

# ENGLISH GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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# Department Policies

## Key Offices at KU

Your unit's Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Academic Advisor is your first stop for any questions related to graduate study or requirements. If you would like to research an issue in advance of speaking with your department or if you still have questions, the following offices can provide assistance:

### [College Office of Graduate Affairs \(COGA\)](#)

COGA oversees graduate affairs and administers University policy for programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The COGA website contains comprehensive information on requirements and processes pertaining to graduate education at KU. Most common questions can be answered with the information provided there, including questions regarding [enrollment changes or forms](#), University policies regarding [exams](#) and committee requirements, and University [graduation requirements](#). The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences' [Master's Hooding Ceremony](#) is coordinated by COGA.

COGA reviews all [student petitions](#) of University and College policy, issuing decisions on behalf of the College or referring as required to a faculty committee and/or the Office of Graduate Studies. The more common student petitions relate to [Enrollment, Leave of Absence](#), and [Time Limit Extensions](#).

COGA is a resource if you have questions about petitions or graduation requirements that your department is unable to answer. Refer to the COGA website for current staff contact information.

### [Office of Graduate Studies](#)

Graduate Studies is the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies at KU. The Executive Council of Graduate Studies sets policies and regulations governing graduate study, and offers various programs for graduate students throughout the year. While COGA should be your first stop for any questions your department cannot answer, you may be referred to Graduate Studies for certain matters, especially for questions about [GTA/GRA/GA appointments and policies](#). The University's [Doctoral Hooding Ceremony](#) is coordinated by Graduate Studies.

### **Graduate Admissions** (Within the Office of Graduate Studies)

Contact Graduate Admissions for questions regarding, KU Online Application for Graduate Study, ADMIT system / Prospect, English proficiency requirements, and official transcripts.

### [Office of the Registrar \(OUR\)](#)

Contact the registrar for questions related to enrollment (if the question cannot be resolved via the enrollment changes link provided above under COGA), tuition, campus fees, the Academic Calendar, and fee petitions.

## **Financial Aid**

Contact Financial Aid for questions related to the disbursement of scholarships, fellowship award, loans, and FAFSA.

## **International Student Services (ISS)**

Contact ISS for questions related to international students, including enrollment requirements, international student insurance, obtaining a social security card, I-20 questions, and any issue related to student visas. While other offices on campus such as the AEC, Human Resources, or the Registrar may also handle related matters, because the students' legal status in the country may be affected, it is recommended that students contact ISS first.

## **Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)**

The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) is a University office dedicated to assisting instructors, including GTAs, to develop effective instructional techniques. The expert staff of CTE can introduce instructors to the pedagogical technology available at the University and help instructors develop new approaches to teaching. CTE specialists work with instructors individually, and also offer a diverse array of workshops and discussions. They also can guide instructors to useful scholarly literature on the subject of college teaching and learning.

## **Academic Calendar**

Please see the [Graduate School calendar](#) for deadlines regarding deadlines for graduation, including dates to meet all school and college requirements, application for degree, etc.

## **General Department Information**

The Department of English offers the M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. degrees. M.A. students may choose one of three courses of study, while students admitted to the Ph.D. program may tailor their programs to their research and teaching interests. A student may expect to finish the M.A. in approximately two to three years, the M.F.A. in three years, and the Ph.D. in five to seven years beyond the M.A. Students who must find employment while they complete their graduate degrees may need additional time.

The Graduate Program is administered by the faculty of the Department of English. The Voting Department, a body comprised of all full-time, tenure-track faculty, plus representatives of the lecturers and SAGE, approves requirements for the M.A., M.F.A., and Ph.D. in English. The College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA) of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) oversees the student's completion of all requirements.

In the Department of English, the Graduate Committee, headed by Giselle Anatol, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), reviews departmental requirements, proposes new policies, and acts on student petitions. The Graduate Admissions Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for admission and recommending students for available fellowships and graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs). The Graduate Director provides first-semester advising, aid in forming exam and thesis committees, and final graduation checks. Graduating students seeking employment may consult, in addition to other faculty, Professor Misty Schieberle, the Professionalization & Job Placement Advisor. Additional information can be provided by the Graduate Secretary, Lydia Ash.



Three graduate student members of SAGE sit as voting members of the Graduate Committee during discussions of general policy. Among the important functions of the Graduate Committee is the consideration of student petitions for the waiver or modification of departmental requirements in individual cases. Such petitions are always discussed carefully, normally by the faculty members of the Committee, and sometimes lead ultimately to changes in Department policy.

### **SAGE (Graduate Student Organization)**

In 1967, students in the Department organized the Student Association of Graduates in English (SAGE) for the purpose of stimulating and coordinating student activity in such areas as curriculum, academic standards, ethics, graduate teaching assistantships, and orientation of new graduate students. All graduate students in English become members of SAGE when they begin their graduate studies, and the association encourages active participation. In addition to an annual picnic at the beginning of the school year, SAGE sponsors colloquia and readings.

SAGE is represented by voting members on the following departmental committees: Advisory, Graduate Committee, First and Second Year English, Graduate Assembly, GTA/Lecturers Committee, Lecturers and Readers Committee, Library Committee, and SAGE Events committee. Other SAGE Officers include Secretary, SAGE Advice Editor, and Treasurer.

### **Admission**

Requirements for application are on [the English website](#). International applicants, please pay special attention to the [additional materials required for non-domestic students](#). Students who are interested in applying for non-degree-seeking status should first make an appointment to speak to the Director of Graduate Studies as well as the specific instructor(s) of the class(es) they wish to take before applying.

University-wide policies regarding admissions can be found at the [KU Policy Library](#). Here are policies regarding [general admission requirements](#) (such as minimum GPA for regular admission) as well as [English proficiency requirements](#) for international students, and [transfer coursework](#).

The deadline for all applications and supplemental materials is December 31. The English department only admits new incoming students for fall semester. Applications that are incomplete or missing materials after the December 31 deadline will not be considered for admission for the following fall semester. Incomplete applications can be held for consideration the following academic year.

Master's graduates of the KU English program who wish to apply to the KU English Ph.D. program must submit the materials required of any new applicant, including a new application form and fee. The student need not resubmit transcripts that were included in the M.A. application, but the applicant must submit a current KU transcript that shows all M.A. coursework.

If you have application questions that aren't answered on the website, please contact the Graduate Academic Advisor: Mary Strickell, [maryj@ku.edu](mailto:maryj@ku.edu).

## **Changing Programs or Tracks Within the Department**

A student wishing to switch between programs within the department must write a short letter of application to the DGS, detailing the reasons for the change. (If the change is approved, the letter will be placed in the student's file.) The application should also include relevant writing samples for evaluation by at least three faculty members in the proposed program (Creative Writing; Rhetoric, Composition, Language Studies; Literature/Literary Theory). These faculty members will be selected by the DGS based on field of study and availability. Students will not be able to switch programs until the completion of their first year of coursework.

## **Allowed Courses for Credit**

Courses numbered below 600 may not be taken for graduate credit. A maximum of two 600-level classes can count toward one's graduate degree. Here are the graduate courses in English currently listed in the KU Graduate Catalog. They are broken into fields based on the required fields for the MA exam.

### *600-level courses*

Rather broad coverage of subject-matter areas; little previous knowledge of the field under study expected. These courses include both undergraduate and graduate students.

### *700-level courses*

Coverage is likely to be more intensive, and field somewhat more limited (although not narrowly confined to the instructor's individual research), than 600-level courses; amount of writing and student participation in class work, much of it reflecting independent study, likely to be greater than in 600-level courses; classes likely to be smaller than in 600-level courses.

### *800-level courses*

ENGL 800 (Methods, Theory, and Professionalism) is designed to introduce graduate students to the history, methods, resources, conventions, and issues peculiar to English studies and to prepare them to go forward in their graduate careers. Its basic divisions are the history and present status of English studies; the nature and analysis of texts; reference sources and bibliographical tools in all areas of English studies; current critical and theoretical approaches to language, literature, and rhetoric. The course is required for entering Ph.D. students who did not have a similar course in their master's program, and it is one of the courses that can fulfill the theories and methods requirement

for the M.A. It is strongly recommended for MFA students who plan to continue in academia. The DGS will decide whether a course taken elsewhere may fulfill this requirement.

Instructors should teach ENGL 800 as a service course. Its focus is the field as a whole (with the exception of creative writing), and the course should benefit students who want a fuller understanding of literary history and criticism, literary theory, composition and rhetoric, and language study. It should not be confined to the instructor's individual interests.

ENGL 801 (Study and Teaching of Writing) is a survey of major concepts and issues in the study of writing, especially as applied to teaching composition. Practices in writing pedagogy are also discussed, and students' teaching of composition is observed and explored. Required of, and enrollment limited to, new teachers of English 101. Three credit hours.

ENGL 802 (Practicum in the Teaching of College English) is a practicum concerned with teaching English 102. Includes weekly group meetings, individual conferences, and class visitations. Required of, and enrollment limited to, new teachers of English 102. One credit hour.

ENGL 896 (Internship) on a transcript highlights professionalization experience that can be valuable in academic and non-academic careers. Unlike a graduate certificate, which might require 2 – 3 courses outside of the department, the student gets a credential from the internship but only has to dedicate one course of one to three credit hours. Students can enroll in ENGL 896 **with DGS permission** after completing one year of graduate coursework. Only one internship for credit can be completed in any single position; in other words, students cannot get credit for a second semester of English 896 if the internship is taking place at the same place and fulfilling the same duties as in a prior semester. Students can apply up to 6 hours of ENGL 896 towards their degree requirements. Because students cannot get paid for internships and are receiving course credit for ENGL 896, they should be able to testify to the educational portion of this experiential learning project. A journal, portfolio, or reflection paper tying the skills gained during the internship back to English graduate study must be submitted to the internship supervisor to receive the final grade. After the student submits the final project to the internship mentor, the mentor submits a short report and grade to the DGS, who will submit the grade.

ENGL 897 (Preparation for the MA Exam) is an independent reading course for students preparing to take the M.A. examination and not otherwise enrolled in the semester of the examination. The grade in the course will be S or U, as determined by performance on the examination. It is not required if the student is already enrolled in coursework the semester they take their exam and/or graduate.

ENGL 899 (MA/MFA Thesis) is required for students who choose the thesis option for their degree.

#### *900-level courses (seminars)*

Coverage likely to be quite limited; amount of writing and student participation in class work, a great deal if not all of it reflecting independent investigation, likely to be larger than in 700-level and 800-level courses; classes likely to be smaller than in 700-level and 800-level courses (normal maximum for seminars: twelve students); previous knowledge of the field, normally acquired in formal coursework, essential. ENGL 800 is a prerequisite for all seminars, except with instructor approval.

A seminar should develop:

- A student's skill in doing research and formulating and articulating the results of such research.
- A student's ability to form an extended critical or scholarly synthesis of materials.

As a challenging intellectual enterprise for advanced graduate students, a seminar will strike some balances:

- Between the interests, qualifications, and responsibilities of the professor and those of the students.
- Between independent investigation and group interaction.

ENGL 997 (Preparation for the Doctoral Examination) is a placeholder enrollment for PhD students who are finished with coursework but are not planning to take their exam that semester. There is no formal work required; rather, students use this time to read widely and review intensively, and to consult freely the members of their examining committees and other members of the graduate faculty about appropriate subjects for study.

ENGL 998 (Investigation & Conference) is a graduate-level directed readings course for students working one-on-one or in a small group with a faculty member. Students wishing to enroll must secure the prior approval of the member of the graduate faculty with whom they intend to work and the approval of the Graduate Director. Students may count only two sections of 998 toward their coursework for a degree. ENGL 998 does not count as a seminar.

ENGL 999 (Dissertation) Students should enroll in ENGL 999 for the semester they take their doctoral exam, and every semester excluding summers until they successfully defend their dissertation. Please see the KU Policy Library entry for the 18-hour enrollment requirement regarding hours of 999.

## List of Graduate Courses in English

### *Field A. English Language and Literature in Old and Middle English*

610, The Literature of England to 1500 710, Introduction to Old English

712, Beowulf

714, Middle English Literature 720, Chaucer:\_\_\_\_\_

785, History of the English Language 787, Modern English Grammar

905, Seminar in the English Language:\_\_\_\_\_

915, Seminar in Medieval English Literature:\_\_\_\_\_ 916, Seminar in Chaucer

*Field B. British Literature 1500-1800*

620, Renaissance English Literature: \_\_\_\_\_ 630, 17th Century Poetry and Prose

633, Milton

640, British Literature, 1660-1800: \_\_\_\_\_ 725,  
Shakespeare: \_\_\_\_\_

730, Topics in Early Modern Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

920, Seminar in Renaissance English Literature: \_\_\_\_ 926, Seminar in Shakespeare

932, Seminar in Milton

940, Seminar in Restoration and 18th Century British Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Field C. British and Irish Literature post 1800*

650, Romantic Literature: \_\_\_\_\_ 655, Victorian  
Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

750, British Literature of the 19th Century: \_\_\_\_\_ 760, British Literature of  
the 20th Century: \_\_\_\_\_ 764, Modern Irish Literature

767, Studies in Modern Drama: \_\_\_\_\_ (depending on subject) 950, Seminar in 19th  
Century British Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

960, Seminar in 20th Century British Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Field D. American Literature*

767, Studies in Modern Drama: \_\_\_\_\_ (depending on subject) 774, Topics in the  
Literatures of Africa and African Diaspora 776, American Literature to  
1900: \_\_\_\_\_

777, American Literature since 1900: \_\_\_\_\_

779, U.S. Poetries since 1900

970, Seminar in American Literature: \_\_\_\_\_

971, Seminar in African-American Literature and Culture: \_\_\_\_\_

*Field E. Composition/Rhetoric and Literary Theory*

707, Literary Criticism to 1800

708, Literary Criticism after 1800

709, Critical Theory: Problems and Principles: \_\_\_\_\_ 770, Studies in Life Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

780, Composition Studies

781, Criticism and the Teaching of Literature

880, Topics in Composition Studies & Rhetoric: \_\_\_\_\_ 885, Writing Center Theory and Administration

904, Seminar in Composition Theory

908, Seminar in Literary Criticism: \_\_\_\_\_

Other courses which may appear in different fields, depending on subjects 674, African Literature

690, Studies in \_\_\_\_\_ 751, Fiction Writing III

752, Poetry Writing III 753, Writing Workshop

756, Forms: \_\_\_\_\_

770, Studies in Life Writing: \_\_\_\_\_

774, Topics in the Literatures of Africa and African Diaspora 790, Studies in \_\_\_\_\_

896, Internship

897, Preparation for MA Exam 899, MA Thesis

974, Seminar in the Literatures of Africa & African Diaspora 997, Preparation for the Doctoral Exam

980, Seminar in \_\_\_\_\_ 998, Directed Readings

999, Dissertation

## Grading

Only grades of A–B are normally taken as indications that a graduate student has done satisfactory [work in the courses in which they were received. Please see the KU Policy Library for KU's letter grade designations for graduate work. Instructors may assign + and - grades, as well as full letter grades.](#) At least a 3.0 average in graduate work is required for the M.A.; a 3.5 average or higher is expected of Ph.D. aspirants.

The grade “I” (Incomplete) is used to indicate work of passing quality in a course, some part of which is, for good reason, unfinished. It is given only by advance arrangement between instructor and student. Some instructors may reserve the right not to give I’s. University policy on Incompletes may be found [here](#). The English department discourages Incompletes except in truly unusual emergency situations; students are advised to make the removal of any I’s on their record a matter of first priority. The accumulation of three Incompletes or the failure to have an Incomplete removed within one year will result in a graduate student falling out of good academic standing and non-reappointment to a graduate teaching assistantship. A grade of I is not appropriate for enrollment in thesis, exam hours, or dissertation and will not be accepted.

