

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of English

Middle Tennessee State University

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

2021-22

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Introduction

The Graduate Student Handbook is designed to serve as a comprehensive guide to the graduate programs in the English Department at Middle Tennessee State University. Every effort will be made to update the handbook periodically. Students and faculty should be aware, however, that the university's *Graduate Catalog* is the final authority concerning graduate school policies, programs, and curricula.

For more information about the graduate programs in English, students and faculty may consult the graduate program's website or any of the graduate program support personnel:

English Graduate Program website: www.mtsu.edu/programs/english-grad/index.php

English Graduate Student Resources webpage: <https://www.mtsu.edu/english/graduate-students.php>

English Graduate Program Office: Ms. Janice Lupo, (615) 898-2665 or Janice.Lupo@mtsu.edu

Director of Graduate Studies in English: Dr. Rhonda L. McDaniel, (615) 898-5285 or Rhonda.McDaniel@mtsu.edu

Graduate Advisor in English: Dr. Laura White, (615) 904-8122 or Laura.White@mtsu.edu

Overview of the Programs

The Department of English at Middle Tennessee State University offers the Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees. Both degree programs provide students with advanced training in standard and emerging areas of English studies and opportunities through assistantships to integrate their studies with teaching experience and pedagogical training. The programs seek to attract a diverse body of qualified applicants and especially welcome nontraditional students, including returning students, professionals, international students, and students historically underrepresented in the discipline.

The English Department has been involved in granting master's and doctoral degrees for more than four decades. The M.A. program was established in 1966, fifteen years after the graduate school was added to the university. The Ph.D. program, first established in 2003, awarded its first two Ph.D. degrees in that same year. The Ph.D. program evolved from a Doctor of Arts (D.A.) degree program established in the late 1960s; the department granted its first D.A. degree in 1971. Many of our applicants to the doctoral program come from regional campuses of community colleges and small liberal arts universities, and in seeking an advanced degree such candidates enhance the intellectual culture of their campuses and the region, as well as contributing to the economic growth of the region and their own personal, intellectual, and economic wellbeing.

The graduate programs in English at Middle Tennessee State University offer a rich curriculum, with a full range of courses covering all literary periods and genres in English. The relatively small size of the seminars, usually eight to ten students, allows for highly individualized attention to students. The curriculum provides opportunities in areas that are unique strengths to the department, such as children's and adolescent literature, film studies, Southern literature, American folklore, popular culture, and rhetoric and composition studies in addition to all the major periods of British and American literature. The graduate curriculum thus maintains considerable breadth as well as depth, allowing students to become adept in a variety of fields within English studies. The department's

faculty is engaged in research in standard literary fields as well as popular culture, film studies, rhetoric and composition, linguistics, children's and young adult literature, and other areas. The graduate programs also afford opportunities to students to teach undergraduates, both in composition classes and in the University Writing Center, as well as opportunities to assist in research with faculty members. The university library, a beautifully designed and well equipped modern facility, prides itself on a meticulously maintained collection and a wide array of archival materials in early American and British literature available through electronic resources. The graduate programs in English have enjoyed a highly successful placement record for students. We are committed to continuing to attract and grow a diverse, well qualified student body and maintaining an engaged graduate faculty.

The Master of Arts degree offers advanced studies in a variety of literary and cultural expressions. Master's students may develop expertise in specific areas and topics by following one of four Emphases or customizing a flexible Open Plan: A: Literary Studies; B: Language and Writing Studies; C: Teaching Writing and Literature; D: Popular Culture/Cultural Studies; E: Open Plan. These emphases are discussed more fully below on pp. 10-14.

The Doctor of Philosophy degree offers a dual specialization program allowing for focused study in more than one area of emphasis. Distribution requirements in Theory, American, and British literature are complemented by a substantial number of electives. Students specialize in two areas on which they take preliminary examinations preparatory to the dissertation. These subject areas currently include all periods of American and British literature as well as popular culture, film, and folklore; children's and young adult literature; Anglophone/Global English literatures; literary theory; linguistics; and rhetoric and composition. One of the subject areas may be replaced with a Custom exam area designed by the student in consultation with appropriate faculty. The program is designed to provide doctoral students with flexibility in developing their own interests while at the same time providing them with a thorough background in the field. Students creatively define their specialties through their course selections and preparations for candidacy examinations, one or both of which are further developed and more sharply focused in the dissertation.

The department offers a number of unique award opportunities for graduate students, including the William R. Wolfe Graduate Student Writing Award, the John N. McDaniel Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Bené Cox Excellence in Tutoring Award, the Richard and Virginia Peck Awards for scholarly achievement, and graduate assistantships in teaching and research. In addition the College of Graduate Studies offers a limited number of scholarships and support for travel for research and conferences.

Because university approval processes make immediate updating of policies and procedures in written or digital formats impracticable, students should be aware that inconsistencies may occur from time to time. Information in the *English Graduate Student Handbook*, based on information in the College of Graduate Studies *Graduate Catalog* or university, department, and program documents, is superseded by more recently communicated updated policies and procedures from the English Graduate Program office. It is the student's responsibility to ask the English Graduate Advisor or Program Director about any apparent inconsistencies that may come to the student's attention. Students should keep in mind that they are generally governed by the policies and procedures stated in the catalog and handbook in place when they enter the program, unless they elect in consultation with the Graduate Advisor or Program Director to be governed by newer policies and procedures and complete the appropriate forms when the option is available.

English Graduate Student Organization

The English Graduate Student Organization represents and serves the interests of MTSU English graduate students by establishing a forum and channels of communication for discussions and dissemination of relevant information, communicating English graduate students' needs to the administration and campus community, offering avenues for networking with faculty and the general MTSU academic community, and providing opportunities for professional development through workshops, symposia, and colloquia.

Additionally, EGSO positions itself as a community center for the English graduate population. In doing so, EGSO strives to provide a space for the English graduates to build a strong sense of unity and support for all things that they might encounter throughout their tenure in the MTSU English graduate program. EGSO strives to listen and adapt to the ever-changing needs of the English graduate community in its efforts to assist graduate students not only from a professional standpoint from a strong personal one as well.

Membership is open to all graduate students fully accepted into the English Graduate Studies Program and membership shall be limited to currently enrolled MTSU students, faculty, and/or staff members.

For more information, visit:

Website: <https://mtsuegso.weebly.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/egsomsu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MTSU-English-Graduate-Student-Organization-EGSO-109354814680536>

Admission to the Programs

Materials required for application to the M.A. and Ph.D. programs include official transcripts certifying coursework from each college or university attended, three letters of recommendation (preferably from those most familiar with the applicant's academic achievement and potential for research and graduate-level work in English, such as current or former English professors), a writing sample (2000-5000 words for M.A. applicants, 3000-5000 words for Ph.D. applicants), TOEFL scores (if required), and a 500-word statement of purpose outlining academic and research interests and professional goals. In addition, Ph.D. applicants must submit GRE scores taken within the past five years (English subject test optional). The department usually expects minimum scores of 150 on the Verbal Reasoning component and 4.0 on the Analytical Writing component of the GRE. We expect minimum scores of 550 for the TOEFL, or 79 for the TOEFL iBT, or 6.5 on the IELTS; these latter language requirements are waived for international students who have earned a degree at a U.S. college or university in the last two years.

Candidates for admission to the M.A. program will be expected to have earned 15 hours of coursework at the 2000 level or above in English or in related fields when that coursework includes a significant component of literature or writing. Applicants to the Ph.D. program should have a Master's degree in English or a closely related field. Applicants not meeting these expectations may be required to take undergraduate coursework before being admitted, or may be admitted with conditions that must be met in order to continue in the program.

Recommendations for admissions are made by the English Graduate Admissions Committee after they review all materials and determine the applicant's capacity, suitability, and preparation for graduate study. Prospective students are recommended selectively from among a pool of qualified applicants. Admission to graduate study is therefore not guaranteed simply by meeting minimum admission requirements.

Applicants may apply online at <http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/apply.php>. Applicants are required to pay a \$35 application fee with their completed application.

All required application materials must be received by the College of Graduate Studies before the deadlines stated below. It is the responsibility of applicants to ensure that their files are complete by the deadline (see the Application Checklists in the appendices of this Handbook). Applicants with incomplete files will not be considered for admission. Applicants are strongly recommended to keep track of the progress of the application through the Graduate Student Portal or by contacting the Admissions Office at 615-898-2233 to verify receipt of all application materials.

Deadlines

Students seeking admission with a graduate assistantship must apply by **February 1** for the following fall semester.

Application for summer/fall admission without an assistantship must be complete by **March 1**.

Application files for spring admission must be complete by **October 1**. Please note that Spring-admission applications are for admission without assistantship only.

Applying for Graduate Assistantships

Applicants wishing to be considered for a graduate assistantship, in addition to supplying the materials for general application (including a general application form and the 500-word statement of purpose), must fill out an application for an assistantship. The application form may be found at the College of Graduate Studies website: <https://mtsu.edu/graduate/funding.php>. The application for an assistantship must be submitted with the rest of the application materials by **February 1**.

Requirements of the Graduate Programs

The following general information applies to all graduate students and relates to advising, courses, course requirements and distribution, grades and grade appeals, and scholarly integrity.

Advising

Students assume a responsibility to work with the English Graduate Program Advisor to ensure they understand and comply in a timely manner with all requirements of the English Graduate Program and the College of Graduate Studies. Failure to do so may jeopardize degree candidacy or planned graduation dates. Completing the requirements for a graduate degree involves planning for courses, for examinations, and for other candidacy requirements (including world language requirements).

Students who wish to change their degree options after they have begun the program must work with the Graduate Advisor to ensure that they meet all requirements.

Students should review the section on Academic Regulations and the description of the English Graduate Program in the online *Graduate Catalog*, where they will find specific requirements for changing the degree program, as well as topics addressed in various sections of this handbook—world language requirements, candidacy forms, advancement to candidacy, graduate examination requirements, etc.

Students who obtain Federal loans for their graduate study should prioritize meeting regularly with the Graduate Advisor because of the strict limitations imposed by Federal loan accountability measures (DegreeWorks).

Degree Requirements in General

Students should become familiar with degree requirements to make sure they proceed efficiently through the graduate program. They should consult the Graduate Advisor upon entering the program about the courses they plan to take. For example, students should make themselves aware of which courses are required for all students, which courses are recommended for particular M.A. emphases, what the distribution requirements are for Ph.D. students, etc.

Students will want to take classes that support their research and professional goals. For example, master's degree students who plan to teach in secondary education will likely take different courses from those taken by students who plan to enter a doctoral program; the designated emphases in the M.A. program are designed to help students pursue these professional goals. In general, students should take courses that provide a broad foundation as well as courses aimed at their specific interests. No undergraduate courses can be applied toward graduate program requirements.

The Department of English, in conjunction with the university's Graduate Council, determines credit-hour requirements for both the Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy programs. The department also determines specific course requirements and a specified distribution of courses aimed at providing students with an appropriate background for the particular degree program in which they are enrolled. Students should consult the section of the *Graduate Catalog* entitled "Department/Programs" and scroll down to the heading for English for general information regarding degree requirements as well as the requirements specific to graduate degrees in English.

Students should make themselves aware of the various forms required of graduate students as they progress through their degree programs and the deadlines for filing those forms. **Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with the Graduate Advisor in order to plan ahead for deadlines.**

Graduate students who have not been fully admitted into the English graduate program must have the approval of the Graduate Program Director in order to register for graduate-level English classes. Non-degree-seeking graduate students, or students who are seeking admission but have not yet been admitted to the English graduate program, may take no more than **six** graduate-level credit hours of coursework in English before being fully admitted into the English graduate program, and then only with the approval of the Graduate Program Director.

World Language Requirement

A graduate degree in English carries the expectation of a well rounded general education as well as specialized knowledge of a field, and graduate students in English are expected to possess at least a reading knowledge of one or more world languages. Reading proficiency in a world language is highly desirable for M.A. students, especially those who plan to pursue a Ph.D. It is required for Ph.D. students.

To demonstrate their proficiency in a world language, students must satisfy one of the following requirements:

- a. completion of two 3-hour world language courses at the 3000 level or above emphasizing reading, translation, or composition; or
- b. earning a final grade of **B** or better in one of the courses in MTSU's Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures numbered 5990 (Techniques in Translation [German, French, or Latin]) or in Spanish 5920 (Spanish for Reading Knowledge); or
- c. passing an examination in reading proficiency administered by the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; or
- d. earning a final grade of **B** or better in **both** English 6011/7011 (Old English Language and Literature) **and** English 6015/7015 (*Beowulf*), courses which must be taken sequentially.

Ph.D. students are strongly recommended to have fulfilled the world language requirement *before* taking preliminary exams. Students should be advised that the requisite classes in World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures may not be available every term. It is necessary to plan ahead in fulfilling this and other degree requirements.

Note: Students holding graduate assistantships who register for an undergraduate world language class must obtain written approval from the graduate program director in order to have the class paid for by their assistantship; the College of Graduate Studies will pay for undergraduate

prerequisites only if they are identified on the student's program of study. Only one 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course offered through the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures may be used as an elective for fulfilling the requirements for the master's degree.

Master's Program Requirements

Students in the M.A. program in English may choose one of four Emphases designed to fulfill different educational and career goals or an Open Plan. M.A. candidates must complete 30 hours (thesis option) or 33 hours (directed portfolio option) in one of these four emphases or the Open Plan, listed below as A through E. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Graduate Advisor in planning their course of study.

A: Literary Studies

The M.A. with Literary Studies Emphasis is designed for students preparing for Ph.D. programs and for those who desire a terminal M.A. with a focus on literature. The Literary Studies emphasis provides Master's students with a foundation in the skills and critical awareness necessary for literary scholarship while also offering a flexible range of courses within the distribution areas and plenty of elective options to allow students to explore the literature of a wide variety of times, places, and genres.

