

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADUATE HANDBOOK

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

GENERAL INFORMATION

Graduate students should familiarize themselves with the policies and deadlines specified in the general section and the English Department section of the Graduate Catalog. This handbook does not supersede but supplements the Graduate Catalog as well as the Rules and Regulations of the Regents of

The University of Texas System and The Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Arlington. It specifies those policies that the English Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Advisor have adopted.

Academic Calendar

Check the Graduate Calendar, online at the Graduate School website (<http://grad.pci.uta.edu>), for a list of all Graduate School deadlines, such as those for registering for courses, scheduling Comprehensive Exams or Thesis/Dissertation defenses, and applying for graduation.

Forms

All forms are available from the Graduate School website. All forms must be filled out carefully and completely and submitted to the Graduate Advisor well before the Graduate School's deadlines.

Students are responsible for ensuring that all forms are completed properly.

Registering for Courses

Registration is done through the University's MyMav system. Students in their first semester must be cleared for registration by the Graduate Advisor. In subsequent semesters, students may register without clearance, but they should consult with the Graduate Advisor about course planning. GTAs taking a standard six or nine hours of Graduate Readings, Thesis, or Dissertation

will be registered automatically by the Graduate Secretary.

General Courses

MA and PhD students are eligible to enroll in any of the English Department's general course offerings at the 5000- and 6000-level.

Independent Study Courses

Subject to approval by the Graduate Advisor, students may study topics not ordinarily offered in the Department by arranging with a professor to organize such a course under the catalog designation ENGL 5391. Before registering for 5391, a student must have the professor complete a Conference Course Documentation form, which must be approved by the Graduate Advisor.

Students may apply six hours of 5391 to their MA Final Program of Work, and an additional six hours to their PhD Final Program.

Enrollment in Undergraduate English Courses

Under extraordinary circumstances, graduate students may enroll for credit in undergraduate English courses when no graduate courses are available to meet their needs. Such enrollments earn graduate credit under the catalog designation ENGL 5391. In such cases, the course instructor, who must have Graduate Faculty status, will determine which additional requirements students must fulfill in order to earn graduate credit.

Courses in Other Units

With the approval of the supervising Committee, if formed, and of the Graduate Advisor, students may apply a maximum of 6 credit hours of graduate coursework from other units in the University to each graduate degree they earn in English.

Incompletes

Students wishing to take an Incomplete must obtain the instructor's permission and must meet the instructor's requirements for course completion. The grade of Incomplete will remain until the instructor submits a grade change form.

Advising

The Graduate Advisor helps students navigate the graduate program i.e., plan their programs of work, select classes, choose members of their supervising Committee, and prepare for the academic job market. Once the supervising Committee is formed, students should work closely with the Committee, who will be important advisors.

THE MA IN ENGLISH

Outline of Administrative Requirements

The following steps must be taken, in the order given, to satisfy the administrative requirements of the English Department and the Graduate School. Deadlines and the necessary forms are available on Graduate School website.

1. Form a three-member supervising Committee. Before the completion of 18 hours of graduate study, the student should consult with the Graduate Advisor about selecting Committee members.
2. Students pursuing the Thesis Option must file an Application for MA Thesis Option while completing the 24th hour of coursework.
3. Complete the Application for Graduation and pay diploma fee.
4. Students pursuing the Thesis Option must request a Thesis Defense. Students pursuing the Non-Thesis option must request a Master's Exam. Both defense and exam are requested via the Request to Hold Master's Exam form.
5. Submit Master's Exam Report after successful completion of a Thesis Defense or Master's Exam.
6. Students pursuing the Thesis Option must work with the Graduate School to submit the Thesis according to its specific requirements (templates are available on the Graduate School

website).

Academic Requirements

Core Courses

All MA students, Thesis and Non-Thesis alike, must take the required core course, ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice in English Studies, during the first 12 hours of graduate study, preferably during the first semester of graduate work. No substitutions are permitted for this course. Within the first [two years](#) of graduate study, all GTAs must also take ENGL 5389: Topics in Teaching Composition and ENGL 5359: Argumentation Theory.