The letters SP/LP/NP (Satisfactory Progress/Limited Progress/No Progress) are used to indicate participation in M.A. exam, M.A. or M.F.A. thesis defense, doctoral exam, doctoral dissertation defense, and in the first semester enrollment of a two-semester sequence course. Any combination of two LP/NP grades will result in a student falling out of good standing. The student will not receive reappointment to a GTAship until they return to Good Standing.

## Transfer Credit

Students planning to transfer graduate credit from other institutions are urged to secure advance approval from the DGS; in order to have the DGS consider counting this credit, they must submit, to the Department, an official transcript showing the work done elsewhere and graded A or B, and indicating clearly that it was taken for graduate credit while enrolled in a graduate program but was not counted toward a degree. Students may request up to nine hours of transfer credit. Graduate Studies will not accept for transfer:

1. Courses taken at a university outside of the United States.
2. Courses from any non-accredited domestic school.
3. Courses listed as workshops or institutes.
4. Distance-learning classes.
5. Courses graded lower than a B.

## Academic Integrity, Good Standing, and Academic Misconduct

To be considered in "good standing" in any graduate program, the University requires graduate students to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 (or "B" average) and be making timely progress toward meeting their degree requirements. [Here is the policy page](#) for additional information on good standing.

According to the University Senate Rules and Regulations (Article II, Section 2.6.1.), "Academic misconduct by a student shall include, but not be limited to, disruption of classes, giving or receiving of unauthorized aid on examinations or in the preparation of notebooks, themes, reports or other assignments, or knowingly misrepresenting the source of academic work." The Policy Library contains [further discussion of university procedures and penalties](#) regarding academic misconduct.

In addition, the departmental Graduate Committee approved the following statement: "Written work done for one class will not be accepted in another class. Questions of interpretation of this rule must be cleared with the instructor in advance. Work submitted for any course is expected to be substantially original (i.e., original with the student) and designed to meet the requirements of the course."

The accumulation of three Incompletes, or the failure to have any Incomplete removed within one year, will result in a graduate student falling out of good academic standing and in non-reappointment to a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA-ship) for at least one semester until the student returns to Good Standing. The student will not receive reappointment to a GTAship until they return to Good Standing.

Students who receive one LP/NP (Limited/No Progress) grade for ENGL 899, 997, or 999 will receive written notice of the potential of falling out of good standing from the DGS. Any combination of two LP/NP grades will result in a student falling out of good standing. If these two LP/NP grades occur in *non-consecutive* semesters, the graduate will fall out of good academic standing and in non-reappointment to a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA-ship) for at least one semester until the student returns to good standing by receiving an SP the next semester. If these two LP/NP grades occur in *consecutive* semesters, the graduate will fall out of good academic standing and in non-reappointment to a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA-ship) for at least two semesters, until the student returns to good standing by receiving an SP in the two subsequent semesters.

If a student falls out of good standing and has not returned to good standing after one semester out of good standing, their name will be forwarded to the College and the student will be put on academic probation for one additional semester. Following the probationary period, the DGS and Graduate Committee senior staff will review the student's progress. If satisfactory progress has not been made, the student may be dismissed from the program. They can also withdraw voluntarily. If dismissed, the student cannot re-enroll at the university at any point in the future. Voluntary withdrawal maintains a student's eligibility to re-enroll at a future time. To re-enroll after voluntarily withdrawing, a student must first re-apply to the program and be admitted by the Admissions Committee.



For example:

|             | Event   | Outcome   |
|-------------|---|---|
| Spring 2021 | Due to poor performance in the Spring 2021 semester, Student B drops out of good standing | Student B is placed on academic probation by college, and GTAship is suspended in Fall 2021 semester.   |
| Fall 2021   | Student B returns to good standing at the end of the Fall 2021 semester                   | Student B is removed from academic probation and their GTAship resumes in Spring 2022 semester.   |
|             | Student B fails to return to good standing at the end of the Fall 2021 semester           | Student B remains on academic probation and GTAship is suspended in Spring 2022 semester. DGS and Graduate Committee senior staff will review Student B's progress. |

### Advising and Mentoring

Master's students, during their first year at KU, are advised by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), with whom they are expected to confer about enrollment. Incoming doctoral students will be assigned a faculty advisor by the DGS, who will take into account each student's preferences as to advisor. At the minimum, the advisor will confer with the new doctoral student about course selection; will assist the doctoral student in developing (or articulating) a specialty; and will suggest avenues for pursuing the student's professional goals (e.g., suggesting journals or conferences to submit to, fellowships to apply for, etc.). Assignments of doctoral advisors must be evenly distributed among tenured faculty members; junior faculty are permitted, at their choosing, to opt out of advising incoming doctoral students until they are tenured, and should not be asked to advise more than one new doctoral student at a time.

Doctoral students will be assigned advisors during their first two years of study or until they designate a chair for the doctoral exam committee, whichever comes first.

M.A. students are required to find advisors no later than the end of their third semester. MFA students are required to find advisors no later than the end of their second year/4th semester. Advisees are encouraged to meet with their advisors regularly to discuss progress and plans. Each Ph.D. student should confer regularly with the DGS regarding their progress toward the doctoral exam examination and the doctorate.

All committees must get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies before scheduling an exam or defense. Furthermore, any changes in the make-up of the dissertation committee after the Review of the Dissertation Proposal must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Similarly, any changes in the make-up of the thesis committee during the semester in which the student plans to defend the thesis must be approved by the DGS.

Mentoring is an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and the graduate advisor—whether about classes, the thesis or dissertation process, professional expectations, or post-graduation plans.

1. The student and the advisor should clearly outline the expectations for the student's performance.

Here are some questions you might consider:

- What is considered good academic progress when preparing for oral exams? What are the key milestones and timelines for completion?
- What is considered good academic progress toward the thesis or dissertation? What are the key milestones and timelines for completion?
- What is expected of students in order to prepare for meetings with the advisor/committee members? What is the appropriate way to submit draft materials? Should something written be prepared?
- What happens if the student doesn't meet these expectations as discussed and agreed upon with the advisor? (i.e. What might be the short- or long-term consequences?)
- The student and the advisor should clearly outline the expectations for the advisor.
- What is the turnaround time on feedback? How frequently should meetings occur? What is the extent of written comments/suggestions for revision? etc.
- The student and the advisor should establish a realistic timeline for completion of the independent study paper / thesis / dissertation / degree that takes into account past performance, the work that remains, amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to the work, and any extenuating circumstances or challenges that might affect progress.
- The timeline and expectations should be revisited regularly (each semester or annually) and adjusted as needed.

Students need have no doubt as to their academic standing and should not hesitate to approach the DGS and appropriate graduate faculty members for counsel about scholarly, academic, or

professional matters. In each course, the instructor will be glad to discuss the student's work with him or her. The same is true of faculty advisors throughout the exam, thesis, and/or dissertation process. Regarding more general questions, the DGS is available for consultation during scheduled office hours and by appointment.

### **Example of Graduate Mentoring Agreement**

Student Name:

Advisor Name:

Semester:

Milestones and Timeline: Please provide detailed information on the expected steps toward completion of the project, including the various stages of research, drafts, revisions, and final submissions.

| MILESTONES/TASKS to be COMPLETED | DUE DATE |
|----------------------------------|----------|
|                                  |          |
|                                  |          |
|                                  |          |
|                                  |          |

Results of Inadequate Progress: If the student does not complete the tasks set out for the semester, will s/he receive a "U" grade? What are the implications of this "U" grade?

Feedback and Revisions: Please explain who will provide feedback to the student and with what frequency. If a committee will provide feedback and review of student progress, please explain what the student should expect of this process.

By signing below, all parties acknowledge that they understand and agree to adhere to the expectations outlined in this Agreement.

Student  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

—

Faculty  
Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

—

### Switching Advisors

Shifts in intellectual interests or interpersonal challenges with an advisor may necessitate changes to a graduate student's dissertation or thesis committee. This decision should not be made frivolously, however. While academic compatibility is of great importance, not agreeing with an advisor's feedback would **not** be considered an acceptable reason for making a switch.

The student's preferences as to the membership of the dissertation committee will be carefully considered; the final decision, however, rests with the Department and with the Office of Graduate Studies. Please feel free to discuss your decision to change advisors before finalizing it with the DGS or the Director of Graduate Creative Writing. If you feel that you need support from outside of the English Department, consider consulting with the [University Ombuds](#).

In order to formally change advisors, both the former and new advisors must be sent written notice of the change and confirm receipt of this notice with the DGS.

Students need have no doubt as to their academic standing and should not hesitate to approach the DGS and appropriate graduate faculty members for counsel about scholarly, academic, or professional matters. In each course, the instructor will be glad to discuss the student's work with him or her. The same is true of faculty advisors throughout the exam, thesis, and/or dissertation process. Regarding more general questions, the DGS is available for consultation during scheduled office hours and by appointment.

### Professional Development

The Department sponsors events that provide an opportunity for students to gain valuable professional experience through the presentation of a paper, or perhaps a dissertation chapter, before fellow students and faculty. Among these opportunities are periodic conferences and events sponsored by SAGE. Also, the Graduate Director and the Job Placement Advisor, in conjunction with SAGE, organize regular sessions on the job market, alternatives to academic employment, interviewing, getting into print, grant writing, and finances. Students are encouraged to participate, receive important criticism of their work, and prepare for future careers, the presentation of research and creative efforts at scholarly and professional conferences, and/or publication.

## Funds for Professional Development

The Travel Funds Committee invites applications from graduate students and part-time lecturers to support professional development activities. Funds are intended to support a trip of significant distance to support your own professional development, such as (in order of preference):

- Presenting a scholarly paper or reading from your own creative work at a regional or national conference,
- Conducting research at a library or archive,
- Engaging in a project at a major workshop or institute, or
- Serving as principal organizer for a session at a regional or national conference.

Graduate student applicants should first seek support from the Office of Graduate Studies, which maintains funds to help defray expenses for one trip per student for a conference presentation or dissertation research (<http://www.graduate.ku.edu/funding>). Applicants for department travel funds are encouraged to submit their materials well in advance, preferably six weeks before the travel dates. Electronic applications (preferably by Word or PDF attachment) are encouraged. Applications should include:

1. Cover letter detailing the professional activity to be completed, including title(s) of any presentation(s), dates of travel, destination, and an explanation of how the activity will help the applicant meet professional goals for their own work;
2. Copy of presentation abstract, conference session proposal, or research project description;
3. Copy of acceptance letter (for conference presentation or session), letter of invitation (for readings or workshops), or information regarding the archival materials to be viewed (for research projects);
4. Copy of completed coursework.

The Committee urges applicants to write their presentation abstracts or research project descriptions in language accessible to non-specialist readers. We look forward to receiving inquiries and applications at [dfowler@ku.edu](mailto:dfowler@ku.edu).

The Angela L. Jones Opportunity Fund, which used to be limited to graduate students focused on technical writing, has now been broadened to include graduate students in rhetoric and composition. The fund is designed to support travel, fees, research, and projects. The student does not have to be presenting a paper at a conference to be eligible. Applicants are encouraged to submit their materials well in advance, preferably six weeks before the travel dates. Electronic applications (preferably by Word or PDF attachment) are encouraged. Applications should include:

1. Cover letter detailing the professional activity to be completed, including title(s) of any presentation(s), dates of travel, destination, and an explanation of how the activity will help the applicant meet professional goals for their own work;
2. Copy of presentation abstract, conference session proposal, or research project description;

3. Copy of acceptance letter (for conference presentation or session), letter of invitation (for readings or workshops), or information regarding the archival materials to be viewed (for research projects);
4. Copy of completed coursework.

Applicants should write abstracts or project descriptions in language accessible to non-specialist readers. Send inquiries and applications to the DGS.

## **Grievance Procedures**

Should a grievance arise, the student affected should make the circumstances known to the DGS, either directly or through the SAGE Ombuds. If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved at the departmental level, the next recourse is the University Ombuds. The last resort is the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA). Here are [instructions and department policy](#) on filing an official grievance.

## **Petitions**

If a graduate student has compelling reason to seek exemption from program requirement or University policy, they may submit a petition to the graduate faculty. Petitioners should write a letter, addressed to the graduate faculty, explaining the reasons why the student is seeking exemption from specific rules, as well as how the educational goals the rules reflect will still be fulfilled. Where applicable, this petition should be accompanied by a letter of support from the student's advisor and/or the appropriate supporting materials. The letter should be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who then refers the petition to the graduate faculty, which will convene to consider the petition.

In cases where the policy or requirement is a departmental requirement (for example, a course requirement for degree) the graduate faculty will issue a final decision (for example, the student may be exempt from a Ph.D. course requirement based on coursework taken at the M.A. level at a previous institution).

In cases where the policy or requirement being petitioned is a University policy, the graduate faculty will decide whether to support the student's petition. If the faculty is in support, the department will submit a petition form to the College Office of Graduate Affairs accompanied by supporting materials as required. The petition form specifies the supporting material needed for each kind of petition. These materials must accompany the petition sent to COGA. Additional information regarding the more common University petitions, such as Leave of Absence, Enrollment requirements, and Time Limit Extensions may also be found in the University Policies & Degree requirements section of this document.

In cases where the graduate faculty declines to support a University petition, no paperwork may be submitted to COGA. COGA only accepts student petitions in cases where there is documented departmental support and when the petition itself is submitted by a representative of the department. Students should always consult with the DGS prior to submitting a petition to the graduate faculty to ensure that a petition is necessary and that all the appropriate supporting documentation is accounted for.

## **GTA Policies and Procedures**

### **Appointment and Reappointment of GTAs**

Appointment to a Graduate Teaching Assistantship is based on the candidate's record as a student and potential as a teacher as suggested by personal qualifications, and, where applicable, successful teaching experience. Usually a student who is a non-native speaker of English may not be considered for appointment unless he or she has been enrolled in graduate course work in the Department of English for at least one academic year and has successfully completed a minimum of 12 hours of such work. Please see the [KU Policy Library entry on GRA GTA, and GA appointments](#). In the event that graduate teaching assistantships must be terminated for budgetary reasons, a special subcommittee constituted from the Graduate Committee and the Graduate Teaching Assistants and Lecturers Committee will make decisions for individual terminations on the basis of criteria concerning normal progress. Additional information on the appointment and reappointment of Graduate Teaching Assistants is included in the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) between the University of Kansas, Lawrence, the Kansas Board of Regents and the Kansas Association of Public Employees (KAPE).

Graduate Teaching Assistants are usually appointed on an annual basis, and their appointment is based on recommendations to the Director of First- and Second-year English and the Department Chair by the Graduate Admissions Committee. Reappointment is made by the FSE Director, usually on an annual basis. In unusual circumstances, the Director seeks the advice of the Department Chairperson and Graduate Teaching Assistants and Lecturers Committee.

For more information about English department GTA policies, consult the *Manual for Teachers*.

### **Evaluation of GTAs**

The University's [Performance Evaluations for Graduate Teaching Assistants policy](#) requires that the assessment of the performance of GTAs be based on the job duties assigned to the GTA in his or her contract.

GTAs must be evaluated each semester, and a performance evaluation, including classroom observations and a written performance evaluation, must be completed each year. During the first year of a GTA's appointment, a documented classroom observation must be conducted during each semester of the academic year. For continuing GTAs, a documented classroom observation must be conducted at least once during the academic year.

In order to give GTAs an evaluation of their work as teachers in a way both helpful to the teachers and manageable for the Department, the Department has instituted a system of Teaching Advisors to supplement the existing academic advisors.

At the beginning of each year after the GTA's first, the FSE Associate Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Department, will assign each GTA a Teaching Advisor, a member of the full-time faculty whose task will be to become familiar with the work of the GTA, to advise the GTA about teaching issues, and to give feedback each semester about the quality of teaching.

## **Annual Performance Review System for GTAs**

Each year in late spring, the Director and Associate Director of FSE evaluate the performance of all GTAs, based on the reviews written by Teaching Advisors or the FSE Teaching Mentor and 802 instructor, student evaluations, and teaching statements or portfolios (optional) provided by the GTAs. If a GTA has taught a summer session, that course will be included in the following academic year's review. The Directors will rank the GTA's performance based on the evaluative criteria found on the Graduate Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form.