1. M.A. with Thesis. Students choosing this option take

- a. 6 hours of **Core Courses**, including ENGL 6001: Introduction to Graduate Studies, Bibliography and Research (recommended in the first semester); and either ENGL 6701: History of Criticism or ENGL 6705: Contemporary Critical Theory.
- b. 12 hours of **Distribution Courses**, including
 - one course (3 hours) in British or American literature up to 1700; options include: ENGL 6011, 6015, 6025, 6021, 6051, 6105, 6101, 6111, 6121, 6115, 6201 (may only be used to fulfill one category), and 6171, 6231, 6415, 6611, and 6655 if appropriate.
 - one course (3 hours) in British or American literature from 1700 to 1900; options include: ENGL 6131, 6141, 6145, 6151, 6201 (may only be used to fulfill one category), 6205, 6211, and 6171, 6231, 6221, 6225, 6415, 6601, and 6611, if appropriate.
 - one course (3 hours) in British or American literature since 1900; options include: ENGL 6161, 6301, 6711, 6215, 6411, 6405, 6401, and 6171, 6231, 6221, 6225, 6415, 6601, and 6611, if appropriate.
 - one course (3 hours) in Global literatures in English; options include: ENGL 6301 and, when appropriate, 6415, 6601, 6611. In order to satisfy this requirement, the works studied in the course must emphasize non-British and non-American works written in English. Courses that focus on translations from other languages do not qualify.
- c. 9 hours of **Electives** fulfilled by any combination of 5000- or 6000-level English courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may be used as an elective. Students are expected to take 3 hours of Master's Readings (6909) with their proposed thesis director the semester before enrolling for thesis hours.
- d. **Thesis**: At least 3 hrs. of ENGL 6640: Thesis Research must be completed with a grade of S, and the completed thesis must be successfully defended and accepted by the College of Graduate Studies.

2. M.A. with Portfolio. The Master of Arts with Portfolio requires at least 30 hours of coursework and three hours of directed portfolio.

Students taking this option have the same **Core** and **Distribution** courses as those choosing the Thesis Option. They take 12 hours of **Electives** fulfilled by any combination of 5000- or 6000-level English courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may be used as an elective.

Directed Portfolio: Three (3) hrs. of ENGL 6913 must be completed with a grade of S. The portfolio is made up of three course papers revised according to the recommendations of the assigning professors (one of whom should act as portfolio director) into short essays appropriate for submission to relevant academic journals and an essay of at least 1500 words addressing the choice of essays and reflecting on the process of revising them into publishable articles. Final submission of the portfolio to the portfolio director should include the originally assigned papers, the revised articles, the reflective essay, and a sign-off sheet for each paper directing professor attesting the professor's satisfaction with the revisions. The portfolio director will assign a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory based upon the completed portfolio.

B: Language and Writing Studies

This emphasis is designed for students primarily interested either in pursuing advanced graduate study in rhetoric and composition studies or in teaching college composition or related college-level writing courses. Students choosing this emphasis take

- a. 6 hours of **Core Courses**, including ENGL 6001: Research & Bibliography (taken in the first semester) and either ENGL 6801: History of Rhetoric—Ancient to Renaissance or ENGL 6805: History of Rhetoric—Early Modern to Contemporary;
- b. 12 hours of **Recommended Courses in the Concentration** including ENGL 6811: Studies in Composition and Rhetoric; ENGL 6651: Essentials of Linguistics; either ENGL 6821: Seminar in Teaching Composition or ENGL 5540: Teaching Grammar and Writing for ESL; and either ENGL 6815: Special Topics in Composition and Rhetoric or ENGL 6611: Special Topics in Linguistics;
- c. 9 hours of **Electives** from among the following: ENGL 6801: History of Rhetoric—Ancient to Renaissance (if not taken as a core class); ENGL 6805: History of Rhetoric—Early Modern to Contemporary (if not taken as a core class); ENGL 6825: Practicum in Composition Methodology; ENGL 6851: Writing Center Theory and Practice; ENGL 6655: Special Topics in the History of the English Language. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may also be used as an elective.
- d. 3 hours of ENGL 6640: Thesis Research must be completed with a grade of S, and the completed thesis must be successfully defended and accepted by the College of Graduate Studies.

2. M.A. with Portfolio. The Master of Arts with Portfolio requires at least 30 hours of coursework and three hours of directed portfolio.

Students taking this option have the same **Core** and **Recommended Courses in Concentration** as those choosing the Thesis Option, but would select 12 hours of **Elective** courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may be used as an elective.

Directed Portfolio: Three (3) hrs. of ENGL 6913 must be completed with a grade of S. The Directed Portfolio for Language and Writing Studies is a culminating project which would offer students the opportunity to revise a seminar paper into a length and quality suitable for publication and would be accompanied by a rhetorical analysis of the target journal, a process narrative discussing the student's writing process, and a reflection piece articulating what the student learned through this process.

C: Teaching Writing and Literature

This emphasis is designed for practicing (or soon to be practicing) teachers at the secondary level or at the post-secondary level. Students choosing this emphasis take

- a. 6 hours of **Core Courses**, including ENGL 6001: Research & Bibliography (taken in the first semester) and either ENGL 6701: History of Literary Criticism or ENGL 6705 Contemporary Critical Theory;
 - b. 12 hours of **Recommended Courses in the Concentration**, including ENGL 6821: Seminar in Teaching Composition; ENGL 6881: Seminar in Teaching Literature; ENGL 6651: Essentials of Linguistics; either ENGL 6801: History of Rhetoric: Ancient to Renaissance or 6805: History of Rhetoric: Early Modern to Contemporary;
 - c. 9 hours of **Electives**. Any 5000- or 6000-level English courses will fulfill these electives. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may also be used as an elective.
 - d. 3 hours of ENGL 6640: Thesis Research. must be completed with a grade of S, and the completed thesis must be successfully defended and accepted by the College of Graduate Studies. The thesis may be a conventional academic investigation or it may be a hybrid pedagogical project involving classroom research/inquiry supported by scholarly research.
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D: Popular Culture/Cultural Studies

This emphasis is designed for students who intend to seek a non-traditional Ph.D. in popular culture/cultural studies or for those seeking a terminal M.A. degree with a focus on contemporary culture. Students may pursue this option either with thesis or directed portfolio.

1. M.A. with Thesis. Students choosing this option take

- a. 6 hours of **Core Courses**, including ENGL 6001: Research & Bibliography (taken in the first semester) and either ENGL 6701: History of Literary Criticism or ENGL 6705 Contemporary Critical Theory;
- b. 12 hours of **Elective Courses in the Concentration**, chosen from among the following: WGST 6000: Feminist Theory; ENGL 6511: History of Children's Literature;

- ENGL 6515: Special Topics in Children's and Adolescent Literature; ENGL 6551: Popular Culture Studies; ENGL 6301: Postcolonial Literature and Theory; ENGL 6711: Reading Postmodernism; ENGL 6715: Studies in Narratology; ENGL 6611: Selected Topics in Literature and Language; ENGL 6555: Special Topics in Popular Culture Studies; ENGL 6571: Studies in Folklore; ENGL 6575: Special Topics in Folklore; ENGL 6561: Film Studies; ENGL 6565: Special Topics in Film Studies.
- c. 9 hours of **Electives**. Any 5000- or 6000-level English courses will fulfill these electives. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may also be used as an elective.
 - d. 3 hours of ENGL 6640: Thesis Research must be completed with a grade of S, and the completed thesis must be successfully defended and accepted by the College of Graduate Studies..

2. M.A. with Portfolio. The Master of Arts (Popular Culture/Cultural Studies) with Portfolio requires at least 30 hours of coursework and three hours of directed portfolio.

- a. Students taking this option have the same **Core** and **Distribution** courses as those choosing the Thesis Option. They take 12 hours of **Electives** fulfilled by any combination of 5000- or 6000-level English courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may be used as an elective.
- b. **Directed Portfolio**: Three (3) hrs. of ENGL 6913 must be completed with a grade of S. The portfolio is made up of three course papers revised according to the recommendations of the assigning professors (one of whom should act as portfolio director) into short essays appropriate for submission to relevant academic journals and an essay of at least 1500 words addressing the choice of essays and reflecting on the process of revising them into publishable articles. Final submission of the portfolio to the portfolio director should include the originally assigned papers, the revised articles, the reflective essay, and a sign-off sheet for each paper signed by the assigning professor attesting the professor's satisfaction with the revisions. The portfolio director will assign a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory based upon the completed portfolio.

E. Open Degree Plan, choosing one of two options:

1. M.A. with Thesis. Students choosing this option take 30 hours of coursework, including ENGL 6001: Introduction to Graduate Studies, Bibliography and Research and 3 hrs. of ENGL 6640: Thesis Research must be completed with a grade of S, and the completed thesis must be successfully defended and accepted by the College of Graduate Studies. The remaining 24 hours may be fulfilled by electives chosen from among any 5000- or 6000-level English courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may also be used as an elective.

2. M.A. with Portfolio. Students choosing this option take 33 hours of coursework, including ENGL 6001: Introduction to Graduate Studies, Bibliography and Research; and a

minimum of 3 hours of ENGL 6913: Directed Portfolio, completed with a grade of S. The portfolio is made up of three course papers revised according to the recommendations of the assigning professors (one of whom should act as portfolio director) into short essays appropriate for submission to relevant academic journals and an essay of at least 1500 words addressing the choice of essays and reflecting on the process of revising them into publishable articles. Final submission of the portfolio to the portfolio director should include the originally assigned papers, the revised articles, the reflective essay, and a sign-off sheet for each paper signed by the assigning professor attesting the professor's satisfaction with the revisions. The portfolio director will assign a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory based upon the completed portfolio. The remaining 27 hours may be fulfilled by electives chosen from among any 5000- or 6000-level English courses. One 5000-level World Language for Reading Knowledge course may also be used as an elective.

Intent to Graduate

Students must file an “Intent to Graduate” form with the College of Graduate Studies *and* notify the Graduate Program Office within two weeks of the beginning of classes in the semester in which they intend to graduate. The form may be obtained and submitted online at the CGS website: <https://mtsu.edu/graduate/forms.php>, under the tab Forms for Current Graduate Students. If plans for graduation change after the Intent has been submitted, students must file a Request to Withdraw Intent to Graduate form located on the same webpage.

Changing Emphases

Students may change the emphasis option within the master’s program after consulting with the graduate advisor to ensure that they understand the recommendations for the new emphasis.

Advancement to Candidacy: M.A.

Students are expected to proceed in a timely manner toward the completion of the degree. The maximum time limit for completing the master’s degree is six years from the date of matriculation in the program, though students normally should complete the degree in two to three years. Students advance to candidacy when they have completed the minimum required coursework for the degree and have only the thesis or directed portfolio remaining.

Doctor of Philosophy Program Requirements

Course requirements for the Ph.D. in English include a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework. Up to 12 hours of master's-level credit may be transferred and applied toward the 60-hour requirement if recommended by the Graduate Program Director or Graduate Advisor and approved by the College of Graduate Studies. Master's-level coursework must be recent (within the past ten years) to be considered. (See the Graduate Program Director or the Graduate Advisor to discuss the transfer of master's-level coursework. The ten-year time limit is firmly enforced.) The 60 hours of required coursework include the following:

- A. At least 12 hours of dissertation research (ENGL 7640). Students may take more (those with Federal loans should consult with the graduate advisor each semester), but only 12 hours count toward the 60-hour requirement. Students who have passed their prelims must be continuously enrolled in at least one semester hour of dissertation research each semester, excluding summers, until the degree is completed. Students planning to graduate in the summer must be enrolled in at least one credit hour.
- B. At least 48 hours of 7000-level English coursework (or 36 hours if 12 hours of master's-level credit have been approved to count toward this requirement, 39 hours if only 9 hours have been approved, 42 hours if only 6 hours have been approved, etc.). No undergraduate or dual-listed 4000/5000 courses may count towards this requirement. The 48 hours must include the following:
 1. Three hours of ENGL 7001: Introduction to Graduate Study (this course may be transferred from the M.A. if the M.A. course is sufficiently similar to the MTSU course).
 2. Three hours of theory fulfilled by either ENGL 7701: History of Criticism or ENGL 7705: Contemporary Critical Theory.
 3. Three hours (or one course) of distribution requirements from each of the following three groups:
 - a. British Literature through the Renaissance (ENGL 7011: Old English Language and Literature; ENGL 7015: *Beowulf*; ENGL 7025: Chaucer Seminar; ENGL 7021: Medieval English Literature; ENGL 7051: Studies in Early English Drama, excluding Shakespeare: 900-1642; ENGL 7105: Spenser Seminar; ENGL 7101: Studies in Sixteenth-Century Prose and Poetry; ENGL 7111: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry; ENGL 7121: Studies in Milton; ENGL 7115: Studies in Shakespeare; other courses when appropriate as determined by the Graduate Program Director or Graduate Advisor, e.g., ENGL 7171: Major British Writers; ENGL 7415: Special Topics in Women's Literature; ENGL 7611: Selected Topics in Literature and Language; ENGL 7901: Directed Reading and Research).
 - b. British Literature since the Renaissance (ENGL 7131: Studies in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature; ENGL 7141: Studies in English Romanticism: Wordsworth and Coleridge; ENGL 7145: Studies in English Romanticism: Shelley, Byron, and Keats; ENGL 7151: Studies in Victorian Literature; ENGL 7161: Modern British Literature. Other courses when appropriate as determined by the Graduate Program Director or Graduate Advisor, e.g., ENGL 7171: Major British Writers; ENGL 7401: Studies in Contemporary Literature; ENGL 7415: Special Topics in Women's Literature; ENGL 7601: Studies in the Novel; ENGL 7611: Selected Topics in Literature and Language; ENGL 7901: Directed Reading and Research).
 - c. American Literature (ENGL 7221: African American Literature; ENGL 7225: Studies in Southern Literature; ENGL 7201: American Literature to 1800; ENGL 7205: Studies in American Literature: 1800-1860; ENGL 7211: Studies in American Literature: 1860-1910;

ENGL 7215: Studies in American Literature: 1910-1950; other courses when appropriate as determined by the Graduate Program Director or Graduate Advisor, e.g., ENGL 7231: Major American Writers; ENGL 7401: Studies in Contemporary Literature; ENGL 7415: Special Topics in Women's Literature; ENGL 7601: Studies in the Novel; ENGL 7611: Selected Topics in Literature and Language; ENGL 7901: Directed Reading and Research).

Cognate Option: Ph.D. students may elect to take 6 to 9 credit hours of graduate courses in a field related to their area of specialization (such as History or Literacy Studies) if permitted by that department. The cognate must be declared to the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Program Director and may be considered electives in the 48 hours of required coursework in English for the degree. **Note:** Other departments may require a methods course in their discipline in order for English Ph.D. students to take their graduate courses.

Additional requirements include:

- a. Fulfillment of a world language requirement;
- b. Successful completion of two Ph.D. preliminary exams (including an oral component when required by the examiners) in chosen areas of specialization. Students are required to notify the English Graduate office of the examination areas of the Ph.D. preliminary exams within two weeks of the beginning of classes in the semester in which they intend to take the exams. For further information, see "Graduate Examinations" in this handbook.
- c. Successful completion of a dissertation and an oral defense

Advancement to Candidacy: Ph.D.