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Non-Thesis Option

All English MA students are admitted by default into the Non-Thesis Option (36 hours of coursework / 12 courses), which allows them to take the broadest range of English graduate courses.

The MA Committee

Upon completing 18 hours (6 courses) of graduate study, students who decide to pursue the Non-Thesis Option should consult with the Graduate Advisor in order to identify members of the Graduate Faculty who might serve on the student's MA Committee. The student is responsible for assembling a group of three professors to serve on this Committee, one as Committee Chair, the decision to serve being at each professor's discretion. Once the Committee is formed, the student should work closely with the Chair, who will keep the other members of the Committee informed about the student's preparation for the Master's Exam.

Master's Exam

The Committee Chair is responsible for supervising the Committee's construction and evaluation of the Master's Exam and has final discretion regarding its exact format (i.e., number, and types, of questions). All questions for this Exam will be based on the student's graduate coursework and

may require the student to make cross-course comparisons. The Chair is also responsible for clarifying the nature of the exam for the student, giving the student appropriate guidelines for it, and administering the Exam. The student is responsible for providing electronic and/or paper copies of all relevant materials (i.e., course lists and syllabi) to the Chair, who will distribute them to the other Committee members.

All the Master's Exams for Non-Thesis students will be written tests lasting five hours, taken on one day or two consecutive days. Office staff will ensure that time limits for the Exam are observed. Students will write their exams on a computer available in the Department. They may not use texts, notes, or Internet during the exam. Possible grades for the Master's Exam will be: a) pass, b) pass conditionally, contingent on rewriting specific sections, or c) fail. A student who fails may retake the entire Master's Exam once only.

According to Graduate School regulations, all students must be enrolled during the semester in which they take the Master's Exam. If the student is unable to take the Exam during a semester of organized coursework, he or she may enroll in ENGL 6191: Independent Study, a 1-credit course, during the semester in which the Exam is taken.

Thesis Option

The Thesis Option (24 hours of coursework and a minimum of six hours of Thesis credit) is recommended only for those students who have a clear Thesis project early in their program of work and who demonstrate that they can complete this project in a single semester. A student wishing to pursue the Thesis Option must file an Application for MA Thesis Option during the 24th hour of coursework. The Graduate Advisor, after consulting with faculty members from whom the student has taken graduate courses, will determine whether the student may pursue the Thesis Option. Should the Graduate Advisor determine that the student is not prepared to write a Thesis, the student may pursue the Non-Thesis option in order to complete the MA degree.

The Master's Thesis

A Master's Thesis should be a 50/60-page original essay that provides a solid and significant analysis of available materials and is informed by a thorough knowledge of the relevant methodologies and scholarship. If previous scholarship on the material does not exist, the student must be thoroughly familiar with the scholarship on closely-related materials. In either case, setting the Thesis in the context of previous scholarship is essential.

The Thesis may be a presentation of research, an essay in primary or secondary bibliography, an argumentative essay, a study of pedagogy or classroom dynamics, a study of the writing process, a critical reading of a text or other cultural object, a hypermedia composition, or another kind of essay along the lines of those published in major print or electronic journals in literary studies, rhetoric and composition studies, critical theory, or cultural studies. The completed Thesis should be of a quality suitable for submission to an academic journal.

The Thesis Committee

To form a Thesis Committee, the student should acquaint him- or herself with the background, interests, and scholarship of the Graduate Faculty and then consult with the Graduate Advisor, in order to identify professors with areas of expertise most relevant to the likely Thesis topic. The student is then responsible for assembling a group of three professors to serve on the Thesis Committee, one as Committee Chair, the decision to serve being at each professor's discretion.