The performance reviews are due to the Human Resources office by May 31st of each year. GTAs will be sent a copy of the review to sign and return and will receive a finalized, signed copy for their records. If GTAs would like to discuss the performance review, they can make an appointment with the Director or Associate Director of FSE, and the review will be finalized after that appointment.

If performance deficiencies exist (overall rankings of needs improvement), the GTA must meet with the Director or Associate Director of FSE to establish specific performance improvement goals and be counseled in how to achieve them.

A GTA can grieve the results of an evaluation if he or she asserts that the evaluation was based on factors other than job performance and adherence to the University and Kansas Board of Regents policies or if he or she receives an overall evaluation ranking of unsatisfactory. The grievance will be handled in accordance with procedures described in the [Memorandum of Agreement](#) and in consultation with Human Resources.

## **Progress toward Degree**

Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to remain in good standing as graduate students and to proceed toward their degrees. The accumulation of more than three Incompletes or the failure to have an Incomplete removed within one year will result in a graduate student falling out of good academic standing and in non-reappointment to a graduate teaching assistantship. During their term of appointment, GTAs must enroll in no fewer than six graduate credit hours per semester, unless they are doctoral students who have successfully completed eighteen hours of post-exam enrollment.

## **Time Limits on Appointments**

Though reappointment is ultimately subject to thorough annual evaluation, a GTA who has been successful as both teacher and student, and who is making satisfactory progress toward her or his graduate degree in English, may reasonably expect to hold that position within these time limits:

- A student who is admitted to obtain only a master's degree has a six-semester limitation on his or her GTA appointments.
- A student who is admitted to obtain only a doctorate has a fourteen-semester limitation on his or her GTA appointments.
- A student who is admitted to obtain a master's degree and is subsequently admitted to obtain a doctorate has a sixteen-semester limitation on his or her appointments.
- No GTA may be appointed in excess of sixteen semesters.



This policy does not apply to summer session GTA appointments. Semesters in which a student's sole appointment is as a GRA do not count against the GTA-semester limit.

Voluntary Resignation during a semester, unless it results from an emergency, is a breach of contract. Leaves of absence for medical reasons must be approved by the College Office of Graduate Affairs.

## **Teaching Load**

A half-time Graduate Teaching Assistant in English teaches twelve credit hours (four sections) per academic year; assignments beyond this half-time load are at the discretion of the Provost, and, when available, will usually be offered only to those who are judged to be making good progress toward their degrees and who have demonstrated their excellence as teachers. Non-teaching assignments through the Departmental budget will be considered equivalent to teaching assignments in proportion to the fraction of equivalent-full-time involvement. Normally, the teaching load is divided equally between the two semesters. Out-of-state GTAs must teach six hours a semester in order to qualify for the in-state tuition rate. For certification as a full-time student, one of three conditions must be met:

- enrollment in twelve credit hours
- enrollment in nine credit hours plus a quarter-time employment as a GTA or GRA
- enrollment in six credit hours plus a half-time appointment as a GTA or GRA.

## **Course Assignments**

GTAs usually teach English 101 and 102. After their first two years of employment, they may request assignment to English 203, 209, 210, and 211 as the schedule permits. Sections of 200-level courses will be assigned first to those who have at least two years of experience teaching 101 and 102, who have made adequate academic progress, and who have demonstrated their excellence as teachers. Priority will also be given to PhD, then M. A., then MFA candidates who have not taught a 203 before. Creative writing GTAs are eligible to teach a creative writing workshop in their third year. PhD GTAs in literature, literary theory, and rhetoric and composition are eligible to teach one advanced course in their field during their GTA appointment.

Occasional departures from these guidelines, required by shifts in enrollment patterns, sometimes occur.

## **Assignments of GTAs to teach upper-level courses**

The following criteria should be used to decide which GTAs and lecturers are assigned to teach upper-level courses (which occurs only on those occasions when there are not sufficient faculty to teach a given course). Priority goes to PhD students who:

1. Have passed their doctoral exams;
2. Are studying the specific field (312, 332, 466, etc.) or a closely related one;
3. Have received high merit evaluations of their teaching;
4. Have not had a previous opportunity to teach an upper-level course.

The Director of Graduate Studies will identify students who meet criteria 1 and 2. Departmental Administrators will then choose students based on criteria 3 and 4.

Departures from guidelines 3 and 4, required by shifts in enrollment patterns, sometimes occur.

### **Priorities for Appointing GTAs and Lecturers and Assigning Courses**

The following priorities are used in determining which GTAs and lecturers are assigned FSE and other relevant courses, presuming competent performance or promise in the classroom. The number of lines available for GTAships is determined according to budget, enrollments, capacity to train new teachers, and the need to sustain a competitive graduate program.

1. Incoming graduate students and continuing graduate students who are below the university's semester-limit of eligibility (including students who have not been but wish to be GTAs), presuming teaching promise, competent performance in the classroom, and timely progress to degree. This priority reflects the department's commitment to provide multiple years of support to our incoming graduate students.
2. Those holding a PhD in English from KU who have completed the doctorate in good time and within the previous year
3. Doctoral students who have taught beyond the university's semester-limit of eligibility up to 14 semesters beyond the MA who are making timely progress to the degree. Sections will be awarded according to merit, as judged by the GTAL Committee
4. Part-time lecturers not covered in the above categories. Sections will be awarded according to merit, as judged by the GTAL Committee.

### **Training for New Teachers**

All new GTAs are required to attend a week-long, pre-semester orientation and to take ENGL 801: The Study and Teaching of Writing and ENGL 802: Practicum in the Teaching of College English during their first year of teaching in the Department. The English 801 requirement may only be waived by approval from the Director of FSE, with evidence of a comparable pedagogical course at another university.

### **Research Assistantships**

Incoming graduate students who are awarded Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA) will be assigned a research mentor by the DGS. In addition to research responsibilities, first-year GRAs take 3 classes (9 credit hours) per semester.

Depending on availability and funding, doctoral students at the dissertation stage may be selected as research assistants, in order to facilitate their research and progress toward the degree. Students must be assigned to a faculty mentor, whom they are expected to assist with research. Research not directly related to the student's dissertation may be minimal in many cases and is at the discretion of the faculty mentor and GRA. Students are expected to benefit and learn from assisting with the faculty mentor's research as well as having more time to work on their own research without the pressures of teaching.

Students who are working towards a PhD may also apply to the Graduate Committee for a year-long, dissertation-stage research assistantship, using a form to be supplied by the DGS near the end of the Fall semester and again in the middle of the Spring semester. Applicants must have completed their doctoral exams and the Review of Dissertation Proposal before the GRAship begins the following Fall. The applications are evaluated by faculty members of the Graduate Committee on the basis of how much progress the student has already made toward the degree and whether or not the research assistantship is likely to facilitate degree completion. All things being equal, students who have never received the assistantship will be given preference. GTAs and Lecturers who are not granted the assistantship but applied for it receive official notification indicating why they did not receive it so that they can make the changes necessary to be eligible in the future.

## **Policy resources for GTAs and GRAs**

### **[Benefits policy and list of benefits for Graduate Assistants](#)**

#### **[Health Insurance](#)**

#### **[HR Pay system login page](#)**

Paychecks are available to view in HR/Pay the Monday before a pay day. If using the system for the first time, the system will need to register the login and then go through an update before any information is accessible. Log in and then log out. Wait a few hours and then log in again. The system has registered you as a user when the main home page menu shows the Self Service option. Navigate to Self Service, then select View Paychecks. Current deductions and direct deposit information may also be viewed and updated via the HR/Pay system.

## **Best Practices**

### **Summer Research Fellowship**

The Department can nominate two applicants (an official nominee and an alternate) to Graduate Studies each year for this fellowship. The Graduate Committee will accept and judge applications for the Summer Research Fellowships in the Spring semester. For this award, Graduate Studies gives preference to students from underrepresented groups who are actively writing dissertations. Students apply internally on their own behalf by submitting a C.V. and a letter describing the project and its significance, outlining the proposed research plan for the fellowship period. Once the nominees are chosen, a faculty member (usually the dissertation director) will be asked to write a letter on the nominee's behalf.

### **Leaves of Absence**

In extenuating circumstances, students may petition for [a leave of absence](#)—typically for one semester or one academic year. However, after an absence of five years a doctoral aspirant or candidate loses status as such and must apply for readmission to the program. In addition, please note that the Office of Student Financial Aid marks the timeline for Satisfactory Academic Progress as starting from the first day of enrollment.

## Mail

All English GTAs and first-year graduate students have a mailbox. Non-teaching graduate students who wish to keep their mailbox after their first year must request one from the Graduate Secretary. These mailboxes should be checked frequently, and they should not normally be used for the transmission of valuables or confidential communications, since they cannot be locked. Graduate students should keep the departmental office and Registrar informed of any changes in their names, mailing addresses, and e-mail addresses.

Graduate students may use departmental stationery for professional correspondence such as letters regarding participation in conferences and submission of articles for publication. The Department will also pay for mailing articles to journals. Leave items to be mailed in the appropriate outgoing basket, and office staff will apply the postage. Please be prudent in order to conserve supplies and to avoid impropriety. Using State property for private benefit is illegal.

## Department Loan Fund / Emergency Fund

The Kansas University Endowment Association manages a small English Department Student Loan Fund. Graduate students in English, as well as undergraduate English majors, may borrow up to \$500, interest free, for periods up to a year from this fund, as long as the money lasts. Potential borrowers should speak to the department chair about their needs. The chair will ascertain if these can be met from available resources at any given time, and will write the necessary note of introduction to KUEA.

## Grants

Grants enable students to take time away from teaching to focus fully on the dissertation project and speed time toward degree. Grant-writing may also strengthen the dissertation proposal, parts of the dissertation itself, or the cover letters and abstracts for the academic job market. Grant-writing experience looks enticing to employers outside of the academy as well. Consider crafting a list of possible grant and fellowship opportunities early in the academic year, since deadlines are set as early as October, and the proposal writing process often involves intensive revision and polishing. See the [Office of Graduate Studies webpage on internal and external resources](#) and the [Hall Center for the Humanities page](#) to get started.

## Committee Make-up

### MA Exam committees:

- Chair (from within the department) + 2 faculty members
- No Graduate Studies Representative (“GSR”) required.

### MA Thesis Defense committees:

- Chair (from within the department) + 2 faculty members
- No Graduate Studies Representative (“GSR”) required.

### MA Portfolio committees:

- Chair (from within the department) + 2 faculty members
- No Graduate Studies Representative (“GSR”) required.

#### **MFA Thesis Defense committees:**

- Chair (from within the department) + 2 faculty members
- No Graduate Studies Representative (“GSR”) required.

#### **Doctoral Exam committees:** (formerly called “Comps” or “Comprehensive Exam”)

- Chair (from English Dept) + 3 faculty members + 1 Grad. Studies Representative (“GSR”)

#### **Review of Dissertation Proposal (RDP) committees:**

- Chair (from within the department) + 2 or 3 faculty members (usually from Exam Cmte)
- No Graduate Studies Representative (“GSR”) required.

#### **Dissertation committees:**

- Chair (from within the department) + 3 faculty members
- Typically the same committee members from the RDP + 1. The 4th reader, who may or may not be as deeply involved as the central 3 members from the RDP, may or may not attend and participate in the RDP.

#### **Dissertation Defense committees:**

- Dissertation Committee + Grad Studies Rep
- (i.e. Diss. Chair + 3 faculty members + non-English faculty member)

The Graduate Studies Representative *does not need to be a specialist on some aspect of the student’s project*; the GSR *does not even need to READ the project*. This faculty member’s role is NOT to provide feedback and expertise; it is to ensure FAIR EXAM PRACTICES (e.g. that the student is not bullied; that junior faculty are not unfairly pressured to vote against or in favor of a student’s passing; etc.)

#### **Thesis and Dissertation Defenses**

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the graduate secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

After a successful defense, [Master’s students](#) and [Doctoral students](#) must submit their theses and dissertations in an electronic version to fulfill graduation requirements. Instructions and guidelines for submitting the thesis in may be found at the [Graduate Studies ETD](#) (Electronic Thesis and

Dissertation) website. Please see [the Embargo policy](#) for information on how to delay digital publication of your thesis or dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the student to bring to their thesis defense a printed copy of the Title Page and Acceptance Page. These two pages must be signed by the appropriate committee members and submitted to the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA) by the deadline for graduation. The correct format and layout for these are [on the Graduate Studies website](#).

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to an exam or defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams/defenses but not others.

### **Post-Degree Employment**

During the summer before the academic year in which a graduate student plans to apply for full-time teaching or non-teaching positions, they should make their availability and particular needs known to the Professionalization & Job Placement Advisor (PJPA)—the faculty member in the Department primarily responsible for helping graduate students find employment. After one or more such conversations, each candidate should register with the University Placement Office in the Burge Union, and file copies of their curriculum vitae or resume with the PJPA. The Department is notified of many job openings and will make such notices available to interested and qualified graduate students who are known to be looking for positions; in order to get on the list of job seekers, the candidate should contact the PJPA. They regularly posts e-mail notices of job openings to those on the list. The Department also offers access to the on-line Job Information List published by the MLA.

It seems fairly clear that, for the foreseeable future, those who confine themselves exclusively to traditional literary specialties will have a relatively hard time finding teaching positions. Those applying for academic jobs should carefully consider the advantages of doing some work in fields like education, journalism, speech and drama, film, linguistics, rhetoric and composition, English as a second language, or foreign languages, since many positions call for candidates proficient in more than one subject.

Many English graduate students who do not want to pursue an academic career find rewarding positions in business, industry, non-profits, and government, all of which remain extremely interested in job seekers with the skills afforded by an English degree. However, students seeking such employment should be aware of the requirements and expectations of the non-academic world. For information, contact the PJPA and/or visit the University Placement Center.

It is impossible to generalize about some of these questions. The best advice is to work as closely as possible with the PJPA and to use the information about employment that the Department makes available.

### **Best Practices for Chairs and Committee Members**

It is important that committee members give students timely feedback on their dissertation work, as well as exam lists, drafts of Reviews of Literature, dissertation proposals, and grant proposals. Generally speaking, items should be returned with comments within two to three weeks—this includes items submitted near the end of the spring semester. Students should be able to progress with confidence through the summer. It is also helpful to schedule a meeting with the student to

discuss revisions of each chapter. Such a meeting provides more extensive feedback, and also sets a de-facto deadline by which the chapter will have been read.

Committee members should be honest and straightforward with graduate students about the degree of revision required before a chapter would be ready to defend. If students ask for an assessment of whether a chapter (or the dissertation as a whole) has been revised satisfactorily, committee members should be willing to offer a candid assessment of this.

As the final oral defense approaches, dissertation directors need to be offering their advisees feedback not just on necessary (or desirable) revisions but on whether the director feels the dissertation is close to ready to defend. Directors do their students no favors by being reassuring as the defense date approaches at the expense of a clear-sighted assessment of readiness. If a student is producing substantial new writing at the last minute, or is producing revisions which have not had time to be properly vetted by the committee, the defense date should, in all likelihood, be postponed. Also see the Advising and Mentoring section of the handbook.

## *Graduate Programs*

### **Masters of Art**

The English department offers four options for M.A. candidates. M.A. students enrolling for the first time must choose one of the four options listed below.