Students are expected to proceed in a timely manner toward the completion of the degree. The **maximum** time limit for completing the Ph.D. degree is ten years from the date of matriculation in the program. A total of 60 hours of graduate-level coursework in English is required, no more than 12 of which may be applied from master's-level work, and no more than 12 from dissertation research credit (ENGL 7640). In order to advance to candidacy, students must successfully pass preliminary examinations in two areas. One area must be selected from one of the standard examination areas; the other examination may be selected from another standard area or may consist of a customized examination constructed by the student in consultation with a student-formed examination committee. A **primary area of concentration** is established by completion of *at least* three courses (9 credit hours) in the general area, passing a preliminary examination, and writing a dissertation in the area. The **secondary area of concentration** may be established by completion of three courses (9 credit hours) in the area or related areas and passing a preliminary examination in the area. Students may list both areas of concentration on letters of application for employment as appropriate.

Ph.D. candidacy is granted only when the student has successfully passed preliminary exams in both areas.

Preliminary examinations must be taken and passed before students may enroll in Dissertation Research (ENGL 7640). The Doctoral Readings (ENGL 7909) course may be taken while students take the preliminary examinations. Students should have fulfilled all distribution requirements before taking preliminary exams and are strongly encouraged to complete the world language requirement also.

Intent to Graduate

Students must inform the Graduate Program office and file an “Intent to Graduate” form with the College of Graduate Studies within two weeks (firmly enforced) of the beginning of classes in the semester in which they intend to graduate. The form may be obtained online at <https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/forms.php>. If circumstances prevent graduation after an Intent to Graduate form has been submitted, the student must file a Request to Withdraw an Intent to Graduate form, which may be found at the same site.

Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations

Ph.D. preliminary examinations are designed to ensure that Ph.D. students have the breadth and depth of knowledge expected of candidates for the highest degree in English. It is at the level of exams that doctoral students creatively define their specialties, which are further developed and more sharply focused in the dissertation. The exam structure is designed to ensure that students master broad fields of study beyond the narrower focus of their dissertations. Students ought to peruse the annual Job Information Lists published by the Modern Language Association and other such sites to get a sense of the range of expertise that colleges and universities are looking for in the faculty they hire.

The graduate program director should be notified in the **first two weeks** of the semester in which a student intends to take exams of which exams the student plans to take. No graduate exams are administered in the summer months. The English Graduate Studies office will announce exam dates in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the College of Graduate Studies. Although faculty readers for standard examination areas remain anonymous, graduate students are encouraged to consult with graduate faculty members in preparing for exams.

Students preparing for the examinations are expected to read extensively in their chosen areas and well beyond the texts covered in their coursework. They should recognize that their course readings, no matter how thorough, reflect only a partial perspective on their exam fields. **Course readings alone almost certainly will not be adequate to prepare students for the preliminary exams.** One course alone, no matter how well a student performs in it, is not adequate preparation for a preliminary examination in any field.

Each academic year, the Graduate Program Director or Graduate Advisor in coordination with EGSO will schedule a workshop to discuss expectations and preparation strategies for the exams. The workshop will draw upon the experiences of students who have recently taken the exams and faculty who have evaluated them.

Current reading lists, which are subject to periodic revision, offer representative major texts in all exam areas and may be obtained from the English Graduate Studies office and through the graduate program website: <https://mtsu.edu/programs/english-grad/info2>. These reading lists serve to guide students toward essential readings. Students are expected to read the works on the lists and demonstrate their knowledge of those works in the written and, if required, oral components of their examinations. In writing answers to exam questions, a student may discuss texts not appearing on an exam list if doing so would effectively supplement a discussion of those that are; however, students must in all cases demonstrate competency in those texts generally accepted as defining the field.

Preliminary exams in the standard areas are read anonymously. One of three grades is awarded for every graduate examination: pass with distinction, pass, or fail. **A student who fails any exam may take it only once more, in the semester following the first attempt.** For all exams, students will be on the honor system, and university policy on plagiarism will be in force. The Graduate Program Director will report the results of exams to students and to the College of Graduate Studies. For further information on assessing the quality of graduate examinations, see the list of “Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Graduate Exams” that concludes this section of the handbook.

Special accommodations will be made only for students with documented disabilities and will be limited to the recommendations of MTSU’s Disability & Access Center.

Preliminary examinations consist of a written and, if required by the examiners, an oral component. The written component of exams is administered individually over two days designated by the department, normally consecutive Friday afternoons a week apart. At each of those times students take one four-hour exam in an examination area they have chosen. Two readers prepare and review each preliminary exam. Readers evaluate exams independently of one another, and then confer to determine the outcome. Should the readers agree that the student has passed the written component of the exam, they may at their discretion require an oral exam, which usually will be scheduled within a period of no more than two weeks and always before the end of the semester in which the exam was administered.

If the two readers disagree irreconcilably on the outcome of the written exam, the Director of Graduate Studies will appoint a third reader to determine the results conclusively. Should the third reader pass the written exam, all three readers will conduct the oral component of the exam if requested. If the third readers determine that the exam fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the area, the exam will be considered to have failed.

If the examiners require an oral exam, the student will be orally examined for up to 90 minutes in the pertinent examination area. The oral component may cover some of the topics addressed in the written exam but may also explore other aspects of the field not addressed in the written portion. Students must be present on campus for their oral examination. Students must pass both oral (if required) and written portions of their Ph.D. exams in order to advance to candidacy.

When to Take the Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations

Near completion of all coursework, a doctoral student will take preliminary exams in **two** examination areas approved by the department (presumably in areas most relevant to the student's teaching interests and dissertation topic). Students are expected to demonstrate a high level of expertise in these examination areas, appropriate for teaching advanced undergraduate and graduate classes. Students must take the preliminary examinations before enrolling in Dissertation Research (ENGL 7640). The Doctoral Readings course (ENGL 7909) may be taken while taking the preliminary examinations.

The following are the **Preliminary Exam Areas** which have been approved by the department. Depending on the availability of faculty, it may not be possible to arrange exams in some of these areas; students should consult with the Graduate Advisor before deciding on an exam area. Current reading lists for these areas are available online at www.mtsu.edu/programs/english-grad/info2.

- I. Old and Middle English
- II. Early Modern (1500-1660, including Milton)
- III. Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature
- IV. Nineteenth-Century British Literature*
 - a. Romantics
 - b. Victorian
- V. Twentieth-Century British Literature
- VI. American Literature to 1830
- VII. American Literature: 1830 to Modernism
- VIII. American Literature: Modernism to the Present
- IX. Criticism and Critical Theory
- X. Composition, Language, Rhetoric
- XI. Children's and Young Adults' Literature
- XII. Linguistics
- XIII. Popular Culture and Film Studies*
 - a. Popular Culture
 - b. Film
- XIV. Anglophone Literature
- XV. Folklore

*Students may choose to be examined in either IV.a or IV.b only; or in XIII.a or XIII.b only.

A student who fails a preliminary exam in one area may choose to change fields *before* re-taking the exam in the failed area, but will be given only one chance to pass an exam in the new examination area and cannot re-take the exam in the failed area. If the student who has failed a prelim opts to re-take an exam in the same area, the second exam will not be identical to the first. **A student who fails a preliminary exam twice will not be able to advance to candidacy or continue in the program.**

Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Ph.D. Preliminary Exams

1. Ability to Compose a Reasoned and Sustained Response to the Question

High Pass: Provides a direct response to the question which clearly pursues a reasoned path, may uncover additional questions or complications.

Pass: Provides a direct response to the question but misses obvious opportunities to develop or complicate the response.

Low Pass: Responds to the question, but lacks clear connection or cohesion of ideas.

Fail: Absence of a reasoned or sustained response to the question.

2. Accuracy, Breadth, and Depth of Knowledge

High Pass: Demonstrates mastery of the area by discussing primary and secondary literature accurately and with an appreciation for complexity.

Pass: Demonstrates strong knowledge of primary works, perhaps with minor inaccuracies, but has few references to secondary scholarship.

Low Pass: Demonstrates general knowledge of primary works with some inaccuracies and oversimplifications. Does not reference any secondary literature

Fail: Does not demonstrate adequate knowledge of primary works.

3. Ability to Establish a Critical Position

High Pass: Shows independent thinking through critical evaluations of primary and/or secondary literature.

Pass: Provides some limited discussion of independent perspectives on primary and/or secondary works.

Low Pass: Exhibits elements of independent thinking with regard to primary and/or secondary texts but without development or sustained discussion.

Fail: Response is limited to showing knowledge of primary works without any critical evaluation of primary and/or secondary works.

4. Writing Quality

High Pass: Well-organized and fluid, with no sentence-level errors, and a minimum of typographical errors.

Pass: Organized and less fluid, with few abrupt transitions and sentence-level errors, and a minimum of typographical errors.

Low Pass: Passably organized, but with some abrupt transitions and sentence-level and/or typographical errors.

Fail: Poorly organized or replete with intrusive sentence-level and typographical errors.

Coursework

Graduate students take courses at the 6000 (M.A.) or 7000 (Ph.D.) level. Some courses taught at the 5000 level may also be accepted toward the M.A. Students should consult the Graduate Advisor to make sure they can apply a 5000-level course to their program.

Descriptions for all graduate courses appear in the *Graduate Catalog*. In addition, fliers are often posted on bulletin boards and the hall monitors in the English Department areas of the third floor of Peck Hall describing courses to be taught in the coming semesters. Students should feel free to consult with the professor who will be teaching a course to find out more about it.

Course offerings for each upcoming semester appear in a class schedule, which is available online, usually around mid-term of the current semester. Once students know which courses they would like to take in a given semester, they can register for these courses online during their assigned registration period.

Note: Sometimes students try to “shop” courses; that is, they attend the first day of several courses, then decide which ones they will take and drop the others. This practice is actively discouraged as it effectively prevents other students from registering for courses that they need. Students who enroll in more than the allowed number of courses may be dropped immediately and without notice from all courses for which they have registered, necessitating their re-enrollment in whatever courses remain open at the time.

Course Load

Students should become familiar with the following information concerning status in regard to graduate loads to avoid problems with registration, financial aid, or academic status. In general:

Full-time status is 9-12 graduate hours.

Three-quarter time is 7-8 graduate hours.

Half-time is 5-6 graduate hours.

Graduate students may enroll in no more than **12 hours per semester** (see *Graduate Catalog* under “Student Load”), but are *strongly* discouraged from attempting 12 hours. Students with assistantships may enroll in no more than **6 hours per semester**. Requests to take an **overload** must be approved by the Graduate Advisor, Graduate Program Director, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The [Request for Overload Form](#) is available online. Approval by the Graduate Advisor and Graduate Program Director is based on the student’s potential to complete the coursework successfully.

Directed Reading Courses

Directed reading courses (ENGL 6901/7901) allow a student to study a specific topic independently in areas not already covered by the regular curriculum of courses in the *Graduate Catalog*, or that have not been offered recently or are not scheduled to be offered during the student’s tenure. These courses should be directly related to the student’s degree program, research, and professional goals.

These courses require approval by the professor directing the reading and by the English Graduate Program Director. Before enrolling in a course of Directed Reading and Research, students must first successfully complete Introduction to Graduate Study: Bibliography and Research (ENGL 6001/7001). Students who wish to take a directed reading course should contact the specific professor they would like to study with well in advance of the semester in which they propose to take the course.

Students may take as many as three directed reading courses; however, normally only two courses (6 hours) may be applied toward the minimum hours of coursework required for the degree.

Directed Creative Writing

Directed Creative Writing (ENGL 6905) is offered only at the master’s level. Master’s students may count either ENGL 6905 or ENGL 6901 toward their degree requirements, but not both.

Master’s and Doctoral Reading Courses

The Master’s and Doctoral Reading courses (ENGL 6909/7909) are designed to be taken the semester *before* a student enrolls for MA thesis or PhD dissertation hours. These courses focus upon foundational research, reading, and writing of an introductory chapter (Master’s) or prospectus (Doctoral). The Master’s and Doctoral Reading courses count as part of the minimum course requirements toward the degree and may only be taken once. MA students seeking the non-thesis degree option cannot take the Master’s Reading course.

How to register for Directed Reading, Directed Creative Writing, or Master’s and Doctoral Reading Courses

Individual sections of Directed Reading, Directed Creative Writing, or Master’s or Doctoral Readings courses must be created by the program secretary before students may enroll for such courses. In order to receive approval to register, the following must be submitted by the *faculty director* of the Directed Reading, Directed Creative Writing, or Master’s or Doctoral Readings course to the Director of Graduate Studies (cc the program secretary):

- Proposal or Statement of Intent for the project: The proposal or statement should be an informal preliminary overview of the student’s proposed research or creative interest, 1-2

pages in length, plus a selective bibliography. It should address the purpose and rationale for the project and comment on the significance of the project to the field.

Adding and Dropping Courses

Students seeking to add a course or drop a course once a semester is underway should consult directions in the *Graduate Catalog*. Generally, these procedures require filling out a Drop/Add form, obtained in the Graduate Office, and obtaining the required signatures.

Cancelling Scheduled Courses

If too few students register for a scheduled course, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts may require that it be cancelled. In such a case, students will be notified and will have to enroll in other courses.

Repeating Courses

Students should remain aware of their academic standing (outlined in Appendix A) and the minimum GPA requirements of the College of Graduate Studies for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The College of Graduate Studies allows graduate students to repeat graduate courses in which a grade lower than B- was earned, with restrictions and limitations as follows:

1. A student may repeat a maximum of 2 courses, not to exceed 8 credits combined, for a grade change (the grade in the second attempt replaces the grade in the first attempt in calculating the GPA; however, grades for both attempts remain on the transcripts).
2. Any third or subsequent repeat by the student will not result in a grade change or replacement. In this case, all grades are calculated into the grade point average.
3. Graduate students may not repeat a course in which they have earned the grade of A, A-, B+, or B without written approval from the English Graduate Program Director and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. If granted, there will be no replacement in the GPA calculation; i.e., all attempts will be used in the GPA calculation and recorded on the transcript.

Students should consult with the graduate advisor if they decide to repeat a course to make sure they are making the most prudent decision.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are available for qualified students. Assistantships fund tuition and provide a stipend in return for work that may include tutoring in the University Writing Center, teaching courses, and assisting in research. Students desiring to be considered for a graduate assistantship must complete a [Graduate Assistant Application](#), which may be found at the [website](#) for the College of Graduate Studies. (This is a separate form from the Application to Graduate School.) The completed form should be submitted with the application to the graduate program through the Graduate Student Portal at the College of Graduate Studies website. Assistantships normally begin in the fall term. Application files must be complete by **February 1** for those wishing to be considered for graduate assistantships.