The Thesis Prospectus

Once the Committee has been formed, the student must write a Thesis Prospectus and have it approved by the Committee. While writing the Prospectus, the student should work closely with the Committee Chair, who is responsible for keeping the other Committee members informed of the student's progress and deciding when to distribute copies of the Prospectus to them. (Because this procedure involves the participation of many people and may require a significant amount of

drafting, the student would be wise to begin as soon as possible). Once the Prospectus has been approved, the student must deliver a copy of it to the Graduate Advisor. The student may then enroll for Thesis credit under the catalog designation 5398: Thesis or 5698: Thesis and proceed to write the Thesis. For the semester in which they complete and defend the Thesis, students must enroll in 5698, because it allows the grade of "P" for successful completion of the Thesis.

The format of the Thesis Prospectus should be as follows:

1. **Statement of Problem, Research Question, or Thesis.** Specify the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. Then explain the importance of the project. That is, describe what you will do and explain its importance, in other words, why scholars should find this work valuable.
2. **Preliminary Review of Scholarship:** Summarize, in no more than four pages, the relevant scholarship on your Thesis subject, and demonstrate your project's distinctiveness from previous research.
3. **Methodology:** In no more than three pages, identify and defend your critical methodology. That is, indicate how you will investigate the subject of your Thesis and why your method is appropriate for the subject.
4. **Feasibility:** Show briefly that you have access to resources that you will need in order to complete the Thesis in one semester.
5. **Tentative Organization:** Briefly outline the structure of your thesis.
6. **Preliminary Bibliography:** List, in a documentation style appropriate to the subject of your Thesis, sources relevant to your project, taking into account that what constitutes an acceptable minimum or maximum number of sources cannot be determined in advance but will depend entirely upon the subject matter of the Thesis.

The Thesis Drafts and Defense

The Committee Chair will make arrangements with the student regarding the submission of drafts, i.e., whether the student will submit individual chapters as they are completed or the entire Thesis. In either case, the student will provide such drafts only to the Chair. Once the Chair approves the draft, the student will provide the other Committee members with copies. Each Committee member will report the revisions necessary, if any, to the Chair, to be passed on to the student. This process repeats itself, if necessary, with revised drafts going first to the Chair and then, if he or she approves, to the other Committee members for examination, and so on. Once it has approved the entire manuscript, the Committee meets with the student for an oral Thesis Defense, scheduled and conducted by the Chair.

Although students are understandably eager to complete the Thesis, they should maintain reasonable expectations, based in part on discussions with the Chair, about the time required for Committee members to read and evaluate drafts of chapters and the entire Thesis. Students should keep in mind that faculty have limited, if any, availability, during summer and winter recesses.

THE PHD IN ENGLISH

Admission to the PhD program in English at UTA requires a Master's degree. Students holding or expecting an MA from UTA must make a special application for admission if they seek to enter the PhD program. Contact the Graduate Advisor for details.

Outline of Administrative Requirements

The following steps must be taken, in the order given, to satisfy the administrative requirements of the English Department and the Graduate School. Deadlines and the necessary forms are available on Graduate School website.

1. Form a three-member supervising Committee before completing 18 hours of graduate

study, having begun, if possible, to assemble the Committee during the second semester of coursework toward the PhD. To form a Dissertation Committee, the student should acquaint him- or herself with the background, interests, and scholarship of the Graduate Faculty and then consult with the Graduate Advisor, in order to identify professors with areas of expertise most relevant to the likely Dissertation topic. The student will then ask a graduate faculty member whose research is relevant to the Dissertation topic to Chair the Committee. The Chair will assist the student in considering faculty to constitute the rest of the Committee, the decision to serve being at each professor's discretion. The Committee is responsible for writing and evaluating the Comprehensive Examination and for evaluating the Dissertation Prospectus and the Dissertation. (It is possible, indeed in some relatively rare cases advisable, to change the make up of the Ph.D student's committee when he or she transitions from the comps to the dissertation stage.)