#### **Option 1a—Literature**

1. A total of 30 hours in English courses carrying graduate credit. No more than 6 hours may be taken at the 600 level. At least 6 hours must be taken at the 900 or seminar level. [ENGL 998](#) does not count as a seminar or 900-level class. **Exam option** students will take 9 conventional courses (27 hours), plus 3 hours of [ENGL 897](#) or another elective course. **Thesis** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 899](#). **Portfolio** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 898](#).
2. 3 hours (1 course) on Methods or Theory appropriate to different areas of focus in Literary Studies: ordinarily 708, 709, 800, or another course appropriately designated by the Graduate Director. A 998 (Directed Reading) directly focused on questions of methods and theory can fulfill this requirement if approved by the Graduate Director.
3. 3 hours (1 course) on Pedagogy: the 801-802 sequence (required for TAs), 780, or other appropriate course as approved by the Graduate Director.
4. 18 (6 courses with **thesis or portfolio** option) or 21 (7 courses with **exam** option) distribution hours to be selected in consultation with advisors (Graduate Director during



first year and thereafter advisors with whom students plan to move toward exam or thesis options). **At least one course must be pre-1700; at least one must be 1700-1900; and at least one must be after 1900.** Two courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the 18 distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.

5. **Exam option** (3 hours): the student will generally enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 897 (exam preparation hours) and must pass a 90-minute oral exam based on a 30-item exam list of literary and / or theoretical texts, including at least 6 items from before 1700; at least 6 items from 1700-1900; and at least 6 items from 1900-present. The student may opt to enroll in one additional 3-hour elective course instead of ENGL 897.
6. **Thesis Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 899 (MA or MFA thesis hours) over 2 semesters of thesis work: (1) a first semester of work with the thesis director leading to polished proposal with a bibliography; and (2) a thesis semester of writing leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the finished thesis (30-40 pages or the digital equivalent).
7. **Portfolio Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 898 (MA portfolio) over 2 semesters of work: (1) a first semester with the portfolio director, deciding on the shorter scholarly pieces to be included in the portfolio and drafting the cover essay (3-5 pages); and (2) a writing semester for crafting and revising the scholarly pieces, leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the polished portfolio (40-50 pages or the digital equivalent).

### Option 1b—Literature and Literary Theory

1. A total of 30 hours in English courses carrying graduate credit. No more than 6 hours may be taken at the 600 level. At least 6 hours must be taken at the 900 or seminar level. ENGL 998 does not count as a seminar or 900-level class **Exam option** students will take 9 conventional courses (27 hours), plus 3 hours of [ENGL 897](#) or another elective course. **Thesis** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 899](#). **Portfolio** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 898](#).
2. 3 hours (1 course) on Methods or Theory appropriate to different areas of focus in Literary Studies: ordinarily 708, 709, 800, or another course appropriately designated by the Graduate Director. A 998 (Directed Reading) directly focused on questions of methods and theory can fulfill this requirement if approved by the Graduate Director.
3. 3 hours (1 course) on Pedagogy: the 801-802 sequence (required for TAs), 780, or other appropriate course as approved by the Graduate Director.
4. 18 (6 courses with **thesis or portfolio** option) or 21 (7 courses with **exam** option) distribution hours to be selected in consultation with advisors (Graduate Director during first year and thereafter advisors with whom students plan to move toward exam or thesis options). **At least one course (3 hours) must be pre-1800; at least one (3 hours) must be post-1800. At least two courses (6 hours), besides the course used to fulfill requirement 2 (Methods or Theory) must focus primarily on Literary**



**Theory.** Two courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the 18 distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.

5. **Exam option** (3 hours): the student will generally enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 897 (exam preparation hours) and must pass a 90-minute oral exam based on a 30-item exam list of literary and / or theoretical texts, including at least 6 items pre-1800; at least 6 items post-1800; and at least 12 items in theory. The student may opt to enroll in one additional 3-hour elective course instead of ENGL 897.
6. **Thesis Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 899 (MA or MFA thesis hours) over 2 semesters of thesis work: (1) a first semester of work with the thesis director leading to polished proposal with a bibliography; and (2) a thesis semester of writing leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the finished thesis (30-40 pages or the digital equivalent).
7. **Portfolio Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 898 (MA portfolio) over 2 semesters of work: (1) a first semester with the portfolio director, deciding on the shorter scholarly pieces to be included in the portfolio and drafting the cover essay (3-5 pages); and (2) a writing semester for crafting and revising the scholarly pieces, leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the polished portfolio (40-50 pages or the digital equivalent).

## Option 2a—Rhetoric and Composition

1. A total of 30 hours in English courses carrying graduate credit. No more than 6 hours may be taken at the 600 level. At least 6 hours must be taken at the 900 or seminar level. [ENGL 998](#) does not count as a seminar or 900-level class. **Exam option** students will take 9 conventional courses (27 hours), plus 3 hours of [ENGL 897](#) or another elective course. **Thesis** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 899](#). **Portfolio** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 898](#).
2. 3 hours (1 course) on Methods or Theory appropriate to different areas of focus in Rhetoric and Composition, ordinarily 780 (Composition Studies), or another course appropriately designated by the Graduate Director. A 998 (Directed Reading) directly focused on questions of methods and theory can fulfill this requirement if approved by the Graduate Director.
3. 3 hours (1 course) on Pedagogy: the 801-802 sequence (required for TAs), 780, or other appropriate course as approved by the Graduate Director.
4. 18 (6 courses with **thesis or portfolio** option) or 21 (7 courses with **exam** option) distribution hours (6 courses) to be selected in consultation with advisors (Graduate Director during first year and thereafter advisors with whom students plan to move toward exam or thesis options). At least **6 hours in Rhetoric and Composition courses (including at least one seminar) beyond the courses used to fulfill requirements 2 (Methods and Theory) and 3 (Pedagogy).**
5. 6 hours of elective courses

6. For students selecting the **exam option**, 6 hours in second exam area (rhetoric and composition specialty, English language studies, literature, literary theory), including at least one seminar
7. Two courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the 18 distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.
8. **Exam option** (3 hours): The student will generally enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 897 (exam preparation hours) and must pass a 90-minute oral exam based on two lists developed in consultation with advisors: a) a 15-item exam list of works in rhetoric and composition, and b) a 15-item exam list of works in a second area: literature, literary theory, English Language Studies, or specialty within rhetoric and composition. The student may opt to enroll in one additional 3-hour elective course instead of ENGL 897.
9. **Thesis Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 899 (MA or MFA thesis hours) over 2 semesters of thesis work: (1) a first semester of work with the thesis director leading to polished proposal with a bibliography; and (2) a thesis semester of writing leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the finished thesis (30-40 pages or the digital equivalent).
10. **Portfolio Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 898 (MA portfolio) over 2 semesters of work: (1) a first semester with the portfolio director, deciding on the shorter scholarly pieces to be included in the portfolio and drafting the cover essay (3-5 pages); and (2) a writing semester for crafting and revising the scholarly pieces, leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the polished portfolio (40-50 pages or the digital equivalent).

## Option 2b –English Language Studies

1. A total of 30 hours in English courses carrying graduate credit. No more than 6 hours may be taken at the 600 level. At least 6 hours must be taken at the 900 or seminar level. [ENGL 998](#) does not count as a seminar or 900-level class. **Exam option** students will take 9 conventional courses (27 hours), plus 3 hours of [ENGL 897](#) or another elective course. **Thesis** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 899](#). **Portfolio** students will take 8 conventional courses (24 hours), plus 6 hours of [ENGL 898](#).
2. 3 hours (1 course) on Methods or Theory appropriate to different areas of focus in English Language Studies: 785 or 787, or another course appropriately designated by the Graduate Director. A 998 (Directed Reading) directly focused on questions of methods and theory can fulfill this requirement if approved by the Graduate Director.
3. 3 hours (1 course) on Pedagogy: the 801-802 sequence (required for TAs), 780, 781, or other appropriate course as approved by the Graduate Director.
4. 18 (6 courses with **thesis or portfolio** option) or 21 (7 courses with **exam** option) distribution hours to be selected in consultation with advisors (Graduate Director during first year and thereafter advisors with whom students plan to move toward exam or thesis options). At least **6 hours in English Language Studies courses (including at**

**least one seminar) beyond the courses used to fulfill requirements 2 (Methods and Theory) and 3 (Pedagogy).**

5. 6 hours of elective courses.
6. For students selecting the **exam option**, 6 hours in second exam area (rhetoric and composition, literature, literary theory), including at least one seminar.
7. Two courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the 18 distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.
8. **Exam option** (3 hours): The student will generally enroll in 3 hours of ENGL 897 (exam preparation hours) and must pass a 90-minute oral exam based on two lists developed in consultation with advisors: a) a 15-item exam list of works in English Language Studies, and b) a 15-item exam list of works in a second area: literature, literary theory, or rhetoric and composition. The student may opt to enroll in one additional 3-hour elective course instead of ENGL 897.
9. **Thesis Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 899 (MA or MFA thesis hours) over 2 semesters of thesis work: (1) a first semester of work with the thesis director leading to polished proposal with a bibliography; and (2) a thesis semester of writing leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the finished thesis (30-40 pages or the digital equivalent).
10. **Portfolio Option** (6 hours): The student must enroll in 6 hours of ENGL 898 (MA portfolio) over 2 semesters of work: (1) a first semester with the portfolio director, deciding on the shorter scholarly pieces to be included in the portfolio and drafting the cover essay (3-5 pages); and (2) a writing semester for crafting and revising the scholarly pieces, leading to the oral defense (90 minutes) of the polished portfolio (40-50 pages or the digital equivalent).

## Exam Options

### Oral Exam

If the student elects to take the final oral exam rather than write a thesis, they will ask a member of the graduate faculty of the Department (preferably his/her advisor) to be the chairperson of the examining committee. The other two members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair. To be eligible for the examination, the candidate must have completed coursework or be scheduled to complete coursework the semester of the exam.

At least three weeks before the examination, the student must submit to each member of the examining committee the list of 30 texts, prepared in consultation with the chair of the examining committee, on which they wish to be examined. At the same time, the Graduate Secretary should be given a copy of the student's list. **Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense.**

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the graduate secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The exam room is reserved for two hours to allow for committee deliberation. The exam itself is limited to no more than ninety minutes.

### **Portfolio Exam**

If the student elects portfolio option, they will ask a member of the graduate faculty of the Department (preferably their advisor) to be the chairperson of the portfolio committee. The other two members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair.

The portfolio is comprised of shorter scholarly pieces, as agreed upon by the committee, plus a brief cover essay of 3-5 pages, all totaling 40-50 pages of writing (or the digital equivalent).

At least three weeks before the examination, the student must submit the final draft of the portfolio to each member of the examining committee and inform the Graduate Secretary. **Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense.**

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the graduate secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The exam room is reserved for two hours to allow for committee deliberation. The exam itself is limited to no more than ninety minutes.

### **Thesis Exam**

If the student elects the thesis option, they will ask a member of the graduate faculty of the Department (preferably their advisor) to be the chairperson of the thesis committee. The other two members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair.

At least three calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the thesis (no more than 40 pages in length or the digital equivalent) to all the committee members and inform the Graduate Secretary. **Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense.**

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the graduate secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The exam room is reserved for two hours to allow for committee deliberation. The defense itself is limited to no more than ninety minutes.

Although compelling arguments have been presented for eradicating the designation of "Honors" altogether, "Honors" on the written thesis is necessary for that work to be nominated for CLAS's annual competition for Outstanding MA Thesis. "Honors" will be given to theses that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the categories on the MA thesis rubric.

## **Time to Degree**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences lists [maximum time to degree](#) on their website. They are intent upon enforcing these time limits. University policy on MA program time constraints is [here](#). Students should not expect the department to grant extensions of the above limits. Students who wish to request [a leave of absence](#) should begin the process with a discussion with the DGS. The DGS and Graduaes will file the request with the College Office of Graduate Affairs; leaves must be renewed on a yearly basis.

## **Admission to the Ph.D. Program**

To apply to the Ph.D. program, M.A. students must submit the materials required of any new applicant, including a new application form and fee. The student need not resubmit transcripts that were included in the M.A. application, but the applicant must submit a current KU transcript that shows all M.A. coursework.

## **Best Practices**

### **The M.A. Oral Exam**

Students preparing to take an MA exam should meet regularly with all of their committee members to discuss progress made on the exam reading list, which must consist of 30 texts. Informal conversations about the selected texts can help committee members to assess the candidate's readiness for the exam.

The oral examination is normally one and a half hours long. It is based on the student's reading lists and assesses the student's understanding of the works on it and their ability to make analytical, critical, synthetic, and historical judgments. The candidate should regard the examination as an opportunity to demonstrate their highest scholarly achievement.

The procedure of the exam usually allows for rounds of questions from each committee member. The chair generally divides the ninety-minute period into two sections of sixty and twenty minutes, leaving the final ten minutes for committee deliberation. In the first hour, each of the three committee members has twenty minutes to pose questions. The second round provides five to eight minutes for each committee member to pursue follow-up questions or ask about new material. The

candidate usually consults with the chair and committee to determine the order of committee members and so forth. Note that this procedure is a matter of tradition and experience, but not a formal requirement. If the candidate and committee agree on an alternate procedure, they may pursue it. For the student's official University record, the examiners will report one of two grades: Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the exam. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

### **The M.A. Portfolio**

While the thesis consists of a single, scholarly piece of writing, the portfolio includes several shorter pieces, as agreed upon by the committee, plus a cover essay of 3 – 5 pages, all totaling 40 – 50 pages of writing (or the digital equivalent). The work should be of publishable or submission quality. Examples of scholarly pieces that might be included are a formal grant proposal; papers from the student's coursework, substantially revised; a review essay; or a digital project. The cover essay explains how those scholarly pieces fit together theoretically or methodologically, and, for revised coursework, what changes were made.

A portfolio defense includes both questions about the topics, arguments, and methodologies of the various pieces of writing, as well as questions that discuss the unifying principles, and the significance of the writing within larger contexts in the field(s).

The work in the portfolio should be of publishable or submission quality. Examples of scholarly pieces that might be included are a formal grant proposal; papers from the student's coursework, substantially revised; a review essay; or a digital project. The cover essay explains how those scholarly pieces fit together theoretically or methodologically and, for revised coursework, what changes were made. The portfolio will be accompanied by a 90-minute defense.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the portfolio defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

### **The M.A. Thesis**

After their graduate program is well-launched, normally at the start of their third semester of coursework, a student should confer with the Graduate Director about the way in which they expect to carry on the independent investigation that the Department and the Graduate School consider to be an essential feature of the M.A. degree.

If the student elects to write a thesis, which consists of a single, scholarly piece of writing, they will ask a member of the graduate faculty of the Department (preferably his/her advisor) to direct the thesis and be the chairperson for the thesis defense. Thesis committees consist of three faculty members: a chair and two other committee members, selected in consultation with the committee chair.

The other two members of the committee and the topic for the thesis will be chosen in consultation with the thesis during the start of the semester prior to that of the student's anticipated graduation.

At this time, the roles of the readers should be agreed upon. During this penultimate semester, the student should submit to all members of the thesis committee a short (1-2 page) prospectus and initial bibliography that makes clear the contribution of the thesis to the field. Students preparing their thesis should show writing selections to all of their committee members as they go along, for feedback and revision suggestions. They should also meet periodically with committee members to assess their progress.

The thesis itself requires substantial research and original argument and is written with the aspiration toward eventual publication. Although there is no set page requirement for the thesis, **the length should be 30-40 pages or the digital equivalent.**

A thesis defense includes both questions about the thesis topic, argument, and methodology, as well as questions that discuss the thesis within larger contexts in the field.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## **M.A. Timeline**

### **YEAR 1:**

#### **FALL SEMESTER**

- GTAs take 2 courses (801 + one), teach 2 courses. GRAs take 3 courses.
- Visit DGS or assigned advisor once a month to update on progress and perceptions.

#### **SPRING SEMESTER**

- GTAs take 2 courses (800 or 780 + one), teach 2 courses. GRAs take 3 courses. Pay attention to distribution requirements (pre-1700, 1700-1900, post-1900; pre-1800, post-1800, literary theory; rhet/comp; English language studies, etc.) depending on your track.
- Visit DGS or assigned advisor at least once during the semester; discuss best advisor choices for Year 2

#### **SUMMER SEMESTER**

- Enroll in Summer Institute if topic and/or methodology matches interests
- Consider conferences suited to your field and schedule; choose a local one for attendance in Year 2. Simply plan to attend if you are getting a feel for future academic work; draft an Abstract for a conference paper (preferably with ideas/materials/writing drawn from



one of your courses) if you are considering PhD programs. Even if your abstract is not accepted, you can attend the conference without the pressure of presenting.