General Policies Concerning Graduate Assistants

All new and returning graduate assistants are required to attend orientation before classes begin for the fall semester.

Within the department graduate assistants are designated by the following titles:

Graduate Assistant (GA): the general title for an M.A. or Ph.D.-level student who is awarded an assistantship, including the following categories employed by the department:

- (a) Writing Assistant (WA): a graduate assistant who is assigned to work in the University Writing Center.
- (b) Teaching Assistant (TA): a graduate assistant who is assigned to teach departmental courses, usually English 1010 or 1020, though Ph.D. students may be able to teach ENGL 2020 or 2030. Graduate assistants may also be assigned as Mentored Teaching Assistants (MTA) in classes for which they are preparing to teach.
- (c) Research Assistant (RA): a graduate assistant who is assigned to work closely with a particular professor on research project(s) of the professor's choice.
- (d) Program Assistant (PA): a graduate assistant who is assigned to work as mentor and facilitator for teaching and assessment activities for the General Education or Graduate Programs.

Graduate assistants are assigned the equivalent of 20 hours of departmental work per week.

Teaching assignments are based on departmental needs, and teaching assistants are sometimes assigned a split workload that includes teaching one English General Education class (ENGL 1010, 1020, or 2020/2030) plus 10 hours as a RA, PA, MTA, or WA in the University Writing Center (UWC). Graduate assistants are not permitted to hold any other paid positions at the university.

All GAs with assignments as research assistant or program assistants are required to complete timesheets recording their weekly hours devoted to their RA or PA assignments. The timesheets are a means of insuring that students are not spending more than 10 hours (in a split assignment) or 20 hours (in a single assignment) on their work in each week. Supervisors are not permitted to require RAs or PAs to "bank" hours in order to work more than their assigned number of hours in any given week.

Until they have completed 18 hours of graduate-level course work in English, which is required by the university's accrediting agency before an instructor can be placed in the college classroom, M.A.-level GAs are generally assigned as writing assistants in the UWC for 20 hours a week; occasionally they may be assigned as UWC writing assistants for 10 hours per week and as research assistants for particular professors for another 10 hours per week. Once students have completed 18 hours of

coursework, they may be assigned to serve as teaching assistants, under the guidance of the department's General Education English Co-Directors. Before their first time teaching, teaching assistants are required to enroll in the Seminar in Teaching Composition (English 6821/7821), which is usually offered in the Fall semester. After their first year as TAs or WAs, graduate assistants may apply to serve as Program Assistants (peer advisors or program assistants) for the UWC, the General Education English program, or the Graduate Program, based on a record of excellence in tutoring and departmental service.

M.A. graduate assistants who have not yet completed 18 hours of graduate coursework in English are normally assigned to 20 hours per week as writing assistants in the UWC, though they may also receive a split assignment as WA and mentored teaching assistant in an ENGL 1010 class. M.A. graduate assistants normally begin their teaching in the first or second semester of their second year. M.A.-level teaching assistants are generally assigned to teach English 1010 composition courses, though they may have a split assignment of teaching one course and up to 10 hours per week as a UWC writing assistant, research assistant, or mentored teaching assistant. On rare occasions M.A.-level graduate assistants may be assigned to a 20-hour per week research assistantship, depending on the needs of the department.

Ph.D.-level graduate assistants may be given teaching assistantships their first year if they have significant previous teaching experience and are enrolled in the Seminar in Teaching Composition (ENGL 7821). Those Ph.D.-level graduate assistants who have minimal or no tutoring or teaching experience will usually be assigned to the University Writing Center as writing assistants in their first semester. On rare occasions Ph.D.-level graduate assistants may be assigned to a 20-hour per week research assistantship, depending on the needs of the department. Ph.D.-level teaching assistants may also be given the opportunity to teach English 1020, the second-semester freshman composition course. After one year in the GTA program, Ph.D.-level TAs may choose to be mentored by experienced faculty and develop their own general education literature course in order to be eligible to teach either ENGL 2020 or 2030. Alternatively, if they have completed ENGL 7881 with a grade of B or better, Ph.D.-level TAs may also qualify to teach 2020 or 2030, depending on departmental need. As the opportunity affords, Ph.D.-level TAs may also be mentored by experienced professors in an upper-level undergraduate course in their field of specialization. All mentoring opportunities are dependent upon the availability of willing faculty members.

Assessment of Graduate Assistants

Graduate assistants are evaluated in various ways, depending on their assignment. The University Writing Center supervisors complete evaluations for each writing assistant each semester; these consist of written evaluations of tutoring sessions and also an evaluation grid that is produced by and sent to the Graduate College. Teaching assistants are observed by departmental faculty. In addition teaching assistants are evaluated by the General Education English Directors, using an evaluation grid provided by the Graduate College. Mentored Teaching Assistants are evaluated by their mentoring faculty, using an evaluation grid provided by the Graduate College. Research assistants and program assistants are evaluated by the individual professors/supervisors to whom they are assigned, who fill out an evaluation grid that is produced by and sent to the Graduate College. The University Writing Center supervisors and General Education English directors meet annually with the Graduate Program Director to discuss the performance and contract renewals of all the department's GAs.

Policies on Continuing Support

M.A. graduate assistants may receive a maximum of six semesters of support and continue to be employed for those six semesters provided that the evaluations completed each semester are positive. Ph.D. graduate assistants receive five years of support and continue to be employed for those five years if the evaluations completed each semester are positive. Graduate assistants who are making insufficient progress in their program, who fail to fulfill their teaching, tutoring, research, or program duties at an adequate level, or who violate academic integrity rules and regulations may have their assistantship terminated. In the event of negative evaluations, the Graduate Program Director or the Chair of the Department may terminate support.

Level of Graduate Assistant Support

Our 9-month M.A. graduate assistants receive an annual stipend of \$6,500 distributed over an eight-month period, with a waiver of tuition fees and out-of-state fees if the GA is not a resident of Tennessee. The 12-month M.A. stipends provide \$8,644 for a twelve-month contract, with a waiver of tuition fees and out-of-state fees if the GA is a non-resident of Tennessee. Doctoral-level stipends are presently \$14,000 for a twelve-month contract, with a waiver of tuition fees and out-of-state fees if the GA is a non-resident of Tennessee.

The John N. McDaniel Excellence in Teaching and Bené Cox Excellence in Tutoring Awards

Each spring, the graduate office will issue a call for self-nominations for the McDaniel and Cox Awards. All M.A.-level and Ph.D.-level teaching assistants are eligible to apply. Two \$500-dollar McDaniel awards are given annually to outstanding classroom teaching assistants, based on teaching observations, student evaluations, a self-nomination letter, and other supporting evidence. One \$150-dollar Cox award is given annually to a graduate student tutor in the University Writing Center, based on a self-nomination letter and tutoring portfolio. The McDaniel Awards are sponsored by Thomson Publishing. The Cox Award is sponsored by Bedford/St. Martin's.

Standards and Expectations

The English Graduate Program assumes important responsibilities in preparing students for professional work in teaching, research, and other areas. The faculty seek to prepare students by providing courses, seminars, speakers, research experience, mentoring, and other activities and resources relevant to students' studies and preparation. While faculty will attend to specific needs of students when feasible, students should understand that the demands of accreditation, the university, and the College of Graduate Studies, as well as the program, render it ultimately impossible to make exceptions to program requirements.

Graduate students in turn assume a responsibility to understand and meet all program requirements and observe policies and procedures, including any measures instituted by MTSU in response to natural disasters, health emergencies, etc. As soon as feasible, students should communicate to the Graduate Advisor or Graduate Program Director their plans regarding dates for completion of coursework, theses and dissertations, exam scheduling, deadlines, and other information relevant to their satisfactory progress.

Students are expected to arrange their schedules to accommodate class meeting times and the office hours of professors.

While faculty attempt to address individual needs when feasible, they are also obligated to apply all university, College of Graduate Studies, and English Graduate Program policies and procedures impartially to all students. **Students who require special accommodations related to a disability should work through the Disability & Access Center** (615-898-2783; Keathley University Center, Room 120; or dacemail@mtsu.edu).

Statement of Community Standards of Civil Behavior

The English Graduate Program fully endorses the statement of community standards and expectations issued by the office of the MTSU Provost for Academic Affairs, which can be found at www.mtsu.edu/student-conduct/code/index.php. Further, the English Graduate Program supports the statement of community standards issued by the College of Graduate Studies and appearing in their *Graduate Student Handbook* (currently being updated), including the following foundational principles:

- the practice of personal honesty in all matters;
- a positive regard for the dignity and value of each citizen in the community;
- respect for the individual rights and possessions of community members;
- disdain for bigotry and hatred expressed in any form or medium and directed toward identifiable groups or individuals in the community;
- tolerance for the convictions and opinions of others, even when not in agreement with one's own beliefs;
- a recognition of community members' mutual needs and concerns and acceptance of a responsibility held in common to support the personal growth and efforts of each individual in furtherance of the well-being of the entire community.

These expectations for community standards apply to all areas of graduate study—actual, virtual, and online classrooms, writing labs, library, group meetings, presentations, all communication venues, and any other forum.

University Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities

The university and College of Graduate Studies have developed a [Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](#) that pertains to all MTSU graduate students. Students assume a responsibility to know and act according to expectations for academic community, and to understand their rights as students.

Academic Integrity

One aspect of professionalism involves integrity. Faculty members assume that students understand, subscribe to, and practice high personal and professional standards, and they hold students accountable to them. In the discipline of English studies, this includes the responsibility of doing one's own work and for complying with professional standards and procedures for attributing the sources of information, images, and other forms of media.

The English Graduate Program takes its role in promoting its students' professionalism very seriously; thus faculty report and act on any breaches of academic integrity as required by the university and College of Graduate Studies.

The College of Graduate Studies states: "Students at MTSU are expected to be intellectually honest and forthright in their academic activities. Proper credit should be given to sources of all work done. To attempt to use the ideas or words of others or to falsify data is to plagiarize (i.e., adopt, present, or reproduce ideas, statements, images, or works of others as one's own without proper acknowledgment) or fabricate (i.e., falsify any information or citation) respectively, neither of which is acceptable. Appropriate action will be taken as deemed necessary by the College of Graduate Studies, up to and including expulsion from MTSU and the rescinding of any graduate degree awarded as a result of a breach in academic integrity."

The following policies are disseminated by Middle Tennessee State University's Office of the Provost for Academic Affairs. The English Department and English Graduate Program comply with these policies and procedures.

Academic Misconduct Defined

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

1. Plagiarism—the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper attribution. This includes self-plagiarism, which occurs when an author submits material or research from a previous academic exercise to satisfy the requirements of another academic exercise and uses it without proper citation of its reuse.
2. Cheating—using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination. Cheating also includes unapproved collaboration, which occurs when a student works with others on an individual academic exercise without the express permission of the faculty member.
3. Fabrication—unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Academic Misconduct Policy

The professor reports allegations of academic misconduct to the English Graduate Program Director and to the Director of Academic Integrity, CAB 111, (615) 898-2533, as described in University Policy 312 [Academic Misconduct](#). The professor should attempt to inform the student of the allegation and notify the student that the information has been forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity's office. The professor may conduct a conference with the student in compliance with the following procedures:

1. The student will be provided notice that he or she is believed to have committed an act or acts of academic misconduct in violation of University rules.
2. The student will be presented with all evidence in the knowledge or possession of the professor that tends to support the allegation(s) of academic misconduct.
3. The student will have an opportunity to present information on his or her behalf.

Based upon university policy regarding academic misconduct, the professor will not assign an appropriate grade until a determination has been made. This information, along with all supporting documentation of the violation, will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity's office.

In the event a student believes he or she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct the student will have the opportunity to communicate this concern to the Director of Academic Integrity by denying responsibility. In such a case, the Director of Academic Integrity will send the case to a hearing by the Academic Integrity Committee, who will consider the evidence and testimony before making a final determination.

If the student is found responsible for the allegation(s) of academic misconduct, the grade proposed by the professor will stand. Should the student be absolved of the allegations of academic misconduct by the Academic Integrity Committee, the faculty member will reassess the student's grade based on the committee's finding.

If the student withdraws from the university, and is ultimately found responsible for academic misconduct, the student will receive the grade proposed by the professor.

Class Attendance Pending Hearing. The student may stay in class pending an appeal hearing if the faculty member determines that the student's presence in the class does not interfere with the professor's ability to teach the class or the ability of other class members to learn.

Graduate assistants found responsible for academic misconduct will have their assistantship terminated.

Portfolios, Theses, and Dissertations

The finished portfolio, thesis, or dissertation is the culmination of a graduate student's degree program, the document that secures a junior scholar's admission into the academic profession and provides proof of professional competence. These documents also attest to advanced practices in research, synthesizing information, effective writing, and analysis. The following comments are meant to provide some general guidelines for students preparing portfolios, theses, and dissertations. Students are also encouraged to consult the most recent edition of *The MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing* and the College of Graduate Studies' [Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines](#).

Directed Portfolio

The directed portfolio is an alternative to the thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree with a non-thesis option. The directed portfolio is an individually supervised, unified collection of multiple components that includes intensive revision of a paper or papers from previous coursework and other elements to be determined by the portfolio director to demonstrate an appropriate breadth of knowledge and sophistication of writing.

The portfolio may take the form of either a culminating project as described on page 12 as part of the Language and Writing Studies emphasis or a portfolio of revised papers as described on page 11 as part of the Literary Studies (and also Cultural Studies and Open) emphasis.

Thesis

The thesis is a work of original, advanced research written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree with a thesis option. A short monograph, usually 70 to 100 pages in length, the thesis develops a unified, coherent argument and makes an original contribution to the

field of study. While a thesis may take an idea explored in a previous class and significantly expand and develop its line of argument into a much larger, more complex work, the research and writing done for the thesis should represent significant new work.

Once an M.A. student enrolls in ENGL 6640: Thesis Research, he or she is expected to enroll in at least one hour of thesis research each Fall and Spring semester until the thesis is completed. However, only 3 hours of 6640 may be applied toward the requisite number of English course credits. (There are certain complications for students who have federal loans. Such students should discuss their plans in detail with the Graduate Advisor *before* registering for thesis hours.)

Dissertation

Like the thesis, the dissertation is a work of original, advanced research written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The dissertation is not an option, but rather a requirement for the degree. A dissertation is a book-length, unified, coherent work, usually 150 to 250 pages, that makes an original contribution to scholarship in the field. This is the document that secures the candidate's right to enter into the academic profession and provides proof of a variety of professional competencies in research, analysis, and writing.