2. Submit proof of completion of language requirements to the Graduate Advisor. The PhD program in English requires basic proficiency in one natural language other than English that is relevant to the student's Dissertation research. Basic proficiency may be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

- a) passing an examination prepared by an appointee of the Dean of Graduate Studies
- b) making an acceptable score on the ETS Graduate School Foreign Language Test
- c) earning a grade of B or higher in two 4000-level language courses at UTA or the equivalent from another university
- d) passing MODL 5301 with a grade of B or higher. The course itself may not be applied to any degree program in English.
- e) passing Old English with a grade of B or higher. The option must be approved by the student's Committee.
- f) submitting documentation of fulfillment of the graduate-level language-proficiency

requirement at another university

- g) being a native speaker of a language other than English that is relevant to the student's Dissertation research.

The student's Committee may require an additional language, depending on the student's area of specialization.

3. File Request for Comprehensive Exam Form.
4. Submit Comprehensive Exam Report.
5. Submit copies of the Dissertation Prospectus approved by the supervising Committee to the Graduate Advisor, during the first semester of Dissertation enrollment.
6. Complete the application for Graduation and pay Diploma Fee.
7. Request Dissertation Defense.
8. Submit Approved Dissertation and Dissertation Defense Report to the Graduate School.

Academic Requirements

Course Requirements

Thirty semester hours of course work beyond the MA are required, along with a minimum of nine hours of Dissertation enrollment under any combination of the catalog designations ENGL 6399: Dissertation, ENGL 6699: Dissertation, ENGL 6999: Dissertation, and ENGL 7399: Dissertation.

Students must consult with the Graduate Advisor and the Chair of their PhD Committee to carefully construct a coherent focus for their course work and Comprehensive Exam. All students are required to take ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice of English Studies during their first semester, unless they have already taken 5300 while in the MA program and received a grade of B or higher. All students are also required to take either 5311: Foundations of Rhetoric or 5359: Argumentation Theory, as early in their program as possible.

Within the first two years of graduate study, all GTAs must take ENGL 5389: Topics in Teaching

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Composition and ENGL 5359: Argumentation Theory. GTAs who wish to teach sophomore literature courses must hold the MA and have completed ENGL 5337: Literary Pedagogy with a grade of B or higher. (Note: completion of this course does not guarantee assignment of sophomore literature courses). ENGL 5337 will be counted toward the 30 hours needed to complete PhD coursework.

EGTAs must enroll for nine credit hours each semester. Before comprehensive exams, an EGTA may fulfill this nine-hour requirement by taking three organized graduate courses. However, the Department recommends that the EGTA enroll for two organized courses and the professional-development seminar ENGL 6391. In ENGL 6391, students will work with a faculty mentor on developing their CVs, submitting work to conferences and journals, becoming oriented to the history, status, and direction of the profession of English studies, and studying other problems of current interest. ENGL 6391 will be graded "R" for successful completion, and does not carry course credit toward any degree. However, the Graduate Faculty considers ENGL 6391 to be an integral part of the professional experience of graduate education.

DS-PRO

Annually, all PhD students, whether holding GTAships or not, must complete the Graduate School's prescribed DS-PRO progress assessment. DS-PRO is completed on-line by doctoral students in conjunction with a member of the Graduate Faculty. Students who have not yet selected a Committee Chair will work with the Graduate Advisor. Students who have assembled a supervising committee will work with their Committee Chair. It is the student's responsibility to maintain close contact with the Graduate Advisor and the Committee and ensure that the DS-PRO requirement has been completed. GTAs who do not complete DS-PRO will lose their assistantships, and be ineligible to register. Students who are not GTAs, and do not complete DS-PRO, will be ineligible to register.

Comprehensive Exam

After completing course work and satisfying the foreign language requirement, the student will take a written Comprehensive Exam. The student must be enrolled for at least one graduate credit hour, usually under the catalog designation ENGL 6191: Independent Study, during the semester in which the Exam is taken.