### **YEAR 2:**

- Attend at least one conference to familiarize yourself with procedures, network with other grad students and scholars in your field, and/or present a paper

### FALL SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester

### WINTER BREAK

- If you are considering PhD programs, think about revising one of your seminar papers/independent study projects for submission to a journal. Research the journals most suited to placement of your piece. (“Research” would include talking to your advisor and the professor for whom the piece was originally written).
- Decide whether you want to take the MA exam or write a thesis

### SPRING SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses. If you have decided on the Exam, and you took one class in the summer of Year 1, these 2 courses will complete the required 9 classes for the MA degree. If you have decided on the Thesis, take one conventional course to complete the required 8 classes and enroll in 3 hours of 899.
- Visit advisor in person regularly during the semester

### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Summer teaching, if eligible
- Enroll in Summer Institute if topic and/or methodology matches interests

### **YEAR 3:**

### FALL SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses. Exam students: enroll in 3 hours of English 897 (exam prep). Thesis students: enroll in your second semester of English 899 hours.
- Visit committee regularly during the semester
- Final Oral Examination? (Thesis Defense or MA Exam)



## SPRING SEMESTER

- Might be necessary to complete hours/course requirements, or for additional polishing of the thesis.
- Final Oral Examination (Thesis Defense)

# Master of Fine Arts

## Overview

The University of Kansas' MFA is a three-year program with tracks in fiction, poetry, and playwriting. Typically, students in the program take course work for the first two years of the program and then take the third year to write their thesis. Students may take up to 15 credit hours to complete the thesis, and by the time they graduate they will have produced a book-length manuscript of poetry or prose.

A GTA appointment includes a tuition waiver for six semesters plus a competitive stipend. In the first year, GTA appointees teach English 101 (first year composition) and English 102 (a required reading and writing course). MFA students may be able to teach an introductory course in creative writing in their third year, and opportunities are available for a limited number of advanced GTAs to teach in the summer.

The creative writing faculty at KU has been widely published and anthologized, winning both critical and popular acclaim. Faculty awards include such distinctions as the Nebula Award, Hugo Award, Osborn Award, Shelley Memorial Award, Gertrude Stein Award, the Kenyon Review Prize, the Kentucky Center Gold Medallion, and the Pushcart Prize.

Our program's award-winning students and graduates publish widely in journals and have published books with numerous presses, including Black Lawrence Press, Black Balloon Publishing, and the University of Massachusetts Press.

[Visit the Graduate Admission page](#) for information on how to apply to the MFA program or PhD program at KU.

## Course Requirements for the MFA

1. 12 graduate credit hours (four courses) in literature, literary theory, forms, or rhetoric/composition/language studies. ENGL 801 does **not** fulfill this requirement.
2. 12 graduate credit hours (four courses) of creative writing workshops.
3. No more than 6 credit hours may be taken at the 600-level.
4. 7 to 9 graduate credit hours in electives or practica, chosen from graduate courses in the Department of English, or approved courses in another department.
5. 15 hours of ENGL 899, Thesis. Original writing in prose fiction, poetry, drama, or nonfiction prose. Students who complete and are able to defend their thesis before completing the 15 hours of ENGL 899 may petition for a reduced credit degree.

## Best Practices for the M.F.A. Thesis

The M.F.A. thesis consists of original writing in fiction, poetry, drama, or prose. After the fall semester of the second year, normally halfway through the program, the student asks a member of the creative writing faculty to serve as the director of the thesis. Students preparing their scholarly or creative thesis should be showing chapters or writing selections to all of their committee members as they go along, for feedback and revision suggestions. They should also meet periodically with committee members to assess their progress.

The thesis in creative writing is the culmination of the student's training and preparation and constitutes the most significant requirement for the student to complete the program and receive the terminal degree. The thesis will consist of a portfolio of the student's best work in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, playwriting, or some combination thereof. In completing the thesis, the student will work under the supervision of the thesis director and two other members of the faculty, at least one of whom must be in creative writing. It is required that the thesis be of publishable quality, in parts or as a whole, and be of substantial length: at least one hundred pages of prose; at least fifty pages of poetry; or at least two one-act plays or one full-length play. More specific requirements will be determined for each thesis by the thesis director and other members of the thesis committee. Toward the end of the third year, the student will present the thesis in a timely manner to their committee members, and a defense will be scheduled. The student must satisfactorily pass the thesis defense in order to receive the M.F.A. degree.

## M.F.A Committee and Scheduling

To be eligible to defend, the candidate must have virtually completed coursework, and finished the thesis. **It is the obligation of the candidate to advise the Graduate Director that they plan to take the thesis defense and confirm completion of coursework; this must be done at least one month before the date of the defense.**

At least three calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the thesis to all the committee members and inform the Graduate Academic Advisor. **Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense**

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the graduate academic advisor as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies and can take up to 2 months to be approved. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold graduate faculty status.

The exam room is reserved for two hours to allow for committee deliberation. The defense itself is limited to no more than ninety minutes.

Although compelling arguments have been presented for eradicating the designation of "Honors" altogether, "Honors" on the written thesis is necessary for that work to be nominated for the CLAS annual competition for Outstanding MA Thesis. "Honors" will be given to theses that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the categories on the MFA thesis rubric.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## **Time to Degree**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences lists [maximum time to degree](#) on their website. They are intent upon enforcing these time limits. University policy on MA program time constraints is [here](#). Students should not expect the department to grant extensions of the above limits. Students may request [a leave of absence](#) from the College Office of Graduate Affairs; it must be renewed on a yearly basis.

## **Admission to the Ph.D. Program**

To apply to the Ph.D. program, M.F.A. students must submit the materials required of any new applicant, including a new application form and fee. The student need not resubmit transcripts that were included in the M.F.A. application, but the applicant must submit a current KU transcript that shows all M.F.A. coursework.

## **M.F.A. Timeline**

### **YEAR 1:**

#### **FALL SEMESTER**

- GTAs take 2 courses (801 + one), teach 2 courses, GRAs take 3 courses
- Visit DGS or assigned advisor once a month to update on progress and perceptions

#### **SPRING SEMESTER**

- GTAs take 2 courses (800 or 780 [recommended] + one), teach 2 courses , GRAs take 3 courses
- Visit DGS or assigned advisor at least once during the semester; discuss best advisor choices for Year 2

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Enroll in Summer Institute if topic and/or methodology matches interests (course is worth 3 credit hours).

#### **YEAR 2:**

##### FALL SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses. Remember that by the end of coursework, you must take 4 creative writing workshops and 4 graduate classes in English or American literature.
- Visit advisor and MFA Director, in person, at least once during the semester to check up on progress

##### SPRING SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses
- Ask a member of the creative writing faculty to serve as your thesis director. Discuss the building of the thesis portfolio, and which other faculty members would make a good fit for your committee

##### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Summer teaching, if eligible
- Enroll in Summer Institute if topic and/or methodology matches interests (course is worth 3 credit hours).

#### **YEAR 3:**

##### FALL SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, including at least 3 hours of 899 (thesis); teach 2 courses.
- Visit committee regularly during the semester

##### SPRING SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, including at least 3 hours of 899 (thesis); teach 2 courses.
- Visit committee regularly during the semester

- Final Oral Examination (Thesis Defense)

## Accelerated M.A.

### Program Description

The 4+1 BA-MA program will offer our best undergraduate majors the opportunity to earn both the BA and MA degrees in a focused and accelerated manner. The program enables qualified KU students to count 12 hours of graduate-level coursework toward the major requirements and the MA degree, which will be completed in the 5th year.

**To request more information about the Accelerated M.A. program, click one of the links below to complete an inquiry form.**

[Current KU](#)

[Students inquiry](#)

[form Potential](#)

[Jayhawks inquiry](#)

[form](#)

We do not currently offer any online degrees for the graduate program.

The course requirements for the accelerated MA program are fulfilled by a combination of graduate-level courses taken for both undergraduate and graduate credit in Year 4, fulfilling both BA major requirements and MA degree requirements, and graduate credit courses taken in Year 5.

***The student must be approved to begin coursework toward the 4+1 program prior to enrolling in any classes that are to count for both undergraduate and graduate credit.***

### Requirements for the BA Major:

The major in English requires 31 hours (34 for Honors English), of which 3 hours may be an appropriate 200-level English course. Students in the 4+1 program must take 6 credit hours at the 590 level or above, and 6 credit hours at the 700 level or above. These courses may be selected from

those that count toward major distribution requirements or major electives. (See the 590+ level options in the course lists below).

As part of these 31 hours (34 for Honors English), all English majors must complete the Orientation to English Studies (ENGL 199) within their first two semesters as a declared major. In addition, they must also choose courses from each of the following 7 categories:

1. **Individual Authors or Movements**
2. **Literary Theory**
3. **English Language or Rhetoric**
4. **Transcultural Approaches to Language, Literature, or Writing**
5. **Writing**
6. **Forms and Genres**
7. **Literary History (2 courses)**

**Notes:**

- 27 hours must be at the junior/senior level.
- One 200-level course may count toward major requirements. No 100-level ENGL courses count toward major requirements except ENGL 199.
- Only 1 (3 credits) creative writing workshop (fiction writing, nonfiction writing, poetry writing, screen writing or playwriting) may be applied as a major course.
- Up to 6 credits combined of ENGL 494 (Research Internship) or ENGL 495 (Directed Study) may be applied as major electives.
- Up to 3 credit hours of ENGL 496 (Internship) or ENGL 497 (Service Learning Internship) may be applied as a major elective.

**Major Hours & Major GPA**

While completing all required courses, majors must also meet each of the following hour and grade-point average minimum standards:

**Major Hours** Satisfied by 31 hours of major courses (34 for Honors English).

**Major Hours in Residence** Satisfied by a minimum of 25 hours of KU resident credit in the major; exceptions by permission of Director of Undergraduate Studies only.

**Major Junior/Senior Hours** Satisfied by a minimum of 24 hours from junior/senior courses (300+) in the major.

**Major Junior/Senior Graduation GPA** Satisfied by a minimum of a 2.0 KU GPA in junior/senior courses (300+) in the major. GPA calculations include all junior/senior courses in the field of study including F's and repeated courses. See the Semester/Cumulative GPA Calculator (<http://clas.ku.edu/undergrad/tools/gpa>).

## **MA Degree Requirements:**

In addition to the 12 graduate credit hours completed during the senior year, MA students must complete an additional 18 hours of graduate-level coursework. The candidate's program should be arranged in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or a member of the departmental committee on graduate studies. No more than 6 hours of the 18 hours of graduate-level coursework for the MA may be taken at the 590-600 level. The following requirements also apply:

3 hours (1 course) on Methods or Theory appropriate to different areas of focus in Literary Studies: ordinarily 708, 709, 800, or another course appropriately designated by the Graduate Director. A 998 (Directed Reading) directly focused on questions of methods and theory can fulfill this requirement if approved by the Graduate Director.

3 hours on Pedagogy: ENGL 780, ENGL 781, or other appropriate course as approved by the Graduate Director.

21 distribution hours to be selected in consultation with advisors. Two options are available:

Option 1a, Literature: At least 1 course (3 hours) must be pre-1700; at least 1 must be 1700-1900; and at least 1 must be after 1900. 2 courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.

Option 1b, Literature and Literary Theory: At least 1 course (3 hours) must be pre-1800; at least 1 (3 hours) must be post-1800. At least 2 courses (6 hours), besides the course used to fulfill requirement 2 (Methods or Theory) must focus primarily on Literary Theory. 2 courses (6 hours) outside the department may be included in the distribution hours with approval of the Graduate Director.

English 899: Portfolio Preparation:

At least 2 courses (6 hours), besides the course used to fulfill requirement 2 (Methods or Theory) must focus primarily on Literary Theory. English 899: Thesis/Portfolio Preparation. This course is completed during the last semester of the MA year (Year 5). Students prepare a portfolio of work from their graduate courses over which they will be examined at an oral defense, not to exceed 90 minutes.

## **Progression Requirements:**

Given the accelerated nature of this program, each student's progress will be closely monitored at various points during the program.

Once approved to begin graduate coursework, the student must meet with the DGS to plan the final year of undergraduate study;

At the end of the final semester of undergraduate study (Year 4), the department will review the student's performance in graduate-level English courses taken in Year 4. The student must earn a grade of B or better in each course to be eligible to continue in the 4+1 program;

Following the completion and award of the BA or BGS degree, the 4+1 student will meet again with the DGS to review the course plan for the 5th year of study and update it as needed. The student's performance in the graduate-level courses taken as an undergraduate will be evaluated

For students who do not meet the minimum GPA requirement of 3.0 in the first semester of Year 5, the department may, at its discretion, devise a plan of study to address the student's deficiencies, or may dismiss the student from the program;

The program is designed so that students can complete all requirements for the 4+1 degree within one year of receiving the BA/BGS degree.

If unforeseen circumstances prevent the timely completion of the MA degree, the student must consult with the DGS and her or his graduate advisor to develop an alternative plan for finishing the program. Similarly, a student may decide to discontinue in the graduate program after finishing the bachelor's degree, or while still completing undergraduate requirements; the student should notify the DGS of this decision. Those still completing requirements for the BA should also contact their undergraduate advisor as soon as possible to ensure timely completion of the bachelor's degree.

If a student performs poorly in graduate coursework in Year 4 (receiving lower than a B in any graduate classes), the student will be advised to withdraw from the 4+1 program. As long as the BA requirements have been met, the student will be able to graduate with a bachelor's degree.

If the student performs poorly in Year 5 (dropping below a 3.0 GPA/"B" average in English classes), the student will fall out of Good Standing. The student's name will be forwarded to the College and the student will be put on academic probation for one semester. The DGS and Graduate Committee senior staff will review the student's progress regularly. If satisfactory progress is not being made, the student may be dismissed from the 4+1 program. The student can also withdraw voluntarily.

## **Creative Writing Ph.D. Track**

A rigorous program that combines creative writing and literary studies, the Ph.D. in Creative Writing prepares graduates for both scholarly and creative publication and teaching. With faculty guidance, students admitted to the Ph.D. program may tailor their



programs to their goals and interests. A GTA appointment includes a tuition waiver for ten semesters plus a competitive stipend. In the first year, GTA appointees teach English 101 (first year composition) and English 102 (a required reading and writing course). MFA and Creative Writing PhD students have the opportunity to teach an introductory course in creative writing in their third year, and opportunities are available for a limited number of advanced GTAs to teach in the summer.

[Doctoral Program Profile](#) (PDF)

We do not currently offer any online degrees for the graduate program.

## Course Requirements for the Ph.D. in Creative Writing

1. At least 24 hours of credit in appropriate formal graduate courses beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. At least 15 hours (in addition to ENGL 800 if not taken for the M.A.) of this course work must be taken from among courses offered by the Department of English at the 700-level and above. English 997 and 999 credits cannot be included among the 24 hours. Students may petition to take up to 6 hours outside the Department.
2. ENGL 800: Methods, Theory, and Professionalism (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
3. The ENGL 801/ENGL 802 pedagogy sequence (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
4. Two seminars (courses numbered 900 or above) offered by the Department of English at the University of Kansas, beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. ENGL 998 does not fulfill this requirement.
5. ENGL 999, Dissertation (at least 12 hours).