General information on dissertations is available in the Graduate Catalog in the section on Graduate Programs. Doctoral students are required to complete at least 12 semester hours of ENGL 7640: Dissertation Research. More may be done (and most Ph.D. candidates do more), but only 12 hours of ENGL 7640 may be applied toward the 60-hour requirement for the degree. (There are certain complications for students who have federal loans. Such students should discuss their plans in detail with the Graduate Advisor *before* registering for dissertation hours.) Furthermore, once degree candidates enroll in dissertation hours, they are expected to enroll for at least one hour of dissertation research each semester (excluding summer sessions) until the dissertation is completed.

Selecting a Thesis or Dissertation Topic

Considering the amount of time a student will spend on the thesis or dissertation, the topic should be sufficiently complex and interesting to sustain concentrated effort over an extended period of months or years. The thesis or dissertation should make an original contribution to knowledge and scholarship on the topic. Students should become acquainted with the state of scholarship in their fields of specialization by keeping up with current published scholarship. The annual published surveys of scholarship in *YWES*, *ALS*, *SEL*, *CCCC Journal*, and other standard sources are useful for this purpose. Theses and dissertations often serve as source material for later publication as articles or books, so students should consider the possibility of future publication when selecting a topic.

Selecting a Director and Readers

First and foremost, the director (sometimes referred to as an advisor) should be a specialist in the area of interest. Students should choose a director who will require nothing less than their best work and for whom they will be willing to do their best work. Degree candidates invariably work closely with their thesis or dissertation directors, so the director should be someone from whom the student can take constructive criticism and with whom he or she can get along. The Graduate College stipulates that only full graduate faculty (in distinction to teaching graduate faculty) may direct Ph.D. dissertations or M.A. theses.

Thesis committees must have a director from within the English department and at least one other faculty reader; dissertation committees must have a director from within the English department and at least two other readers, at least one from within the area of specialization (or a closely related area) and perhaps one from outside of the specialization or outside of the department. Upon request of the student and approval of the director, dissertation committees can have a maximum of five members (a director and four readers). If the thesis or dissertation draws significantly upon another discipline (such as history, for example) then a student may consider selecting a qualified reader from that discipline. All readers, including those from outside the discipline or university, must have graduate faculty status.

Common courtesy demands that a student should approach a professor in person if possible, rather than by e-mail or note, to inquire about directing or reading a thesis or dissertation. The members of the committee are being asked to make a commitment that will require a significant investment of their time for which they are not significantly recompensed by the university. Students should also be aware that agreeing to serve as a director or reader for a thesis or dissertation does not obligate the professor to stick with the project to the end. *A student should approach the potential director at least one semester prior to registering for thesis or dissertation hours.*

Under certain conditions, in-person approaches to potential directors or readers may not be practical. You should develop a polished one-page description of your thesis or dissertation concept, carefully proofread, to attach to a formal e-mail asking the professors to consider serving as director or reader for your project and requesting an in-person, web conference, or phone appointment to discuss the possibility of working together.

Changing a Topic, Director, or Readers

Students should consult the Graduate Advisor if contemplating a change of topic or of director. The Advisor can help determine the need for or direction of a potential change.

In order to change the thesis or dissertation **topic**, a student must first discuss the change with the director of the thesis or dissertation. Since a major change in the topic may require changes in the committee, perhaps even a change of director, it is important to discuss all of the ramifications of the change before committing to it. Depending on the kind of change, new forms may need to be filed with the graduate college.

A student may need to change his or her **director** for any number of legitimate reasons. When pursuing a change, the student should speak in person to the former director as well as to the potential new director concerning the reasons for the change. It may be necessary to file new forms with the graduate college.

A student may need to change **readers** during the writing of the thesis or dissertation, and such a change should be made in consultation with the director. The student should speak in person to the former reader(s) as well as to the potential new reader(s) concerning the reasons for the change. As with the change of director, it may be necessary to file new forms with the Graduate College.

Under certain conditions, in-person approaches to potential directors or readers may not be practical. Instead of requesting an in-person meeting, students making changes should request a web conference or phone appointment.

How to Register for Directed Portfolio, Thesis, or Dissertation Hours

Individual sections of Directed Portfolio, Thesis, or Dissertation hours must be created by the program secretary before students may enroll for portfolio, thesis, or dissertation hours. In order to receive approval to register, the following must be submitted by the portfolio, thesis, or dissertation *director* to the Director of Graduate Studies (cc the program secretary):

- **Proposal or Statement of Intent for the project:** The proposal or statement should be a preliminary overview of the student's proposed portfolio or research interest, 1-2 pages in length, plus a selective bibliography in MLA or Chicago format. It should address the purpose and rationale for portfolio or the research and comment on the significance of the study to the field. All proposals should be carefully proofread and demonstrate professionalism.

Steps in Writing a Thesis or Dissertation

Students must complete and submit an [Advisory Committee Form](#) during the first semester in which they register for thesis or dissertation hours if they have not taken ENGL 6909 (Master's Readings) or ENGL 7909 (Doctoral Readings). Forming a committee and submitting the Advisory Committee form should be part of completing these courses prior to registering for thesis or dissertation hours.

Each thesis or dissertation is unique, and the preparedness of each student also differs widely, so the following list of steps is provisional, not absolute. The director may ask the writer of the thesis or dissertation to follow a different set of steps from those listed here, but this list will provide a general idea of what to expect.

1. **Statement of Intent:** The Statement of Intent is a preliminary overview of the student's research interest, 1-2 pages in length, plus a selective bibliography in MLA or Chicago format. It should address the purpose and rationale for the research and comment on the significance of the study to the field. The Statement should be professional in its presentation and carefully proofread. Students would be well advised to bring this statement when approaching the potential director and readers.
2. **Masters or Doctoral Readings:** The Masters (ENGL 6909) and Doctoral Readings (ENGL 7909) courses should be taken in the semester before initial enrollment in thesis or dissertation hours. These courses are designed to allow the student to conduct preliminary research and study in the topic of the thesis or dissertation, establish a thesis or dissertation committee, and write an introductory chapter (M.A.) or prospectus (Ph.D.), thus reserving actual thesis or dissertation hours for focused writing. The 6909/7909 course may count as elective coursework toward the degree and may be taken only once.
3. **Dissertation Prospectus:** The dissertation prospectus should outline the background, research question, argumentative thesis, and planned methodology for addressing the topic, and it should discuss the potential contribution that the work will make to advancing scholarship and/or pedagogy. Ph.D. students may use the Doctoral Readings (ENGL 7909) course to prepare and present the prospectus before registering for dissertation hours, but if they do not take the Readings course candidates are required to submit the completed prospectus to their dissertation directors and committees before

- completing their first semester of ENGL 7640 (Dissertation Research). If the proposed project is weak or there are flaws in the proposed methodology, the director may require revision—perhaps multiple revisions—before the prospectus is accepted. This step may generate a written outline of further requirements from the committee. The approved prospectus is publicly presented and then disseminated via email to the department’s graduate students and faculty at large. A prospectus is *not* required for the M.A. thesis.
4. **Provisional Table of Contents, and Working Timeline for Completion:** The table of contents provides a broad, general outline of the plan to develop the argument. The timeline for completion will almost always change as one gets into the actual writing (it almost always takes longer than originally planned), but students should try to be as realistic and as honest as possible.
 5. **Reading, Research, and Drafts of Chapters:** This process makes up the bulk of the time and is often cyclical. The director should see some sort of progress on drafts of chapters each semester before turning in the requisite grade of S or U for that semester. The student should discuss with the director and readers when to send the drafts to the reader(s): some want to see the chapters as they are completed; others prefer to wait until a draft of the entire thesis or dissertation is complete.
 6. **Revision:** Students should expect to have to make several revisions of each chapter, and they are expected to address the directors’ and readers’ comments on previous drafts in their revisions. Directors may require revision according to their comments on a chapter before sending it on to the reader(s), whose comments will probably require another revision. If there are conflicts, the director’s responsibility is to guide the student in negotiating with other committee members about which comments are most important to address and why. The director and all committee members must approve all revisions before the student produces the completed draft.
 7. **Completed Draft:** The entire committee should be able to read the whole, revised and polished text at least a couple of weeks before the defense. If there are any doubts about the quality of scholarship or argument at this point, the oral defense may be delayed until the student addresses the concerns of the committee. Completion of a draft does not automatically mean that the draft will be approved by the committee.
 8. **Final Copy.** The argument should be sound and the text should provide ample proof supporting the argument. The writing should be sophisticated and clear and should present the ideas in an interesting, orderly, and persuasive manner. The thesis or dissertation should be carefully proofread and polished and should conform to all of the formatting requirements of the College of Graduate Studies. In short, it should be a polished, professional work. Students should bear in mind that theses and dissertations are automatically made available online through ProQuest. “Good enough” should not be the first impression people have of one’s work.
 9. **Oral Defense:** The oral defense is an examination conducted by the committee on the material covered by the thesis or dissertation and its contribution to the field of study. The defense is announced ahead of time and is open to anyone who cares to attend. The student and all members of the committee must be present at the defense. Generally the

oral defense will generate further “fine tuning” revisions necessary before the student turns in the polished copy to the College of Graduate Studies. Depending on the nature of such revisions, the director may or may not want to see this copy before final submission.

- 10. Final Submission Process:** Since several individuals must read and approve graduate theses and dissertations, the submission process involves several steps and several deadlines which occur fairly early in the semester in which a student graduates. The relevant dates are posted by the College of Graduate Studies on the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#) and by the graduate program each semester.

Thesis: The thesis must be submitted to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies by the date indicated on the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#). **This is a hard deadline**—no extensions will be permitted. [**Note:** The Graduate Program in English requires submission of all finished theses to the Director of Graduate Studies.] The student must submit an electronic copy of the thesis to the thesis director, who must assess the originality through TurnItIn. Once results have been obtained, the director sends an electronic copy to the Graduate Program Director, and the student submits an electronic file of the thesis to ProQuest and a signature page form with the required signatures to the College of Graduate Studies. (These details are provided in the guidelines located at mtsu.edu/graduate/student/thesis.php.) Any thesis not meeting the standards of the College of Graduate Studies may be rejected by the dean, delaying graduation.

Dissertation: The original dissertation in electronic format must be submitted electronically through ProQuest and the signature page form containing signatures from the committee and graduate program director should be submitted to the College of Graduate Studies by the deadline found in the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#) and the current semester’s schedule of classes. Any dissertation not meeting the standards of the College of Graduate Studies may be rejected by the dean, delaying graduation. **Note:** The Graduate Program in English requires submission of all finished dissertations to the Director of Graduate Studies two weeks prior to the College of Graduate Studies deadlines.

Deadlines

Under no circumstances can the steps to completing a thesis or dissertation be shortened or amended to meet a student’s need to graduate by a certain date. The quality of the thesis or dissertation has priority. Whenever possible, the director and readers may make all due efforts to accommodate external time constraints (e.g., necessity to complete the degree in order to obtain a job), but they are under no obligation or constraint to approve substandard work in order to accommodate a student’s plans.

The deadlines for defending theses and dissertations and for submitting the final, polished copies come early in the semester of completion and are published in the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#) and announced by the graduate program each semester. Students are responsible for knowing the deadlines they must meet in order to graduate and to make sure they complete their work in good time to meet those deadlines.

Missing a Graduate College deadline may result in a delay in graduation. Students should not expect the director of the thesis or dissertation to issue reminders about approaching deadlines, though the director should be involved in planning the timeline for completion. Good planning in consultation with the director and honest assessment of what one can do should allow for sufficient planning to meet the deadlines. Realistically, students should expect the process to run longer than outlined in the initial timeline—it almost invariably takes longer than initially planned or expected.

What Writers of Theses and Dissertations Should Expect

Students may reasonably expect the thesis or dissertation director to be a source of guidance as they develop the prospectus, plan research, and construct the argument. The director should guide the process, suggest avenues of research, question the writer's assumptions, require a demonstration of competence in areas such as languages, etc., and make editorial suggestions, including expansion or cutting of the text. However, the ideas and argument must be the student's own original contribution to scholarship. Students may expect the director to read and comment upon drafts within a reasonable amount of time (two weeks to a month).

Students may expect the reader(s) to read and comment on the drafts; the readers in turn may question the strength of the argument or proofs offered, suggest additional sources or avenues of research, and recommend that the student address additional issues—in short, the readers can be as involved as if they were directing the thesis, though the degree of involvement may vary from professor to professor and should be a topic of discussion between the student, the director, and the readers very early in the process. The readers may make recommendations and suggestions and may require additional work. The readers should read and comment upon the drafts in a reasonable amount of time (two weeks to a month), as should the director.

The committee will generally expect the following from the student:

1. Quality. They will expect the best possible work. Whether at the M.A. or the Ph.D. level, the thesis or dissertation director (and probably the readers) will be the primary source of letters of recommendation for Ph.D. programs, grants, fellowships, assistantships, and jobs, so students should work to ensure that the committee can give their highest, unqualified recommendations. For further guidance, see the list of “Criteria for Assessing the Quality of Dissertations and Theses” below.
2. Responsibility. The committee will expect the student to recognize that writing a thesis or dissertation is a major investment of time and energy requiring extensive reading, research, writing, and revising. Students must be self-motivated. They cannot expect constant hand-holding or nagging from the committee members.
3. Honesty. Students should not promise more than can be delivered and should always deliver what is promised. This applies to everything from showing up for appointments to meeting deadlines to being realistic about one's expectations of oneself and the committee. It goes without saying that the committee will expect each student to abide by the standards of academic integrity.
4. World-language competency. The committee may reasonably expect the student to have (or have a plan to acquire) the knowledge of any world languages necessary to deal with texts in the original language. This is a *must* at the Ph.D. level and highly recommended at the M.A. level.

Most directors and readers will communicate their expectations to students verbally in a face-to-face meeting. Students should go to this meeting prepared to take notes on their expectations and they should not be afraid to ask for clarification about any of the expectations.

The director or readers may withdraw from the committee if the student does not meet their expectations. **Note:** Some readers will not commit to plans to complete a thesis or dissertation during the summer since this entails significant work that is neither recognized nor compensated by the university, so you should discuss your timeline and any possibilities of a summer defense with all readers.

Assessment of Portfolios, Theses, and Dissertations

The portfolio director and the thesis and dissertation committees perform assessments of portfolios, theses, and dissertations as the candidates' go through the writing process and when a final draft has been produced. When the portfolio, thesis, or dissertation is complete and has been successfully defended (if required), the portfolio director or the thesis/dissertation committee completes an assessment report of Student Learning Outcomes to be used by the program for reporting Institutional Effectiveness. The Assessment forms filled out by each director or committee are provided in Appendix 6.

