and ranking of journal in which the article is published (or at which it is under review) is to be attached along with the letter of acceptance (or review confirmation) from the journal.

Or

- b. Publication of a chapter in an academic book (by an academic publisher). The candidate appears as a sole author or with partners, as first author.

Or

- c. Presentation of a research paper at an international conference. The candidate appears as a sole author or with partners, as the first author.

When registering, a link to the conference details must be attached and the committee will examine the academic level of the conference and decide accordingly.

In order to meet the above conditions of admission to the doctorate, the recommendation of the School of Political Science is to write the thesis as an article.