If the MA or MFA was completed in KU's Department of English, a doctoral student may petition the DGS to have up to 12 hours of the coursework taken in the English Department reduced toward the PhD

## Responsible Scholarship and Research Skills (RSRS) Requirement

For Doctoral students, [the university requires completion of a course in responsible scholarship](#). For the English department, this would be ENGL 800, 780, or the equivalent). In addition, the Department requires reading knowledge of one approved foreign language: Old English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Latin, or Hebrew. Upon successful petition, a candidate may substitute reading knowledge of another language or research skill that is studied at the University or is demonstrably appropriate to the candidate's program of study.

Doctoral students must fulfill the requirement **before** they take their doctoral examination, or be enrolled in a reading course the same semester as the exam. Students are permitted three attempts at passing each foreign language or research skill. Three methods of demonstrating reading knowledge for all approved languages except Old English are acceptable:

1. Presenting 16 hours, four semesters, or the equivalent of undergraduate credit, earned with an average of C or better.
2. Passing a graduate reading course at the University of Kansas or peer institution (e.g., French 100, German 100, etc.) with a grade of C or higher. In the past, some of these reading courses have been given by correspondence; check with the Division of Continuing Education for availability.
3. Passing a translation examination given by a designated member of the English Department faculty or by the appropriate foreign language department at KU. The exam is graded pass/fail and requires the student to translate as much as possible of a representative text in the foreign language in a one-hour period, using a bilingual dictionary.
4. Passing a translation examination given by the appropriate foreign language department at the MA-granting institution. Successful completion must be reflected either on the MA transcript or by a letter from the degree-granting department.

To fulfill the language requirement using Old English, students must successfully complete ENGL 710 (Introduction to Old English) and ENGL 712 (Beowulf).

## **Residence Requirement**

A doctoral student must fulfill [the university policy residence requirement](#) before taking the doctoral exam.

## **Annual Review**

Post-Coursework Ph.D. students must submit, with their committee chair(s), an annual review form to the DGS and Graduate Committee.

## **Doctoral Exam**

### **Overview**

Doctoral students must take their doctoral examination within three semesters (excluding summers) of the end of the semester in which they took their final required course. If a student has an Incomplete, the timeline is not postponed until the Incomplete is resolved. For example, a student completing doctoral course work in Spring 2018 will need to schedule their doctoral exam no later than the end of Fall semester 2019. Delays may be granted by petition to the Graduate Director in highly unusual circumstances. Failure to take the exam within this time limit without an approved delay will result in the student's falling out of good standing. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

A student may not take their doctoral exam until the university's Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement is fulfilled (ENGL 800 or equivalent and reading knowledge of one foreign language or equivalent).

## Requirements for Doctoral Exams:

### Reading Lists

All students are required to submit three reading lists, based on the requirements below, to their committee for approval. The doctoral exam will be scheduled a minimum of twelve weeks after approval from the whole committee is received. To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate academic advisor on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

During the two-hour oral examination (plus an additional 15-30 minutes for a break and committee deliberation), a student will be tested on their comprehension of a literary period or movement, including multiple genres and groups of authors within that period or movement. In addition, the student will be tested on two of the following six areas of study:

- An adjacent or parallel literary period or movement,
- An author or group of related authors,
- A genre,
- Criticism and literary theory,
- Composition theory, and
- English language.

No title from any field list may appear on either of the other two lists. See Best Practices section for more details on these six areas. See below for a description of the Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP), which the candidate takes the semester after passing the doctoral exam.

While many students confer with the DGS as they begin the process of developing their lists, they are also required to submit a copy of their final exam list to the DGS. Most lists will be left intact, but the DGS might request that overly long lists be condensed, or extremely short lists be expanded.

### **Review of Literature (*minimum 8 double-spaced pages/area; max of 36 double-spaced pages total*)**

The purpose of the Review of Literature is to develop and demonstrate an advanced awareness of the critical landscape for each list. The student will write an overview of the defining attributes of the field, identifying two or three broad questions that animate scholarly discussion, while using specific noteworthy texts from their list (*but not all texts on the list*) as examples.

The review also must accomplish the following:

- consider the historical context of major issues, debates, and trends that factor into the emergence of the field
- offer a historical overview of scholarship in the field that connects the present to the past
- note recent trends and emergent lines of inquiry

- propose questions about (develop critiques of, and/or identify gaps in) the field and how they might be pursued in future study (but not actually proposing or referencing a dissertation project)

For example, for a literary period, the student might include an overview of primary formal and thematic elements, of the relationship between literary and social/historical developments, of prominent movements, (etc.), as well as of recent critical debates and topics.

For a genre list, the Review of Literature might include major theories of its constitution and significance, while outlining the evolution of these theories over time.

For a Rhetoric and Composition list, the review would give an overview of major historical developments, research, theories, methods, debates, and trends of scholarship in the field.

For an English Language Studies (ELS) list, the review would give an overview of the subfields that make up ELS, the various methodological approaches to language study, the type of sources used, and major aims and goals of ELS. The review also usually involves a focus on one subfield of particular interest to the student (such as stylistics, sociolinguistics, or World/Postcolonial Englishes).

Students are encouraged to divide reviews into smaller sections that enhance clarity and organization. Students are not expected to interact with every text on their lists.

The review of literature might be used to prepare students for identifying the most important texts in the field, along with why those texts are important to the field, for the oral exam. It is recommended for students to have completed reading the bulk of (if not all) texts on their lists before writing the ROL.

The Reviews of Literature will not be produced in an exam context, but in the manner of papers that are researched and developed in consultation with all advisors/committee members, **with final drafts being distributed within a reasonable time for all members to review and approve in advance of the 3-week deadline.** While the Review of Literature generally is not the focus of the oral examination, it is frequently used as a point of departure for questions and discussion during the oral examination.

## Doctoral Exam Committee

Exam committees typically consist of 4 faculty members from the department—one of whom serves as the Committee Chair—plus a Graduate Studies Representative. [University policy dictates the composition of exam committees.](#) Students may petition for an exception for several committee member situations, with the exception of [the Graduate Studies Representative.](#)

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College

and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status

### **Remote participation of committee members via technology**

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

A majority of committee members must be physically present for an examination to commence; for doctoral oral examinations this requirement is 3 of the 5 members, for master's oral examinations the requirement is 2 of the 3 members. In addition, it is required that the student being examined, the chair of the committee, and the Graduate Studies Representative all be physically present at the examination or defense. Mediated attendance by the student, chair and Grad Studies Rep is prohibited.

### **Doctoral Exam Timeline**

The recommended time between completion of coursework and the doctoral examination is two semesters.

Final exam lists need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 12 weeks prior to the prospective exam date. This includes summers/summer semesters. The lists should then be submitted to the Graduate Secretary. Reviews of Literature need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 3 weeks prior to the exam date. Failure to meet this deadline will result in rescheduling the exam. No further changes to lists or Reviews of Literature will be allowed after official approval. The three-week deadline is the faculty deadline--the last date for them to confirm receipt of the ROLs and confer approval--not necessarily the student deadline for submitting the documents to the faculty. Please keep that timing in mind and allow your committee adequate time to review the materials and provide feedback.

Students taking the Doctoral Exam are allowed to bring their text lists, the approved Reviews of Literature, scratch paper, a writing utensil, and notes/writing for an approximately 5-minute introductory statement to the exam. (This statement does not need to lay out ideas or any aspect of the dissertation project.)

Each portion of the oral examination must be deemed passing before the student can proceed to the Review of the Dissertation Proposal. If a majority of the committee judges that the student has not answered adequately on one of the three areas of the exam, the student must repeat that portion in a separate oral exam of one hour, to be taken as expeditiously as possible. **Failure in two areas constitutes failure of the exam and requires a retake of the whole.** The doctoral examining committee will render a judgment of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory on the entire examination. A student who fails the exam twice may, upon successful petition to the Graduate Committee, take it a third and final time.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the exam. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## Post-Exam Enrollment

Ph.D. candidates must be continuously enrolled in Dissertation hours each Fall and Spring semester from the time they pass the doctoral examination until successful completion of the final oral examination (defense of dissertation).

- Students enroll for a minimum of 6 hours each Fall and Spring semester until the total of post-doctoral exam Dissertation hours is 18. One hour each semester must be ENGL 999. In order to more quickly reach the 18-hour minimum, and to be sooner eligible for GRAships, it is highly recommended that students enroll in 9 hours of Dissertation in the Spring and Fall semesters.
- Once a student has accumulated 18 post-doctoral exam hours, each subsequent enrollment will be for a number of hours agreed upon as appropriate between the student and their advisor, the minimal enrollment each semester being 1 hour of ENGL 999.
- A student must be enrolled in at least one hour of credit at KU during the semester they graduate. Although doctoral students must be enrolled in ENGL 999 while working on their dissertations, per current CLAS regulations, there is no absolute minimum number of ENGL 999 hours required for graduation.
- Students who live and work outside the Lawrence area may, under current University regulations, have their fees assessed at the Field Work rate, which is somewhat lower than the on-campus rate. Students must petition the College Office of Graduate Affairs before campus fees will be waived.

Please also refer to [the COGA policy on post-exam enrollment](#) or the [Graduate School's policy](#).

## Best Practices for Doctoral Exam

The doctoral oral examination has the following purposes:

1. To establish goals, tone, and direction for the pursuit of the Ph.D. in English for the Department and for individual programs of study;
2. To make clear the kinds of knowledge and skills that, in the opinion of the Department, all well-prepared holders of the degree should have attained;
3. To provide a means for the Department to assess each candidate's control of such knowledge and skills in order to certify that the candidate is prepared to write a significant dissertation and enter the profession; and
4. To enable the Department to recommend to the candidate areas of strength or weakness that should be addressed.

## Advising

In consultation with the Graduate Director, a student will ask a member of the Department's graduate faculty (preferably their advisor) to be the chairperson of the examining committee. The choice of examination committee chair is very important, for that person's role is to assist the candidate in designing the examination structure, preparing the Review of Literature (see below),

negotiating reading lists and clarifying their purposes, and generally following procedures here outlined. The other three English Department members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair. (At some point an additional examiner from outside the Department, who serves as the Graduate School representative, will be invited to join the committee). Any unresolved problems in negotiation between a candidate and their committee should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director, who may choose to involve the Graduate Committee. A student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the examining committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.

## **Reading Lists**

Copies of some approved reading lists and Reviews of Literature are available from the Graduate Secretary and can be found on the U: drive if you are using a computer on campus. Despite the goal of fairness and equity, some unavoidable unevenness and disparity will appear in the length of these lists. It remains, however, the responsibility of the examining committee, and especially the student's chair, to aim toward consonance with the most rigorous standards and expectations and to insure that areas of study are not unduly narrow.

To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate secretary on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists and reviews of literature. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

## **Criteria for Reading Lists**

Comprehension of a literary period (e.g., British literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; Romanticism; US literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Modernism) entails sufficient intellectual grasp of both the important primary works of and secondary works on the period or movement to indicate a student's ability to teach the period or movement and undertake respectable scholarship on it.

Comprehension of an author or group of related authors (e.g., Donne, the Brontës, the Bloomsbury Group, the Black Mountain Poets) entails knowledge, both primary and secondary, of a figure or figures whose writing has generated a significant body of interrelated biographical, historical, and critical scholarship.

Comprehension of one of several genres (the short story, the lyric poem, the epistolary novel). To demonstrate comprehension of a genre, a student should possess sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge, both primary and secondary, of the genre to explain its formal characteristics and account for its historical development.

Comprehension of criticism and literary theory entails a grasp of fundamental conceptual problems inherent in a major school of literary study (e.g., historicist, psychoanalytic, feminist, poststructuralist, etc.). To demonstrate comprehension of that school of criticism and literary theory, a student should be able to discuss changes in its conventions and standards of interpretation and evaluation of literature from its beginning to the present. Students will be expected to possess sufficient depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge to bring appropriate texts and issues to bear on questions of literary study.

Comprehension of composition theory entails an intellectual grasp of fundamental concepts, issues, and theories pertaining to the study of writing. To demonstrate comprehension of composition



theory, students should be able to discuss traditional and current issues from a variety of perspectives, as well as the field's historical development from classical rhetoric to the present.

Comprehension of the broad field of English language studies entails a grasp of the field's theoretical concepts and current issues, as well as a familiarity with significant works within given subareas. Such subareas will normally involve formal structures (syntax, etc.) and history of the English language, along with other subareas such as social linguistics, discourse analysis, lexicography, etc. Areas of emphasis and specific sets of topics will be arranged through consultation with relevant faculty.

## **Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP)**

As soon as possible following successful completion of the doctoral exam, the candidate should establish their three-person core dissertation committee, and then expeditiously proceed to the preparation of a dissertation proposal. **Within the semester following completion of the doctoral exam**, the student will present to their core dissertation committee a written narrative of approximately **10-15 pages**, not including bibliography, of the dissertation proposal. Copies of this proposal must be submitted to the members of the dissertation committee no later than **three weeks prior** to the scheduled examination date.

In the proposal, students will be expected to define: the guiding question or set of questions; a basic thesis (or hypothesis); how the works to be studied or the creative writing produced relate to that (hypo)thesis; the theoretical/methodological model to be followed; the overall formal divisions of the dissertation; and how the study will be situated in the context of prior scholarship (i.e., its importance to the field). The narrative section should be followed by a bibliography demonstrating that the candidate is conversant with the basic theoretical and critical works pertinent to the study. For creative writing students, the proposal may serve as a draft of the critical introduction to the creative dissertation. Students are expected to consult with their projected dissertation committee concerning the preparation of the proposal.

The review will focus on the proposal, although it could also entail determining whether or not the candidate's knowledge of the field is adequate to begin the composition process. The examination will be graded pass/fail. If it is failed, the committee will suggest areas of weakness to be addressed by the candidate, who will rewrite the proposal and retake the review **by the end of the following semester**. If the candidate abandons the entire dissertation project for another, a new RDP will be taken. (For such a step to be taken, the change would need to be drastic, such as a move to a new field or topic. A change in thesis or the addition or subtraction of one or even several works to be examined would not necessitate a new proposal and defense.) **If the student fails to complete the Review of the Dissertation Proposal within a year of the completion of the doctoral exams, they will have fallen out of departmental good standing.** For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

After passing the Review of the Dissertation Proposal, the student should forward one signed copy of the proposal to the Graduate Secretary. The RDP may last no longer than 90 minutes.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the review. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.



# The Doctoral Dissertation

## Overview

The Graduate Catalog states that the doctoral candidate “must present a dissertation showing the planning, conduct and results of original research, and scholarly creativity.” While most Ph.D. candidates in the Department of English write dissertations of a traditional, research-oriented nature, a creative writing candidate may elect to do a creative-writing dissertation involving fiction, poetry, drama or nonfiction prose. **Such a dissertation must contain a substantial section of scholarly research related to the creative writing.** The precise nature of the scholarly research component should be determined by the candidate in consultation with the dissertation committee and the Graduate Director. Candidates wishing to undertake such a dissertation must complete all Departmental requirements demanded for the research-oriented Ph.D. degree.

## Scholarly Research Component (SRC)

The Scholarly Research Component (SRC) of the creative-writing dissertation is a separate section of the dissertation than the creative work. It involves substantial research and is written in the style of academic prose. It should be 15-20 pages and should cite at least 20 sources, some of which should be primary texts, and many of which should be from the peer-reviewed secondary literature. The topic must relate, in some way, to the topic, themes, ideas, or style of the creative portion of the dissertation; this relation should be stated in the Dissertation Proposal, which should include a section describing the student’s plans for the SRC. The SRC may be based on a seminar paper or other work the student has completed prior to the dissertation; but the research should be augmented, and the writing revised, per these guidelines. The SRC is a part of the dissertation, and as such will be included in the dissertation defense.

The SRC may take two general forms:

1.) An article, publishable in a peer-reviewed journal or collection, on a specific topic related to an author, movement, theoretical issue, taxonomic issue, etc. that has bearing on the creative portion. The quality of this article should be high enough that the manuscript could be submitted to a peer-reviewed publication, with a plausible chance of acceptance.