M.A. Directed Portfolio Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Candidates demonstrate an advanced understanding of the major periods, trends, authors and texts that comprise the Western and non-Western literary, linguistic and/or rhetorical traditions.
2. Candidates will produce a portfolio of three graduate seminar papers and/or projects reflecting the student's strongest work as well as his/her breadth of knowledge. In consultation with the portfolio director, determine revision goals and target audiences (such as journals and/or academic conferences) for each paper and/or project that will influence these goals.
3. Candidates recognize and adhere to the expectations for professional and ethical practices—with a particular emphasis on proper source citation and respect for intellectual property—that are followed by the discipline of English studies (broadly defined).

M.A. Thesis Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Candidates demonstrate an advanced understanding of the major periods, trends, authors and texts that comprise the Western and non-Western literary, linguistic and/or rhetorical traditions.
2. Candidates will produce an extended, persuasive, and original analysis of a text or texts that rests upon significant research and is of sufficient quality to be considered for publication by a peer-reviewed journal.
3. Candidates recognize and adhere to the expectations for professional and ethical practices—with a particular emphasis on proper source citation and respect for intellectual property—that are followed by the discipline of English studies (broadly defined).

Ph.D. Dissertation Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Candidates demonstrate an expert-level understanding of the major periods, trends, authors and texts that comprise the Western and non-Western literary, linguistic and/or rhetorical traditions.
2. Candidates will produce a dissertation-length, original analysis of a text or texts that rests upon significant research and is of sufficient quality to be considered for publication by a vetted academic press.
3. Candidates recognize and adhere to the expectations for professional and ethical practices—with a particular emphasis on proper source citation and respect for intellectual property—that are followed by the discipline of English studies (broadly defined).

Preparing for the Academic Job Market

The job market in the various fields of English is highly competitive, and many newly minted Ph.D.s spend a few years in visiting professorships or teaching as adjuncts before obtaining a tenure-track position. Some never do land a tenure-track job. M.A. students who plan to pursue Ph.D.s and all Ph.D. students who hope for careers in academia should begin preparing for the academic job market as soon as possible by participating in professional conferences, publishing in professional journals, applying for grants and awards, and gaining teaching experience.

Professional Conferences

Presenting papers in professional conferences indicates that a scholar has interesting ideas and can develop them for consideration by other scholars in the field. Professional conferences can also indicate a scholar's ability to answer questions from other scholars and to moderate discussions by presiding over sessions. Master's students and doctoral students should plan to develop one or two course papers each year into conference presentations. **However, they should avoid presenting more than once a year or twice a year in order to allow sufficient time for their coursework and for revising papers to submit for publication.** Having a CV full of presentations will be fruitless if your transcript is not equally impressive.

Publication in Professional Journals

Publication in a peer-reviewed professional journal demonstrates that a scholar's research and ideas are sound and that the scholar is capable of expressing those ideas clearly, cogently, and persuasively. Publications are generally considered more important than conference presentations by hiring committees, since most journals employ a peer-review process that ensures that published papers meet professional standards of quality. One hears the good, the bad, and the ugly at conferences, but the peer-review process is supposed to weed out papers that employ poorly constructed arguments or provide unconvincing evidence. It is more important to invest time in publishing than in conference presentations and it is almost necessary to have one or more publications in peer-reviewed journals in order to be seriously considered for a tenure-track job at a university.

Grants and Awards

A number of grants, awards, and honors are offered by the department and the College of Graduate Studies. In addition, Ph.D. students may find a number of external grants available to support their participation in seminars or their dissertation research. The university's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs provides information on finding appropriate grants. Students should be aware that grant-writing experience is considered a valuable asset for job-searchers—especially if the grant is obtained.

Teaching Experience

Students should obtain as much teaching experience as possible in both composition and literature. Most academic positions regularly require faculty to teach general education courses in composition *and* literature, so such experience is a valuable asset on the job market. The number of GTA positions is limited, so students without assistantships should consider teaching a course or two as an adjunct at a community college in order to gain additional experience.

Applying for Academic Jobs

Academic jobs are typically announced in professional journals and on university websites. The [MLA Job Information List \(JIL\)](#) is the main source for academic employment opportunities in our discipline; *Rhetmap*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* are other important resources used by many universities for disseminating information about academic positions and there are other, more specialized, job listings as well. It is important to do some preliminary research about jobs before applying, including learning about the nature of the school and the community in which it is situated, the size of the library and its potential for advanced research, courseloads required of faculty, class sizes, and any other details considered important by the applicant.

The faculty search process takes several months, beginning with the posting of job openings in the fall semester, so academic job-seekers should start applying for positions a year before they actually need a job. Most application due dates fall in October or November. Many of the colleges and universities advertising positions will conduct preliminary interviews at the annual MLA meeting in early January, so job-seekers may want to plan a budget that includes airfare, hotel, and food for this trip. More and more institutions, however, are using Skype and Zoom for first-stage interviews, so you should be prepared for interviews under such conditions, also.

Application Materials

The following materials are commonly submitted when applying for academic positions:

Cover Letter

The cover letter provides the first impression of a candidate to a search committee. The letter should be individualized to address the specifics of the job listing. You may need one letter that emphasizes research and another that focuses on teaching. The letter for research-oriented positions addresses one's research interests and provides a brief synopsis of the dissertation. It should also mention teaching experience and any honors or awards that have been received for scholarly work or teaching excellence. Letters for teaching institutions should highlight teaching and minimize descriptions of research.

Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)

The *curriculum vitae* or c.v. (often alternatively referred to as the *vita*) is the academic equivalent of a professional résumé and succinctly presents one's credentials to the search committee. It should be thorough, but concise, outlining the applicant's college education and degrees, publications, conference activities, teaching experience, honors and awards, grants, service, and any experience outside the university that is related to the applicant's field of study. The c.v. should also include the names and contact information for three references who may attest to the candidate's abilities as a scholar, teacher, and colleague.

Abstract

Many schools will request an abstract of the dissertation. The abstract should be no more than two pages in length.

Philosophy of Teaching

Many search committees require a statement of teaching philosophy. The statement should be 1 to 1½ pages long and should include views on lecturing, group-work, the goal of writing assignments,

the goal of studying literature, and how these particular goals and activities work together toward achieving the larger goals of a liberal education.

Transcripts

Most committees will initially require unofficial copies of transcripts from *all* of the higher education institutions attended by a job candidate, showing the degrees earned. Official transcripts will be required if the candidate is considered for the position.

Writing Sample

Writing samples are often requested along with other application materials. The sample should (obviously) represent the candidate's best work, for instance, an excerpt from the dissertation or an offprint or photocopy of a paper that has been published in a journal. The sample should be around 20–30 pages in length, though some committees may ask for less.

Letters of Recommendation

The letters of recommendation may be the most important part of the application dossier. Impressive as the c.v., writing sample, and transcripts may be, the letters are the search committee's most revealing window into the candidate as a potential colleague. As a result, candidates should ask for letters from people who can attest not only to their brilliance as scholars, but also to their work habits, collegiality, and ability to meet challenges and overcome obstacles. The dissertation director should *always* be one of the references. The other two references should be people very familiar with the candidate's scholarship and teaching abilities. If necessary, ask the references to observe a class you teach and to look over the syllabus, so that they will be able to write on this topic.

The references should always be given at least one month's notice in advance of the date that letters will be needed. Each reference should be provided with a sample of updated application materials and the due dates for the various applications being submitted. Applicants should not be afraid to ask for confirmation that the letters have been sent, though most referrers will send notification when they have done so.

Applicants should never ask for copies of the letters of recommendation. Some referrers will provide a copy; others will refuse to write the letters unless they can do so without providing a copy.

Candidates preparing for the job markets should consult the [professional development resources](#) provided by the department, attend relevant workshops, and consult with faculty mentors while developing their application materials.

Preparing for Non-academic Jobs

First, be aware that there *are* several differences: the hiring timeline is much different, resumes are not the same thing as CVs, experience counts. If you are pursuing graduate study as a means of career preparation or advancement, you should build a resume outside of academia at the same time that you build one inside by pursuing internships, visiting job fairs, and exploring the enormous world of non-academic teaching, creativity, research, consulting, editing, and writing. Many potential employers are looking for creative people with sophisticated written and oral communication

abilities, people with teaching abilities, and people who have advanced research experience (that goes way beyond Googling)—all abilities that advanced studies in English provide.

The Hiring Timeline

Non-academic and Alt-Ac jobs operate on a different timeline from academic faculty jobs. Usually the position is posted for only two to three weeks before the review of applications begins, so you need to have a resume ready to go when you begin looking for non-academic jobs. You should also have a one-page cover letter that demonstrates that you have done your homework on the business/company/organization and see understand how your abilities will fit—one general cover letter will *not* work well.

The review of applications often takes only a week, maybe two, before a shortlist of prospective interviewees has been determined and the contact calls or emails start coming. You need to be ready! Use the time to think deeply about connecting your abilities to the work you are applying to do. You bring more than just a skill set to the table—you also bring insight, creativity, and exposure to a variety of ways of thinking and being in the world.

The interview gives both you and the potential employer an opportunity to get to know each other better. Get a good night's sleep, present yourself professionally, and have some “big picture” questions ready that you would like to ask about the business/company/organization, its philosophy and goals, and how the job you are applying for fits into those goals.

The offer, if it comes, follows quickly—the whole process from application to offer often takes less than a month...sometimes less than a week or two. If you receive word that the position has been filled, know that it does not necessarily mean that you were not an attractive candidate and avoid taking it personally.

Resume vs. CV (*Curriculum vitae*)

Resumes and CVs are different in terms of length, audience, and purpose. CVs are requested mainly for academic, scientific, and medical professions. Practically all other kinds of jobs ask for a resume. In each case, the document should be tailored to respond specifically to each job posting.

Purpose

The purpose of the resume is to present your qualifications in such a way as to land an interview. It is your own personal advertisement of your skills and suitability for the job you are interested in.

The CV focuses on demonstrating that your credentials in terms of education, research, certifications, affiliations, and experience meet the requirements of the open position.

Audience

A resume may be reviewed (depending on the size of the business/company/organization) by Human Resources personnel, hiring managers, temp agencies, or individuals who are not necessarily involved in the job itself. The initial review and cut may be done by algorithm, rather than by a person. In all cases, be sure your resume reflects the language of the job posting. Applicable skills, abilities, and experience may be more important than level of education.

The review of a CV is usually done by peers and colleagues in the field of medicine, science, or academic research. Most reviewers will have either specialist or general knowledge of both the field and the demands of the open position. They want to ensure appropriate education and credentials, applicable specialization(s), and (often) experience.

Length

The resume usually presents its information in one or (at most) two pages. The content should be a precise, concise, easily navigated summary of education, experience, and relevant skills and credentials.

The CV, on the other hand, may run to several pages and reflects a professional lifetime of education, research, experience, and accomplishments.

For more detailed information, see Alison Doyle's helpful article at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/cv-vs-resume-2058495>.

Experience Counts

In academic, alt-ac, and non-academic jobs, experience counts! In addition to excelling in your studies, take advantage of as many opportunities to gain diverse experience and insight as you reasonably may without sacrificing your grades; pursue internships, graduate assistantships, individual editing or tutoring jobs, and anything else that provides experience in whatever you might like to do. Exploring a variety of possibilities will give you better insight into the advantages of your graduate education, but always remember that you are a student, first and foremost. Excellence in your coursework tells potential employers (who sometimes ask for transcripts) something about you, too.

If you are pursuing graduate study as a means of career preparation or advancement, consider future possibilities and make plans to explore them early in your program. Avoid the trap of thinking about non-academic jobs as only a back-up plan or somehow inferior to academic options. Take chances to learn about a range of career paths and consider how they fit with your own talents, values, and goals. During your program, take advantage of self-assessment and career planning resources and consider conducting informational interviews and building a network of contacts in the various fields you might think interesting. You can find links to Resources for Comprehensive Job Planning on the English Department's Graduate Student Resources page under [**Professional Development Resources**](#).

Appendix 1: Grades and Academic Standing

Grades are assigned by professors based on the following notations, mandated by the College of Graduate Studies. Individual professors provide the grading scale for the courses they teach, using some or all of the assigned notations:

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0.00
I (Incomplete)	Not calculated
W (withdrawal)	Not calculated
P	Pass
F	Fail
S	Satisfactory
U	Unsatisfactory

Incompletes

Incompletes (designated by an I on the transcript) indicate that the student has not completed all course requirements due to illness or other uncontrollable circumstances, especially those that occur towards the close of the term. Mere failure to make up work or turn in assignments on time will not result in an incomplete unless documented extenuating circumstances are acceptable to the professor, who finally determines acceptable criteria for assigning an I.

The College of Graduate Studies provides the following criteria in regard to uncompleted coursework:

1. If the student fails to appear for a final examination without known cause, the grade is determined as follows:
 - a. If the student has done satisfactory work to that point, the grade I may be reported on the assumption that the student was ill or will otherwise present sufficient reason for the absence.
 - b. If the student has attended irregularly and has not done satisfactory work to that point, the grade F should be reported.
2. The incomplete must be removed during the succeeding semester, excluding summer, or it will convert to a grade of F.
3. The I grade carries no value until converted to a final grade.
4. An I may not be removed by retaking a course. Only the professor awarding the I can remove it based on the student's meeting the course requirements. If the professor does not change the I, it will convert to an F.

Individual professors may specify additional or more specific requirements for the assignment of an Incomplete.

Accessing Grades

Grades can be accessed online through PipelineMT at www.mtsu.edu. Outstanding financial balances will prevent the release of grades. Contact MT OneStop to verify and clear any financial issues.

Grade Appeals

The grade appeals process is available to any student who wants to contest a course grade. In general, grade appeals are adjudicated on the basis of policies and procedures outlined in the individual course guidelines and syllabus. The College of Graduate Studies provides the following policies and procedures, which constitute a two-level appeals process that the student initiates.

Level One

This process takes place within the English Department.

1. The student should first discuss the grade with the professor who taught the course. This step must take place within **40 days of the graduation date for each term**.
2. If the issue is not resolved at this level, the student should discuss the grade appeal with the chair of the English Department within **10 days of the conference with the professor**. (If the department chair is the professor against whom the complaint is lodged, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts assumes the role of the chair for the appeals process). The chair investigates the circumstances, discusses the circumstances with the professor, and records the findings.
3. The chair documents the findings and either recommends retaining the assigned grade or changing the grade. (**Only the professor, and not the chair, can change the grade.**) This document becomes part of the appeals record if the appeal proceeds.
3. The chair sends a copy of the findings and recommendations to the student and faculty member within **10 days of the notification of the department chair of the complaint**.