The Comprehensive Exam tests the student's knowledge of three areas of study in order to determine whether the student is prepared to conduct research and to teach in those areas; consequently, the scope of the Exam will be much broader than the topic of the student's Dissertation. To prepare for the Exam, the student must develop in consultation with the PhD Committee a reading list for each of three fields of specialization. Each list will consist of approximately fifty to eighty books and articles, including both primary and secondary sources. Students should consult with the Committee as to the specific format of each exam. It is up to the student and her or his chair to work out a method for studying for the exam, which may include the delineation of particular subfields or topics but will not include questions that will form part of the exam. The Comprehensive Exam must be taken over a period of three days, for five hours each day. The student will be tested on one field each day. Students will use a computer available in the department to take the Comprehensive Exam. They may not use texts, notes, or Internet during the exam. Office staff will ensure that time limits for individual parts of the Exam are observed. The student's written responses will be evaluated by all members of the PhD Committee. There are four options for reports of the Comprehensive Exam's results: a) pass, with approval and recommendation to proceed to the Dissertation Prospectus; b) pass, with approval to remain in the program conditional upon the student's meeting specified additional requirements; c) fail, with permission to retake the Comprehensive Exam after a certain period as specified by the PhD Committee; or d) fail, with recommendation not to continue in the program.

Dissertation Prospectus

By the end of the first semester after successfully completing the Comprehensive Exam, students must submit a Prospectus to the PhD Committee for a Dissertation that will be an original, substantial, and significant contribution to scholarship.

The Prospectus typically includes the following elements:

1. **Statement of Problem, Research Question, or Thesis.** Specify the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. Then explain the importance of the project. That is, describe what you will do and address the "so what" question: why should scholars find this work valuable?

2. **Summary Review of Scholarship Relevant to the Dissertation:** Summarize briefly what is already known about the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. If the problem has been previously investigated, specify what is distinctive about the proposed study.

3. **Methodology:** Indicate the critical methodology or methodologies with which the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated will be researched, and show why such an approach or approaches will be appropriate for the subject being examined.

4. **Tentative Organization:** Provide a brief chapter outline indicating what each chapter will cover.

5. **Preliminary Bibliography:** Provide a preliminary bibliography listing investigations to date relevant to the project proposed. Where appropriate, indicate whether sufficient resources for the research project are readily available.

Dissertation Preliminaries and Course Requirements

While researching and writing the Dissertation, students must enroll in Dissertation hours under the catalog designation ENGL 6399: Dissertation, ENGL 6699: Dissertation, or ENGL 6999:

Dissertation. [If these requirements have been met before the final graduation term, the minimum](#)

requirement for that term is 3 credit hours of research under the course number 7399.

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The Dissertation Draft

Students should work closely with the Chair of their Committee while researching and writing their Dissertation. The Chair of the supervising Committee will make arrangements with the student regarding the submission of drafts, i.e., whether the student will submit partial or completed chapters as they are completed, or a draft of the entire Dissertation. In each case, the student will provide such drafts to the Chair only. Once the Chair approves the draft and indicates its readiness for the other Committee members to read, the student will provide them with copies. Each Committee member will report to the Chair such revisions as are necessary, if any. This information is then passed on to the student, to be acted on. This process repeats itself until the Dissertation is approved, first by the Chair, and then by the other Committee members.

Although students are understandably eager to complete the Dissertation, they should have reasonable expectations—based in part on discussions with the Chair—about the time required for Committee members to read and evaluate drafts of chapters or the entire Dissertation. Students should keep in mind that faculty have limited, if any, availability, during summer and winter recesses.

Dissertation Defense

Once the Chair and the Committee agree that the Dissertation is ready to be defended, the student and the Chair schedule an oral defense. The student must furnish each Committee member with a copy of the Dissertation, including notes and bibliography, at least four weeks prior to the defense date. The defense, directed by the Chair, is open to all members of the faculty, to graduate students, and to invited guests of the University community. Questions will be directed to the candidate by the student's Committee, but any person attending the defense may participate.

The Committee may require that the Dissertation be further revised and may withhold final approval until satisfactory revisions have been made.