2.) A survey. This survey may take several different forms:

A survey of a particular aspect of the genre of the creative portion of the dissertation (stylistic, national, historical, etc.)

An introduction to the creative portion of the dissertation that explores the influences on, and the theoretical or philosophical foundations or implications of the creative work

An exploration of a particular technical problem or craft issue that is salient in the creative portion of the dissertation

If the creative portion of the dissertation includes the results of research (e.g., historical novel, documentary poetry, research-based creative nonfiction), a descriptive overview of the research undertaken already for the dissertation itself

A combination of the above, with the prior approval of the student’s dissertation director.

## Committee

The dissertation committee will consist of at least five members—three “core” English faculty members, a fourth faculty member (usually from English), and one faculty member from a different department who serves as the Graduate Studies representative. The committee may include (with the Graduate Director’s approval) members from other departments and, with the approval of the University’s Graduate Council, members from outside the University. If a student wants to have a committee member from outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track

professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and the Office of Graduate Studies. Requests for defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The candidate's preferences as to the membership of the dissertation committee will be carefully considered; the final decision, however, rests with the Department and with the Office of Graduate Studies. All dissertation committees must get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies before scheduling the final oral exam (defense). Furthermore, any changes in the make-up of the dissertation committee from the Review of the Dissertation Proposal committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once the dissertation proposal has passed and the writing of the dissertation begins, membership of the dissertation committee should remain constant. However, under extraordinary circumstances, a student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the dissertation committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.

If a student does not make progress during the dissertation-writing stage, and accumulates more than one "Limited Progress" and/or "No Progress" grade on their transcript, they will fall out of good standing in the department. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices

### **Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)**

When the dissertation has been tentatively accepted by the dissertation committee (not including the Graduate Studies Representative), the final oral examination will be held, on the recommendation of the Department.

Although the dissertation committee is responsible for certification of the candidate, any member of the graduate faculty may be present at the examination and participate in the questioning, and one examiner—the Graduate Studies Representative—must be from outside the Department. The Graduate Secretary can help students locate an appropriate Grad Studies Rep. The examination normally lasts no more than two hours. It is the obligation of the candidate to advise the Graduate Director that they plan to take the oral examination; this must be done at least one month before the date proposed for the examination.

***At least three calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the dissertation to all the committee members (including the GSR) and inform the Graduate Secretary. Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense.*** The final oral examination for the Ph.D. in English is, essentially, a defense of the dissertation. When it is passed, the dissertation itself is graded by the dissertation director, in consultation with the student's committee; the student's performance in the final examination (defense) is graded by the entire five-person committee

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student defenses but not others

## **Rubric for an Honors dissertation in Creative Writing**

These sets of attributes are adapted from the Graduate Learner Outcomes that are a part of our Assessment portfolio. "Honors" should only be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the following categories:

1. Significant and innovative plot/structure/idea/focus. The writer clearly places plot/structure/idea/focus in context.
2. Thorough knowledge of literary traditions. Clear/flexible vision of the creative work produced in relation to those literary traditions.
3. Introduction/Afterword is clear, concise, and insightful. A detailed discussion of the implications of the project and future writing projects exists.
4. The creative dissertation reveals the doctoral candidate's comprehensive understanding of poetics and/or aesthetic approach. The application of the aesthetic approach is innovative and convincing.
5. The creative dissertation represents original and sophisticated creative work.
6. The creative dissertation demonstrates thematic and/or aesthetic unity.

After much discussion about whether the "honors" designation assigned after the dissertation defense should be for the written product only, for the defense/discussion only, for both together, weighted equally, or eradicated altogether, the department voted to accept the Graduate Committee recommendation that "honors" only apply to the written dissertation. "Honors" will be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the categories on the dissertation rubric.

## **Best Practices for the Doctoral Dissertation**

Normally, the dissertation will present the results of the writer's own research, carried on under the direction of the dissertation committee. This means that the candidate should be in regular contact with all members of the committee during the dissertation research and writing process, providing multiple drafts of chapters, or sections of chapters, according to the arrangements made between the student and each faculty member. Though accepted primarily for its scholarly merit rather than for its rhetorical qualities, the dissertation must be stylistically competent. The Department has accepted the MLA Handbook as the authority in matters of style. The writer may wish to consult also *the Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Dissertations, Theses, and Term Papers*.

Naturally, both the student and the dissertation committee have responsibilities and obligations to each other concerning the submitting and returning of materials. The student should plan on working steadily on the dissertation; if they do so, they should expect from the dissertation committee a reasonably quick reading and assessment of material submitted.

Students preparing their dissertation should be showing chapters to their committee members as they go along, for feedback and revision suggestions. They should also meet periodically with committee members to assess their progress. Prior to scheduling a defense, the student is encouraged to ask committee members whether they feel that the student is ready to defend the dissertation. Ideally, the student should hold the defense only when they have consulted with committee members sufficiently to feel confident that they have revised the dissertation successfully to meet the expectations of all committee members.

Students should expect that they will need to revise each chapter at least once. This means that all chapters (including introduction and conclusion) are shown to committee members once, revised, then shown to committee members again in revised form to assess whether further revisions are needed, prior to the submitting of the final dissertation as a whole. It is not unusual for further revisions to be required and necessary after the second draft of a chapter; students should not therefore simply assume that a second draft is necessarily "final" and passing work.

If a substantial amount of work still needs to be completed or revised at the point that the dissertation defense is scheduled, such a defense date should be regarded as tentative, pending the successful completion, revision, and receipt of feedback on all work. Several weeks prior to the defense, students should consult closely with their dissertation director and committee members about whether the dissertation as a whole is in a final and defensible stage. A project is ready for defense when it is coherent, cohesive, well researched, engages in sophisticated analysis (in its entirety or in the critical introduction of creative dissertations), and makes a significant contribution to the field. In other words, it passes each of the categories laid out in the Dissertation Rubric.

If the dissertation has not clearly reached a final stage, the student and dissertation director are advised to reschedule the defense.

## **Prior Publication of the Doctoral Dissertation**

Portions of the material written by the doctoral candidate may appear in article form before completion of the dissertation. Prior publication does not ensure the acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation committee. Final acceptance of the dissertation is subject to the approval of the

dissertation committee. Previously published material by other authors included in the dissertation must be properly documented.

## **Misc. Best Practices for Creative Writing PhD**

Each student beyond the Master's degree should confer regularly with the Graduate Director regarding their progress toward the doctoral examination and the doctorate.

Doctoral students may take graduate courses outside the English Department if, in their opinion and that of the Graduate Director, acting on behalf of the Graduate Committee, those courses will be of value to them. Their taking such courses will not, of course, absolve them of the responsibility for meeting all the normal departmental and Graduate School requirements.

Doctoral students in creative writing are strongly encouraged to take formal literature classes in addition to forms classes. Formal literature classes, by providing training in literary analysis, theory, and/or literary history, will help to prepare students for doctoral exams (and future teaching at the college level).

## **Literature Ph.D. Track**

The Ph.D. degree offers the opportunity for advanced and concentrated research to students who hold an M.A. degree in English or a related field, from KU or elsewhere. With faculty guidance, students admitted to the Ph.D. program may tailor their programs to their research and teaching interests

A GTA appointment includes a tuition waiver for ten semesters plus a competitive stipend. In the first year, GTA appointees teach English 101 (first year composition) and English 102 (a required reading and writing course). Graduate students eventually have the opportunity to teach an introductory course in their field, and opportunities are available for a limited number of advanced GTAs to teach in the summer.

[Doctoral Program Profile \(PDF\)](#)

We do not currently offer any online degrees for the graduate program

## **Course Requirements for the Ph.D. in Literary Studies**

1. At least 24 hours of credit in appropriate formal graduate courses beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. At least 15 hours (in addition to ENGL 800 if not taken for the M.A.) of this course work must be taken from among courses offered by the Department of English at the 700-level and above. English 997 and 999 credits cannot be included among the 24 hours. Students may petition to take up to 6 hours outside the Department.

2. ENGL 800: Methods, Theory, and Professionalism (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
3. The ENGL 801/ENGL 802 pedagogy sequence (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
4. Two seminars (courses numbered 900 or above) offered by the Department of English at the University of Kansas, beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. ENGL 998 does not fulfill this requirement.
5. ENGL 999, Dissertation (at least 12 hours).

If the MA or MFA was completed in KU's Department of English, a doctoral student may petition the DGS to have up to 12 hours of the coursework taken in the English Department reduced toward the PhD.

### **Responsible Scholarship and Research Skills (RSRS) Requirement**

For Doctoral students, [the university requires completion of a course in responsible scholarship](#). For the English department, this would be ENGL 800, 780, or the equivalent). In addition, the Department requires reading knowledge of one approved foreign language: Old English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Latin, or Hebrew. Upon successful petition, a candidate may substitute reading knowledge of another language or research skill that is studied at the University or is demonstrably appropriate to the candidate's program of study.

Doctoral students must fulfill the requirement **before** they take their doctoral examination, or be enrolled in a reading course the same semester as the exam. Students are permitted three attempts at passing each foreign language or research skill. Three methods of demonstrating reading knowledge for all approved languages except Old English are acceptable:

1. Presenting 16 hours, four semesters, or the equivalent of undergraduate credit, earned with an average of C or better.
2. Passing a graduate reading course at the University of Kansas or peer institution (e.g., French 100, German 100, etc.) with a grade of C or higher. In the past, some of these reading courses have been given by correspondence; check with the Division of Continuing Education for availability.
3. Passing a translation examination given by a designated member of the English Department faculty or by the appropriate foreign language department at KU. The exam is graded pass/fail and requires the student to translate as much as possible of a representative text in the foreign language in a one-hour period, using a bilingual dictionary.
4. Passing a translation examination given by the appropriate foreign language department at the MA-granting institution. Successful completion must be reflected either on the MA transcript or by a letter from the degree-granting department.

To fulfill the language requirement using Old English, students must successfully complete ENGL 710 (Introduction to Old English) and ENGL 712 (Beowulf).

## Residence Requirement

A doctoral student must fulfill [the university policy residence requirement](#) before taking the doctoral exam.

## Annual Review

Post-Coursework Ph.D. students must submit, with their committee chair(s), an annual review form to the DGS and Graduate Committee.

## Doctoral Exam

### Overview

Doctoral students must take their doctoral examination within three semesters (excluding summers) of the end of the semester in which they took their final required course. If a student has an Incomplete, the timeline is not postponed until the Incomplete is resolved. For example, a student completing doctoral course work in Spring 2018 will need to schedule their doctoral exam no later than the end of Fall semester 2019. Delays may be granted by petition to the Graduate Director in highly unusual circumstances. Failure to take the exam within this time limit without an approved delay will result in the student's falling out of good standing. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

**A student may not take their doctoral exam until the university's Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement is fulfilled (ENGL 800 or equivalent and reading knowledge of one foreign language or equivalent).**

### Doctoral Exam Requirements:

#### Reading Lists

All students are required to submit three reading lists, based on the requirements below, to their committee for approval. The doctoral exam will be scheduled a minimum of twelve weeks after approval from the whole committee is received. To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate academic advisor on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

During the two-hour oral examination (plus an additional 15-30 minutes for a break and committee deliberation), a student will be tested on their comprehension of a literary period or movement, including multiple genres and groups of authors within that period or movement. In addition, the student will be tested on two of the following six areas of study:

- An adjacent or parallel literary period or movement,



- An author or group of related authors,
- A genre,
- Criticism and literary theory,
- Composition theory, and
- English language.

No title from any field list may appear on either of the other two lists. See Best Practices section for more details on these six areas. See below for a description of the Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP), which the candidate takes the semester after passing the doctoral exam.

While many students confer with the DGS as they *begin* the process of developing their lists, they are also required to submit a copy of their *final* exam list to the DGS. Most lists will be left intact, but the DGS might request that overly long lists be condensed, or extremely short lists be expanded.

### **Review of Literature (*minimum 8 double-spaced pages/area; max of 36 double-spaced pages total*)**

The purpose of the Review of Literature is to develop and demonstrate an advanced awareness of the critical landscape for each list. The student will write an overview of the defining attributes of the field, identifying two or three broad questions that animate scholarly discussion, while using specific noteworthy texts from their list (*but not all texts on the list*) as examples.

The review also must accomplish the following:

- consider the historical context of major issues, debates, and trends that factor into the emergence of the field
- offer a historical overview of scholarship in the field that connects the present to the past
- note recent trends and emergent lines of inquiry
- propose questions about (develop critiques of, and/or identify gaps in) the field and how they might be pursued in future study (but not actually proposing or referencing a dissertation project)

For example, for a literary period, the student might include an overview of primary formal and thematic elements, of the relationship between literary and social/historical developments, of prominent movements, (etc.), as well as of recent critical debates and topics.

For a genre list, the Review of Literature might include major theories of its constitution and significance, while outlining the evolution of these theories over time.

For a Rhetoric and Composition list, the review would give an overview of major historical developments, research, theories, methods, debates, and trends of scholarship in the field.

For an English Language Studies (ELS) list, the review would give an overview of the subfields that make up ELS, the various methodological approaches to language study, the type of sources used,



and major aims and goals of ELS. The review also usually involves a focus on one subfield of particular interest to the student (such as stylistics, sociolinguistics, or World/Postcolonial Englishes).

Students are encouraged to divide reviews into smaller sections that enhance clarity and organization. Students are not expected to interact with every text on their lists.

The review of literature might be used to prepare students for identifying the most important texts in the field, along with why those texts are important to the field, for the oral exam. It is recommended for students to have completed reading the bulk of (if not all) texts on their lists before writing the ROL.

The Reviews of Literature will not be produced in an exam context, but in the manner of papers that are researched and developed in consultation with all advisors/committee members, **with final drafts being distributed within a reasonable time for all members to review and approve in advance of the 3-week deadline.** While the Review of Literature generally is not the focus of the oral examination, it is frequently used as a point of departure for questions and discussion during the oral examination.

## Doctoral Exam Committee

Exam committees typically consist of 4 faculty members from the department—one of whom serves as the Committee Chair—plus a Graduate Studies Representative. University policy dictates the composition of exam committees. Students may petition for an exception for several committee member situations, with the exception of [the Graduate Studies Representative](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

## Remote participation of committee members via technology

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

A majority of committee members must be physically present for an examination to commence; for doctoral oral examinations this requirement is 3 of the 5 members, for master's oral examinations the requirement is 2 of the 3 members. In addition, it is required that the student being examined, the chair of the committee, and the Graduate Studies Representative all be physically present at the examination or defense. Mediated attendance by the student, chair and Grad Studies Rep is prohibited.

## Doctoral Exam Timeline

The recommended time between completion of coursework and the doctoral examination is two semesters.

Final exam lists need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 12 weeks prior to the prospective exam date. This includes summers/summer semesters. The lists should then be submitted to the Graduate Secretary. Reviews of Literature need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 3 weeks prior to the exam date. Failure to meet this deadline will result in rescheduling the exam. No further changes to lists or Reviews of Literature will be allowed after official approval. The three-week deadline is the faculty deadline--the last date for them to confirm receipt of the ROLs and confer approval--not necessarily the student deadline for submitting the documents to the faculty. Please keep that timing in mind and allow your committee adequate time to review the materials and provide feedback.

Students taking the Doctoral Exam are allowed to bring their text lists, the approved Reviews of Literature, scratch paper, a writing utensil, and notes/writing for an approximately 5-minute introductory statement to the exam. (This statement does not need to lay out ideas or any aspect of the dissertation project.)