Level Two

If the issue is not resolved at this point, the appeal moves to the Provost's Office and the University Grade Appeals Committee, and must be initiated within **15 days following the English Department Chair's recommendation**.

1. The student files an appeal with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Cope Administration Building, room 111), providing all relevant documentation:
 - a. The student's discussion of why the appeal has not been satisfied;
 - b. The department chair's recommendation.
2. The Vice Provost sends the appeal documents to the appropriate college grade appeals committee.
3. The Grade Appeals Committee considers the documentation and meets with the student and faculty member. The Committee then renders a decision to retain or change the grade.
4. The Grade Appeals Committee notifies the student, faculty member, department chair, college dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Director of Records.
5. The decision of the Grade Appeals Committee is final.

Other grade appeals policies:

1. The number of days at each level indicated above is considered the maximum; however, every attempt should be made to expedite the process.
2. The failure of the student to proceed from one level of the appeal process to the next within prescribed time limits shall be deemed to be an acceptance of the recommendations and/or decision previously rendered. All further considerations and proceedings regarding that particular appeal shall cease at that point.
3. A grade appeal may be withdrawn at any level without prejudice.
4. All appeal proceedings shall be kept as confidential as may be appropriate at each level.
5. The grade appeals committee shall have reasonable access to all official records for information necessary to determine a recommendation.

Information about grade appeals also appears in the Graduate Catalog and the MTSU student handbook, in print and online. Students can call the Vice Provost's office at any time for information and help regarding grade appeals.

Academic Standing

Students should acquaint themselves with the following policies from the "[Academic Policies and Procedures](#)" section of the Graduate Catalog:

1. Up to six semester hours of C grade (C+, C, or C-) coursework may be applied towards a master's degree; and up to seven hours of C grade (C+, C, or C-) coursework may be applied towards a Ph.D.
2. No course with a grade lower than a C- may be applied toward any graduate degree requirement.

Master's degree students are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least **3.00** for all graduate work completed at MTSU as well as in the major.

Doctoral students must maintain a minimum GPA of **3.25**.

Academic Probation

A graduate student who fails to meet the following academic retention standards will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term:

- a. the applicable minimum cumulative graduate GPA retention standard listed below; or
- b. cumulative GPA less than 3.00 for three consecutive semesters.

Academic Retention Standards

Degree-seeking students are expected to take appropriate courses and make satisfactory progress toward their degree objectives as determined by the graduate program. A graduate student at the master's or specialist level must maintain a cumulative GPA of **at least 3.00** for all graduate work completed at MTSU as well as in the major. A doctoral student must maintain a minimum GPA of **at least 3.25**. Six semester hours of C grade (C+, C, or C-) coursework may be applied toward a master's degree; seven hours of C grade may count toward a Ph.D. No grade below C- may be applied toward a degree; however, all grades are included in calculation of cumulative GPA.

Probation in itself has no serious consequences other than to alert the student to potential academic problems and the requirement to (re)establish satisfactory academic status. Once on probation, a student has three consecutive semesters in which to restore the cumulative GPA to the minimum required. If the student fails to attain the required GPA at the close of the third semester of probation, the student will be suspended automatically. A graduate student who is on academic probation, then returns to good standing, will no longer be on probation. Should the student once again fall below the minimum cumulative graduate GPA for retention (GPA < 3.00 for master's or < 3.25 for doctoral) during their course of study, rather than being placed on probation again, they will be suspended. **Graduate assistants** who are placed on academic probation are also placed on probation in regard to their assistantships. Graduate assistants placed on probation have **one semester** to restore their GPA to the necessary level.

See the guidelines for maintaining or (re)establishing satisfactory academic status in the "[Academic Policies and Procedures](#)" section of the Graduate Catalog under the subtopic "Academic Standards—Retention, Probation, and Suspension."

Academic Suspension

A graduate student on academic probation who fails to meet the applicable standard described above will be placed on academic suspension. Academic suspension means that the student may not enroll in classes for at least the following semester, not including summer. The student also forfeits any assistantships. The student may file an appeal by following the policies described below.

Academic Suspension Appeal and Reenrollment

In order to reenroll, a student must formally appeal the suspension to the graduate program by following established requirements within the program. The program director must then file a Suspension Appeal Decision Form no later than 4:30 p.m. on Thursday during the first week of classes each semester. In the event that a student is suspended and subsequently upon appeal is granted permission to reenroll, should the student fail to maintain the minimum cumulative GPA, there will be no second probationary period. The student will be terminated at the close of the semester and no longer eligible for matriculation in any program at MTSU.

Students whose appeals have been denied by their graduate programs will have the right to appeal this decision by filing an [Appeal to the Graduate Council](#) form by the first week of the term following their suspension. An ad hoc committee made up of members of the MTSU Graduate Council from other disciplines will be created. The student and program will have the opportunity to represent both the appeal and decision to the committee at this meeting. The decision of the committee is final.

In addition to students who are permanently suspended due to failure to return to good standing following a suspension, students may be removed from their programs due to an unsuccessful suspension appeal or for failure to make satisfactory academic progress.

In the case of failure to make satisfactory academic progress, the program may recommend dismissal to the College of Graduate Studies with clear documentation as to the reasons for recommendation. Action on this recommendation will be made by the dean of the College of Graduate Studies. Appeals of this dismissal would be made by filing an [Appeal to the Graduate Council](#) form and are

considered by an Ad Hoc Graduate Council Suspension Appeals Committee. The action of this committee is final.

This form of appeal does not include grade appeals, which are described above (p. 43).

Reapplication Following Suspension

Students who do not successfully appeal the suspension must reapply to the College of Graduate Studies in order to return to the program. The application must include all new documents, including new letters of recommendation (the same individuals who wrote initial recommendations may provide new letters). The letter accompanying the application must address the facts of suspension and support the request for readmission. The student must also reapply for assistantships. The application will be considered alongside all new applications.

Appendix 2a: Checklist for Applications (U.S. Students)

This checklist is intended as a general guide. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for the most updated requirements and deadlines.

Required Application Materials for Admission

You may apply on-line by going to www.mtsu.edu/graduate. In order to complete your application, you will need to submit the following materials through the Graduate Student Portal:

_____ Application fee of \$35.

_____ Transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended.

_____ Three letters of recommendation

_____ GRE scores, Ph.D. only (We look primarily at the Verbal and Analytical portions of the General exam; the English subject test, though not required, is recommended.)

_____ A short statement of purpose (500 words or so) in which you present your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies in English (your professional plans, areas of interest, etc.) as well as any relevant experience that prepares you for graduate studies.

_____ A writing sample of 2000-5000 words for applicants to the M.A. program, 3000-5000 words for applicants to the Ph.D. program.

_____ [Certificate of Immunization Form](#) (required for all full-time students). (Submit to [Health Services](#).)

_____ The deadline for application without assistantship for Fall admission only is **March 1**.

_____ The deadline for application for Spring admission only is **October 1**.

Required Application Materials for Graduate Assistantship

If you would like to be considered for a graduate assistantship, in addition to the material required for the general application, you will need to fill out an [application](#) for an assistantship (<https://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/funding.php>) and submit it online.

_____ Application for Graduate Assistantship

_____ Copy of 500-word statement of purpose from general application materials

_____ The deadline for application for a graduate assistantship is **February 1**.

Appendix 2b: Checklist for Applications (International Students)

This checklist is intended as a general guide. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for the most updated requirements and deadlines.

Required Application Materials for Admission

You may apply on-line by going to www.mtsu.edu/graduate, or by filling out and submitting an application through the Graduate Student Portal. Application material include:

_____ Application fee of \$35.

_____ Transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate institutions attended.

_____ Three letters of recommendation.

_____ GRE scores, Ph.D. only (We look primarily at the Verbal and Analytical portions of the General exam; the English subject test, though not required, is recommended.)

_____ A short statement of purpose (500 words or so) in which you present your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies in English (your professional plans, areas of interest, etc.) as well as any relevant experience that prepares you for graduate studies.

_____ A writing sample of 2000-5000 words for applicants to the M.A. program, 3000-5000 words for applicants to the Ph.D. program.

_____ Proof of English Proficiency (if required); see above, p. 6.

_____ [Certificate of Immunization Form](#) (required for all full-time students). (Submit to [Health Services](#).)

_____ All F1 and J1 visa holders are required to show proof of insurance showing a minimum of \$30,000 medical evacuation expenses being covered as well as a minimum of \$30,000 repatriation expenses being covered. Insurance coverage for students and their dependents is available through [Lewermark](#).

_____ [Financial Statement Form](#) (Submit to james.shupe@mtsu.edu.)

_____ [Tuberculosis Risk Assessment Form](#) (Submit to [Health Services](#).)

_____ The deadline for application for Fall admission only is **March 1**.

_____ The deadline for application for Spring admission only is **October 1**.

If you need to change your program or entry semester after submitting you application, please use the [Change of Program or Change of Entry Term](#) form.

Required Application Materials for Graduate Assistantship

If you would like to be considered for a graduate assistantship, in addition to the material required for the general application, you will need to fill out an application for an assistantship (<https://mtsu.edu/graduate/funding.php>) and submit it through the online portal along with a copy of the 500-word statement of purpose from the general application materials.

_____ Application for Graduate Assistantship

_____ Copy of 500-word statement of purpose from general application materials

_____ The deadline for application for a graduate assistantship for the Fall semester is **February 1**.

Appendix 3: Timeline and Checklist for M.A. Degree

This timeline and checklist is intended as a general guide. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for the most updated requirements and deadlines. Students take coursework at different rates, so the timeline is *very* general.

Timeline

0-15 credits: Discuss degree requirements and plan courses with graduate advisor. Take ENGL 6821 (Fall semester if GTA); take ENGL 6001 early in your program; take electives to explore your interests; use the courses listed in the Handbook descriptions of Emphases as guides

16-24 credits: Develop Directed Reading or Directed Creative Writing course to explore specialized interests; select Director for Thesis or Portfolio; and if choosing thesis, take ENGL 6909 semester before thesis hours. Directed Reading, MA Reading, Thesis and Portfolio classes all require proposals to be approved in order to register (See Handbook and FAQ pages for more information)

25-33 credits: Complete coursework; complete and defend thesis (theses must be defended and submitted to CGS several weeks before end of semester) OR complete portfolio (portfolios are approved by the director by the end of the semester); file Intent to Graduate in final semester

Thesis Option

_____ ENGL 6001 Introduction to Graduate Studies (best taken the first semester if possible)

_____ ENGL 6821 Seminar in Teaching Composition (required in the Fall semester before teaching for GTAs)

_____ Plan timeline for thesis with thesis director and submit [Advisory Committee Form](#). (May be done while taking ENGL 6909 prior to registering for thesis hours.)

_____ Complete minimum of 27 credit hours of coursework (including required ENGL 6001 and optional ENGL 6909) and minimum 3 credit hours of Thesis Research (ENGL 6640) with a grade of S.

_____ File Intent to Graduate (semester in which you will defend the thesis)

_____ Submit defended M.A. thesis to ProQuest

_____ Submit [Thesis/Dissertation Approval Page](#) to College of Graduate Studies

Portfolio Option

_____ ENGL 6001 Introduction to Graduate Studies (best taken the first semester if possible)

_____ ENGL 6821 Seminar in Teaching Composition (required in the Fall semester for GTAs)

_____ Complete 30 credit hours of coursework (including ENGL 6001)

_____ File Intent to Graduate (semester in which you will complete the Directed Portfolio)

_____ Complete ENGL 6913: Directed Portfolio (semester of graduation)

Appendix 4: Timeline and Checklist for Ph.D. Degree

This timeline and checklist is intended as a general guide. Please refer to the *Graduate Catalog* for the most updated requirements and deadlines. Students take coursework at different rates, so the timeline is *very* general.

Timeline

0-24 credits: Transfer M.A. coursework (if possible); take ENGL 7821 (Fall semester if GTA); take ENGL 7001 early in program; decide on plan for World Language requirement (many language courses are offered on an every other year rotation, so it is important to plan early); take courses to fill distribution requirements and electives; commit to exam areas.

25-36 credits: Take courses to fill distribution requirements and take several courses in each of the areas in which you plan to examine; use Directed Readings to explore areas of specialization and start narrowing dissertation topic; do independent reading for exams and organize/join study group.

37-48 credits: Take exams in two areas of specialization semester before you finish coursework; complete coursework and plan to use ENGL 7909 Doctoral Readings as an elective that will also allow you to organize your dissertation committee, prepare and present dissertation prospectus.

49-60 credits: If you do not take ENGL 7909, then you need to complete and defend prospectus during first semester of dissertation credits; complete a minimum of 12 dissertation hours and defend dissertation; search for post-graduation employment.

_____ ENGL 7001 Introduction to Graduate Studies if required (best taken the first semester if possible.)

_____ Check possibility of transferring M.A. coursework (see Graduate Advisor)

_____ ENGL 7821 Seminar in Teaching Composition (required in the first Fall semester for GTAs)

_____ World language requirement

_____ Complete all area requirements

_____ Complete Preliminary exams in two areas

_____ Organize dissertation committee and submit [Advisory Committee Form](#) (may be done while taking ENGL 7909, Doctoral Readings); prepare and present dissertation prospectus; plan timeline for dissertation with dissertation director

_____ Complete a minimum of 48 credit hours of coursework (including required ENGL 7001 and optional ENGL 7909), and a minimum of 12 hours of dissertation

_____ File Intent to Graduate (semester in which you will defend the dissertation and graduate)

_____ Submit defended dissertation to ProQuest

_____ Submit [Thesis/Dissertation Approval Page](#) to College of Graduate Studies

Appendix 5: Sample Course Plans for Students with Assistantships

Timeline to Degree for 9-Month GTAs/FedLoan Recipients (6 Hrs/Sem)

	M.A. Thesis Option		M.A. Portfolio Option	
Year One				
Fall	6001 R&B	6881 Sem Comp	6001 R&B	6881 Sem Comp
Spring	Track Req	Track/Elective	Track Req	Track/Elective
Summer				
Year Two				
Fall	DR/Track/Elective	Track Req	Track Req	Track Req
Spring	M.A. Reading	Track/Elective	Track/Elective	Track/Elective
Summer				
Year Three				
Fall	Thesis	Track/Elective	Track/Elective	DR
Spring	(Thesis)		*Portfolio	
Summer				

*The 33 hours required of the Portfolio option leaves students with federal loans hanging with one semester with only three hours.

Timeline to Degree for 12-Month GTAs/FedLoan Recipients (6 Hrs/Sem; 3 Hrs Summer)

	M.A. Thesis Option		M.A. Portfolio Option	
Year One				
Fall	6001 R&B	6881 Sem Comp	6001 R&B	6881 Sem Comp
Spring	Track Req	Track/Elective	Track Req	Track/Elective
Summer	DR/Track/Elective		DR/Track/Elective	*Track/Elective
Year Two				
Fall	Track Req	Track/Elective	Track Req	Track Req
Spring	M.A. Reading	Track/Elective	Track/Elective	Track/Elective
Summer	Thesis		Portfolio	*Track/Elective

*The 33 hours required for the Portfolio option requires students to take 6 hours during either the first or second summer of the assistantship.

Timeline to Degree for PhD GTAs (6 Hrs/Sem; 3 Hrs Summer)

	Ph.D. (No Transfers)			Ph.D. (12 Hrs Transfer)	
Year One	Fall	*7001 R&B	7881 Sem Comp		
	Spring	Spec Elective	Theory/Elective		
	Summer	Elective			
Year Two	Fall	**World Language	Spec Elective		
	Spring	Area Elective	Spec Elective		
	Summer	Elective			
Year Three	Fall	Area Elective	Spec Elective		
	Spring	Spec Elective	DR	Prelims	
	Summer	Ph.D. Reading			
Year Four	Fall	Area Elective	Dissertation		
	Spring	Dissertation	Dissertation		
	Summer	Dissertation			
Year Five	Fall	Dissertation	Dissertation		
	Spring	Dissertation	Dissertation		
	Summer	Dissertation			

Students without federal loans may take more than the minimum required hours of coursework.

* 7001 is a difficult course to transfer as there is no uniform practice across programs. Most often there is a heavy emphasis on theory which makes it more appropriate to transfer as the theory requirement than as the equivalent of our R&B. Transferred courses may also cover Area requirements or other electives.

Old English and *Beowulf* may be taken to fulfill the World Languages requirement **and electives or British Lit to the Renaissance area requirement.

Timeline to Degree for PhD GTAs/FedLoan Recipients (6 Hrs/Sem; 3 Hrs Summer)

	Ph.D. (No Transfers)			Ph.D. (12 Hrs Transfer)	
Year One					
Fall	*7001 R&B	7881 Sem Comp		*7001 R&B	7881 Sem Comp
Spring	Elective	Theory/Elective		Elective	Theory/Elective
Summer	Elective			Elective	
Year Two					
Fall	**World Language	Elective		**World Language	Elective
Spring	Elective	Elective		Elective	DR/Elective
Summer	Elective			DR/Elective	
Year Three					
Fall	Elective	Elective		Ph.D. Reading	Elective
Spring	Elective	DR	Prelims	***Dissertation	***Dissertation
Summer	Ph.D. Reading			***Dissertation	
Year Four					
Fall	Elective	***Dissertation		***Dissertation	***Dissertation
Spring	***Dissertation	***Dissertation		***Dissertation	***Dissertation
Summer	***Dissertation			***Dissertation	
Year Five					
Fall	***Dissertation	***Dissertation			
Spring	***Dissertation	***Dissertation			
Summer	***Dissertation				

* 7001 is a difficult course to transfer as there is no uniform practice across programs. Most often there is a heavy emphasis on theory which makes it more appropriate to transfer as the theory requirement than as the equivalent of our R&B. Transferred courses may also cover Area requirements or other electives.

Old English and *Beowulf* may be taken to fulfill the World Languages requirement **and electives or British Lit to the Renaissance area requirement.

***Federal loans will only pay for the specified number of course and dissertation hours indicated in the catalog. See Graduate Advisor.

MA PORTFOLIO STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

SEMESTER _____ YEAR _____

STUDENT M# _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each aspect assessed, please check the box that most closely describes the student's performance.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 1 Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the major periods, trends, authors and texts that comprise the Western and non-Western literary, linguistic, filmic, and/or rhetorical traditions.

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
Awareness of historical, artistic, theoretical, and/or cultural contexts and influences upon the subject-matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer fails to situate the papers'/projects' topics within the their historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer situates the papers'/projects' topics within the their historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts, but does not discuss the influence of those contexts on the papers'/projects' topics. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer expertly situates the papers'/projects' topics within their historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts, and develops nuanced discussion of the influence of those contexts.
Participates in or questions the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer does not attempt to contribute to or question the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer discusses the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable), but does not make an independent contribution to scholarly discourse in the field of study. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer expertly discusses the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable), and makes a significant independent contribution to scholarly discourse in the field of study.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 2 Produce a portfolio of three graduate seminar papers and/or projects reflecting the student's strongest work as well as his/her breadth of knowledge. In consultation with the portfolio director, determine revision goals and target audiences (such as journals and/or academic conferences) for each paper and/or project that will influence these goals.

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
Grammar & Punctuation; Structure; Usage & Diction; Argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each paper and/or project shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant number of mechanical errors and/or misspellings Sentence-level structure is unclear Paragraphs lack cohesion Intelligibility of prose is limited Relies heavily on idiomatic expressions Use of phrases and wording that are inappropriate in an academic context Macro-level structure is disjointed Presence of logical fallacies Lack of supporting evidence Claims are contradictory 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each paper and/or project shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few mechanical errors Sentence-level structure is grammatically appropriate Basic- and macro-level structure may be discerned Usage is appropriate for academic context Diction is varied Provides effective supporting evidence Few contradictory claims or logical fallacies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each paper and/or project shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prose is engaging and motivates audience to read No grammatical errors Wide variety of sentence structures are used correctly Diction is varied and appropriate for academic context Supporting evidence is detailed and persuasive Sophisticated and persuasive strategies of argumentation No contradictory claims or logical fallacies
Extent and quality of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised papers/projects show no additional research beyond the research for the originals. Gaps in the review of criticism in each paper Bibliography and/or Works Cited for each paper/project is incomplete and/or missing major or relevant primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of criticism in each paper/project shows breadth and depth of research Bibliography and/or Works Cited for each paper/project includes major and some minor primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of criticism in each paper/project is elegantly and persuasively organized Lengthy Bibliography and/or Works Cited for each paper/project that includes major and many minor primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate
Ability to analyze and synthesize sources or data into a compelling,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper/project shows little or no revision based on additional research Poorly organized and/or developed argument in each paper Writer shows little ability to analyze and/or synthesize data in each paper 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In each paper/project the writer creates an argument based upon the analysis and synthesis of additional sources, but the argument could be more persuasive 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In each paper/project the writer compellingly argues a thesis based upon close analysis of additional primary and/or secondary text(s), as

<p>Quality meets the standard of a peer-reviewed, academic press</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers/projects do not meet the standards of a peer-reviewed, academic press or digital venue 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With substantive editing and revising, each paper/project could be accepted for publication by a peer-reviewed, academic press or digital venue 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With minimal editing and revising, each paper/project could be accepted for publication by a peer-reviewed, academic press or digital venue
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LEARNING OUTCOME # 3 Recognize and adhere to the expectations for professional and ethical practices - with a particular emphasis on proper source citation and respect for intellectual property - that are followed by the discipline of English studies (broadly defined).

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
<p>In-text Citation</p>	<p>Each paper/project shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few, if any, added citations are present In-text citations that are present are not formatted correctly Errors in format of in-text citation result in misattribution of sources Citations to sources not found on the Works Cited/Bibliography 		<p>Each paper/project shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citations are present for all added references that require them In-text citations are formatted correctly Errors in format of in-text citation do not result in misattribution of a source 		<p>Each paper/project shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All in-text citations are present and formatted properly
<p>Works Cited/Bibliography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works Cited/Bibliography displays any of the following characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of any new entries reflecting new research Haphazard format Failure to adhere to required citation standards Missing/non-existent sources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All original and newly added sources are included Formatting is correct Any formatting errors are minor and do not result in misattribution of sources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works Cited/Bibliography is complete and formatted properly throughout
<p>Intellectual Property</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work shows little to no understanding of the essential concepts of intellectual property Often cannot discern between the student's ideas and sources' ideas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work demonstrates a grasp of essential concepts associated with intellectual property and adequately discerns between 'common 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work demonstrates an understanding of advanced concepts associated with intellectual property such as requirements for citing visual aids and graphics, digital

PH.D. PRELIMINARY EXAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

SEMESTER _____ YEAR _____

STUDENT M#: _____

Instructions: For each Outcome (1-4), please check the box (Fail, Low Pass, Pass, High Pass) that most closely describes the student's performance.

Outcomes	Fail (0)	Low Pass (1)	Pass (2)	High Pass (3)
1. Ability to Compose a Reasoned and Sustained Response to the Question	Absence of a reasoned or sustained response to the question.	Responds to the question, but lacks clear connection or cohesion of ideas.	Provides a direct response to the question but misses obvious opportunities to develop or complicate the response.	Provides a direct response to the question which clearly pursues a reasoned path, may uncover additional questions or complications.
2. Accuracy, Breadth, and Depth of Knowledge	Does not demonstrate adequate knowledge of primary works	Demonstrates general knowledge of primary works with some inaccuracies and oversimplifications. Does not reference any secondary literature.	Demonstrates strong knowledge of primary works, perhaps with minor inaccuracies, but has few references to secondary scholarship.	Demonstrates mastery of the area by discussing primary and secondary literature accurately and with an appreciation for complexity.
3. Ability to Establish a Critical Position	Response is limited to showing knowledge of primary works without any critical evaluation of primary and/or secondary works.	Exhibits elements of independent thinking with regard to primary and/or secondary texts but without development or sustained discussion.	Provides some limited discussion of independent perspectives on primary and/or secondary works.	Shows independent thinking through sustained critical evaluations of primary and/or secondary literature.
4. Writing Quality	Poorly organized or replete with intrusive sentence-level and typographical errors.	Passably organized, but with some abrupt transitions and sentence-level and/or typographical errors.	Organized and less fluid, with few abrupt transitions and sentence-level errors, and a minimum of typographical errors.	Well-organized and fluid, with no sentence-level errors, and a minimum of typographical errors.

Please check one of the following: FAIL _____ LOW PASS _____ PASS _____ HIGH PASS _____

Evaluator _____, Evaluator _____, Evaluator _____

Date _____

PHD DISSERTATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

SEMESTER _____ YEAR _____

STUDENT M# _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For each aspect assessed, please check the box that most closely describes the student's performance.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 1 Demonstrate an expert-level understanding of the major periods, trends, authors and texts that comprise the Western and non-Western literary, linguistic and/or rhetorical traditions.

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
Awareness of historical, artistic, theoretical, and/or cultural contexts and influences upon the subject-matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer fails to situate the dissertation's topic within the topic's historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer situates the dissertation's topic within the topic's historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts, but does not discuss the influence of those contexts on the topic. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer expertly situates the dissertation's topic within the topic's historical, artistic, theoretical, or cultural contexts, and develops nuanced discussion of the influence of those contexts.
Participates in or questions the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer does not attempt to contribute to or question the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer discusses the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable), but does not make a significant independent contribution to scholarly discourse in the field of study. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer expertly discusses the scholarship on relevant literary, filmic, rhetorical, critical, and/or linguistic traditions (as applicable), and makes a significant independent contribution to scholarly discourse in the field of study.

LEARNING OUTCOME # 2 Produce a dissertation-length, original analysis of a text or texts that rests upon significant research and is of sufficient quality to be considered for publication by a vetted academic press.

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
Grammar & Punctuation; Structure; Usage & Diction; Argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant number of mechanical errors and/or misspellings Sentence-level structure is unclear Paragraphs lack cohesion Intelligibility of prose is limited Relies heavily on idiomatic expressions Use of phrases and wording that are inappropriate in an academic context Macro-level structure is disjointed Presence of logical fallacies Lack of evidence to support argument Claims are contradictory 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few mechanical errors Sentence-level structure is grammatically appropriate Basic- and macro-level structure may be discerned Usage is appropriate for academic context Diction is varied Provides effective evidence Few contradictory claims or logical fallacies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prose is engaging and motivates audience to read No grammatical errors Wide variety of sentence structures are used correctly Document flows well and argument can be clearly traced Diction is varied and appropriate for academic context Evidence is detailed and persuasive Sophisticated and persuasive strategies of argumentation No contradictory claims or logical fallacies
Extent and quality of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in the review of criticism Bibliography and/or Works Cited incomplete and/or missing major relevant primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of criticism shows breadth and depth of research Bibliography and/or Works Cited includes major and some minor primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of criticism elegantly and persuasively organized Lengthy Bibliography and/or Works Cited that includes major and many minor primary and/or secondary works, as appropriate
Ability to analyze and synthesize sources or data into a compelling, extended argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly organized and/or developed argument Writer shows little ability to analyze and/or synthesize data 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer creates an argument based upon the analysis and synthesis of sources, but the argument could be more persuasive with closer attention to the analysis and synthesis of the data in the source materials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writer compellingly argues a thesis based upon close analysis of primary text(s), as appropriate, and synthesis of multiple critical perspectives

Quality suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed, academic press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not meet the standards of a peer-reviewed, academic press 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With substantive editing and revising could be accepted for publication by a peer-reviewed, academic press 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With minimal editing and revising, could be accepted for publication by a peer-reviewed, academic press
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LEARNING OUTCOME # 3 Recognize and adhere to the expectations for professional and ethical practices - with a particular emphasis on proper source citation and respect for intellectual property - that are followed by the discipline of English studies (broadly defined).

Aspects Assessed	1 Significantly Below Standards	2 Below Standards	3 Meets Standards	4 Exceeds Standards	5 Significantly Exceeds Standards
In-text Citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few, if any, citations are present In-text citations that are present are not formatted correctly Errors in format of in-text citation result in misattribution of sources Citations to sources not found on the Works Cited/Bibliography 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citations are present for all references that require them In-text citations are formatted correctly Errors in format of in-text citation do not result in misattribution of a source 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-text citations are all present and formatted properly
Works Cited/ Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works Cited/Bibliography displays any of the following characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haphazard format Failure to adhere to required citation standards Missing/non-existent sources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All required sources are included Formatting is correct Any formatting errors are minor and do not result in misattribution of sources 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works Cited/Bibliography is complete and formatted properly throughout
Intellectual Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work shows little to no understanding of the essential concepts of intellectual property Often cannot discern between the student's ideas and sources' ideas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work demonstrates a grasp of essential concepts associated with intellectual property and adequately discerns between "common knowledge" and ideas requiring citation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's work demonstrates an understanding of advanced concepts associated with intellectual property such as requirements for citing visual aids and graphics, digital sources, and open access resources