Each portion of the oral examination must be deemed passing before the student can proceed to the Review of the Dissertation Proposal. If a majority of the committee judges that the student has not answered adequately on one of the three areas of the exam, the student must repeat that portion in a separate oral exam of one hour, to be taken as expeditiously as possible. **Failure in two areas constitutes failure of the exam and requires a retake of the whole.** The doctoral examining committee will render a judgment of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory on the entire examination. A student who fails the exam twice may, upon successful petition to the Graduate Committee, take it a third and final time.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the exam. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## Best Practices for Doctoral Exam

### Purposes of the doctoral oral examination:

1. To establish goals, tone, and direction for the pursuit of the Ph.D. in English for the Department and for individual programs of study;
2. To make clear the kinds of knowledge and skills that, in the opinion of the Department, all well-prepared holders of the degree should have attained;
3. To provide a means for the Department to assess each candidate's control of such knowledge and skills in order to certify that the candidate is prepared to write a significant dissertation and enter the profession; and
4. To enable the Department to recommend to the candidate areas of strength or weakness that should be addressed.

## Advising

In consultation with the Graduate Director, a student will ask a member of the Department's graduate faculty (preferably their advisor) to be the chairperson of the examining committee. The choice of examination committee chair is very important, for that person's role is to assist the candidate in designing the examination structure, preparing the Review of Literature (see below), negotiating reading lists and clarifying their purposes, and generally following procedures here outlined. The other three English Department members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair. (At some point an additional examiner from outside the Department, who serves as the Graduate School representative, will be invited to join the committee). Any unresolved problems in negotiation between a candidate and their committee should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director, who may choose to involve the Graduate Committee. A student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the examining committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.

## Reading Lists

Copies of some approved reading lists and Reviews of Literature are available from the Graduate Secretary and can be found on the U: drive if you are using a computer on campus. Despite the goal of fairness and equity, some unavoidable unevenness and disparity will appear in the length of these lists. It remains, however, the responsibility of the examining committee, and especially the student's chair, to aim toward consonance with the most rigorous standards and expectations and to insure that areas of study are not unduly narrow.

To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate secretary on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists and reviews of literature. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

## Criteria for Reading Lists

Comprehension of a literary period (e.g., British literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; Romanticism; US literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Modernism) entails sufficient intellectual grasp of both the important primary works of and secondary works on the period or movement to indicate a student's ability to teach the period or movement and undertake respectable scholarship on it.

Comprehension of an author or group of related authors (e.g., Donne, the Brontës, the Bloomsbury Group, the Black Mountain Poets) entails knowledge, both primary and secondary, of a figure or figures whose writing has generated a significant body of interrelated biographical, historical, and critical scholarship.

Comprehension of one of several genres (the short story, the lyric poem, the epistolary novel). To demonstrate comprehension of a genre, a student should possess sufficient depth and breadth of knowledge, both primary and secondary, of the genre to explain its formal characteristics and account for its historical development.

Comprehension of criticism and literary theory entails a grasp of fundamental conceptual problems inherent in a major school of literary study (e.g., historicist, psychoanalytic, feminist, poststructuralist, etc.). To demonstrate comprehension of that school of criticism and literary theory, a student should be able to discuss changes in its conventions and standards of interpretation and evaluation of literature from its beginning to the present. Students will be expected to possess sufficient depth and breadth of theoretical knowledge to bring appropriate texts and issues to bear on questions of literary study.

Comprehension of composition theory entails an intellectual grasp of fundamental concepts, issues, and theories pertaining to the study of writing. To demonstrate comprehension of composition theory, students should be able to discuss traditional and current issues from a variety of perspectives, as well as the field's historical development from classical rhetoric to the present.

Comprehension of the broad field of English language studies entails a grasp of the field's theoretical concepts and current issues, as well as a familiarity with significant works within given subareas. Such subareas will normally involve formal structures (syntax, etc.) and history of the English language, along with other subareas such as social linguistics, discourse analysis, lexicography, etc. Areas of emphasis and specific sets of topics will be arranged through consultation with relevant faculty.

## **Post-Exam Enrollment**

Ph.D. candidates must be continuously enrolled in Dissertation hours each Fall and Spring semester from the time they pass the doctoral examination until successful completion of the final oral examination (defense of dissertation).

- Students enroll for a minimum of 6 hours each Fall and Spring semester until the total of post-doctoral exam Dissertation hours is 18. One hour each semester must be ENGL 999. In order to more quickly reach the 18-hour minimum, and to be sooner eligible for GRAships, it is highly recommended that students enroll in 9 hours of Dissertation in the Spring and Fall semesters.
- Once a student has accumulated 18 post-doctoral exam hours, each subsequent enrollment will be for a number of hours agreed upon as appropriate between the student and their advisor, the minimal enrollment each semester being 1 hour of ENGL 999.
- A student must be enrolled in at least one hour of credit at KU during the semester they graduate. Although doctoral students must be enrolled in ENGL 999 while working on their dissertations, per current CLAS regulations, there is no absolute minimum number of ENGL 999 hours required for graduation.
- Students who live and work outside the Lawrence area may, under current University regulations, have their fees assessed at the Field Work rate, which is somewhat lower than the on-campus rate. Students must petition the College Office of Graduate Affairs before campus fees will be waived.

Please also refer to [the COGA policy on post-exam enrollment](#) or the [Graduate School's policy](#).

## Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP)

As soon as possible following successful completion of the doctoral exam, the candidate should establish their three-person core dissertation committee, and then expeditiously proceed to the preparation of a dissertation proposal. **Within the semester following completion of the doctoral exam**, the student will present to their core dissertation committee a written narrative of approximately **10-15 pages**, not including bibliography, of the dissertation proposal. Copies of this proposal must be submitted to the members of the dissertation committee no later than **three weeks prior** to the scheduled examination date.

In the proposal, students will be expected to define: the guiding question or set of questions; a basic thesis (or hypothesis); how the works to be studied or the creative writing produced relate to that (hypo)thesis; the theoretical/methodological model to be followed; the overall formal divisions of the dissertation; and how the study will be situated in the context of prior scholarship (i.e., its importance to the field). The narrative section should be followed by a bibliography demonstrating that the candidate is conversant with the basic theoretical and critical works pertinent to the study. For creative writing students, the proposal may serve as a draft of the critical introduction to the creative dissertation. Students are expected to consult with their projected dissertation committee concerning the preparation of the proposal.

The review will focus on the proposal, although it could also entail determining whether or not the candidate's knowledge of the field is adequate to begin the composition process. The examination will be graded pass/fail. If it is failed, the committee will suggest areas of weakness to be addressed by the candidate, who will rewrite the proposal and retake the review **by the end of the following semester**. If the candidate abandons the entire dissertation project for another, a new RDP will be taken. (For such a step to be taken, the change would need to be drastic, such as a move to a new field or topic. A change in thesis or the addition or subtraction of one or even several works to be examined would not necessitate a new proposal and defense.) **If the student fails to complete the Review of the Dissertation Proposal within a year of the completion of the doctoral exams, they will have fallen out of departmental good standing.** For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

After passing the Review of the Dissertation Proposal, the student should forward one signed copy of the proposal to the Graduate Secretary. The RDP may last no longer than 90 minutes.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the review. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## The Doctoral Dissertation Overview

The Graduate Catalog states that the doctoral candidate "must present a dissertation showing the planning, conduct and results of original research, and scholarly creativity."

## Committee

The dissertation committee will consist of at least five members—three “core” English faculty members, a fourth faculty member (usually from English), and one faculty member from a different department who serves as the Graduate Studies representative. The committee may include (with the Graduate Director’s approval) members from other departments and, with the approval of the University’s Graduate Council, members from outside the University. If a student wants to have a committee member from outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and the Office of Graduate Studies. Requests for defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The candidate’s preferences as to the membership of the dissertation committee will be carefully considered; the final decision, however, rests with the Department and with the Office of Graduate Studies. All dissertation committees must get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies before scheduling the final oral exam (defense). Furthermore, any changes in the make-up of the dissertation committee from the Review of the Dissertation Proposal committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once the dissertation proposal has passed and the writing of the dissertation begins, membership of the dissertation committee should remain constant. However, under extraordinary circumstances, a student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the dissertation committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.

If a student does not make progress during the dissertation-writing stage, and accumulates more than one “Limited Progress” and/or “No Progress” grade on their transcript, they will fall out of good standing in the department. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see “Falling Out of Good Standing,” in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

## Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)

When the dissertation has been tentatively accepted by the dissertation committee (not including the Graduate Studies Representative), the final oral examination will be held, on the recommendation of the Department.

Although the dissertation committee is responsible for certification of the candidate, any member of the graduate faculty may be present at the examination and participate in the questioning, and one examiner—the Graduate Studies Representative—must be from outside the Department. The Graduate Secretary can help students locate an appropriate Grad Studies Rep. The examination normally lasts no more than two hours. It is the obligation of the candidate to advise the Graduate Director that they plan to take the oral examination; this must be done at least one month before the date proposed for the examination.

***At least three calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the dissertation to all the committee members (including the GSR) and inform the Graduate Secretary. Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate***

**rescheduling the defense.** The final oral examination for the Ph.D. in English is, essentially, a defense of the dissertation. When it is passed, the dissertation itself is graded by the dissertation director, in consultation with the student's committee; the student's performance in the final examination (defense) is graded by the entire five-person committee.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student defenses but not others.

## **Rubric for an Honors dissertation in Literature**

These sets of attributes are adapted from the Graduate Learner Outcomes that are a part of our Assessment portfolio. "Honors" should only be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the following categories:

1. Introduction/Statement of the Problem/Focus/Thesis is significant and innovative; the introduction clearly places the problem/focus/thesis in context.
2. The doctoral candidate demonstrates a full and up-to-date grounding in existing literature; the writer also engages in an extensive critique of the literature, not just a summary of it.
3. The doctoral candidate thoroughly understands methodology/approach/theory. Their application of methodology/approach/theory is innovative and convincing.
4. Summary of materials under examination is clear, concise, and insightful.
5. Detailed discussion of the implications of the research and future directions for research.
6. The dissertation demonstrates original and sophisticated analysis. Novel, important conclusions are drawn, and the results are thoroughly contextualized.

After much discussion about whether the "honors" designation assigned after the dissertation defense should be for the written product only, for the defense/discussion only, for both together, weighted equally, or eradicated altogether, the department voted to accept the Graduate Committee recommendation that "honors" only apply to the written dissertation. "Honors" will be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the categories on the dissertation rubric

## **Best Practices for the Doctoral Dissertation**

Normally, the dissertation will present the results of the writer's own research, carried on under the direction of the dissertation committee. This means that the candidate should be in regular contact with all members of the committee during the dissertation research and writing process, providing multiple drafts of chapters, or sections of chapters, according to the arrangements made between the student and each faculty member. Though accepted primarily for its scholarly merit rather than for its rhetorical qualities, the dissertation must be stylistically competent. The Department has accepted the MLA Handbook as the authority in matters of style. The writer may wish to consult also *the Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Dissertations, Theses, and Term Papers*.



Naturally, both the student and the dissertation committee have responsibilities and obligations to each other concerning the submitting and returning of materials. The student should plan on working steadily on the dissertation; if they do so, they should expect from the dissertation committee a reasonably quick reading and assessment of material submitted.

Students preparing their dissertation should be showing chapters to their committee members as they go along, for feedback and revision suggestions. They should also meet periodically with committee members to assess their progress. Prior to scheduling a defense, the student is encouraged to ask committee members whether they feel that the student is ready to defend the dissertation. Ideally, the student should hold the defense only when they have consulted with committee members sufficiently to feel confident that they have revised the dissertation successfully to meet the expectations of all committee members.

Students should expect that they will need to revise each chapter at least once. This means that all chapters (including introduction and conclusion) are shown to committee members once, revised, then shown to committee members again in revised form to assess whether further revisions are needed, prior to the submitting of the final dissertation as a whole. It is not unusual for further revisions to be required and necessary after the second draft of a chapter; students should not therefore simply assume that a second draft is necessarily “final” and passing work.

If a substantial amount of work still needs to be completed or revised at the point that the dissertation defense is scheduled, such a defense date should be regarded as tentative, pending the successful completion, revision, and receipt of feedback on all work. Several weeks prior to the defense, students should consult closely with their dissertation director and committee members about whether the dissertation as a whole is in a final and defensible stage. A project is ready for defense when it is coherent, cohesive, well researched, engages in sophisticated analysis (in its entirety or in the critical introduction of creative dissertations), and makes a significant contribution to the field. In other words, it passes each of the categories laid out in the Dissertation Rubric.

If the dissertation has not clearly reached a final stage, the student and dissertation director are advised to reschedule the defense.

#### Prior Publication of the Doctoral Dissertation

Portions of the material written by the doctoral candidate may appear in article form before completion of the dissertation. Prior publication does not ensure the acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation committee. Final acceptance of the dissertation is subject to the approval of the dissertation committee. Previously published material by other authors included in the dissertation must be properly documented.

### **Misc. Best Practices for Literature PhD Track**

Each student beyond the Master’s degree should confer regularly with the Graduate Director regarding their progress toward the doctoral examination and the doctorate.

Doctoral students may take graduate courses outside the English Department if, in their opinion and that of the Graduate Director, acting on behalf of the Graduate Committee, those courses will be of



value to them. Their taking such courses will not, of course, absolve them of the responsibility for meeting all the normal departmental and Graduate School requirements.

Doctoral students in creative writing are strongly encouraged to take formal literature classes in addition to forms classes. Formal literature classes, by providing training in literary analysis, theory, and/or literary history, will help to prepare students for doctoral exams (and future teaching at the college level).

## Rhetoric & Composition Ph.D. Track

KU offers a two-track PhD in [Rhetoric and Composition](#). The M.A. to Ph.D. standard track offers the opportunity for advanced and concentrated research to students who hold an M.A. degree in English or a related field, from KU or elsewhere. The B.A. to Ph.D. accelerated track is a five-year intensive program for students with a B.A.

A GTA appointment includes a tuition waiver for ten semesters plus a competitive stipend. In the first year, GTA appointees teach English 101 (first year composition) and English 102 (a required reading and writing course). Graduate students eventually have the opportunity to teach an introductory course in their field, and opportunities are available for a limited number of advanced GTAs to teach in the summer.

[Doctoral Program Profile](#) (PDF)

We do not currently offer any online degrees for the graduate program.

### Course Requirements for the Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Composition (M.A. to Ph.D. Standard Track)

1. At least 24 hours of credit in appropriate formal graduate courses beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. At least 15 hours (in addition to ENGL 800 if not taken for the M.A.) of this course work must be taken from among courses offered by the Department of English at the 700-level and above. English 997 and 999 credits cannot be included among the 24 hours. Students may petition to take up to 6 hours outside the Department.
2. An introduction to the field: either ENGL 800: Methods, Theory, and Professionalism, or ENGL 780: Composition Studies (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
3. The ENGL 801/ENGL 802 pedagogy sequence (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
4. Two seminars (courses numbered 900 or above) offered by the Department of English at the University of Kansas, beyond the M.A. or M.F.A. ENGL 998 does not fulfill this requirement.
5. ENGL 999, Dissertation (at least 12 hours).

## Course Requirements for the Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Composition (B.A. to Ph.D. Accelerated Track)

1. At least 36 hours of credit in appropriate formal graduate courses beyond the B.A. At least 30 hours of this course work must be taken from among courses offered at the 700-level and above. ENGL 997 and 999 credits cannot be included among the 36 hours. Students in this specialization may take up to 12 hours outside the Department without petition, with written approval by the students' graduate advisors. Students may petition to take more hours outside the Department, with the approval of their graduate advisors, and provided they can demonstrate how the courses fit within their programs of study.
2. An introduction to the field: either ENGL 800 Introduction to Graduate Study in English or ENGL 780 Composition Studies (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
3. The ENGL 801/ENGL 802 pedagogy sequence (counts toward the 24 required credit hours).
4. At least 3 seminars (numbered 900 or above) offered by the Department of English at the University of Kansas, at least two of which should be in Rhetoric and Composition. ENGL 998 does not fulfill this requirement.
5. ENGL 999, Dissertation (at least 12 hours).

*The 5-year accelerated track program is designed for students who wish to pursue the Ph.D. degree without an intermediary M.A. degree. Students who decide not to pursue the Ph.D. after at least 30 hours of coursework may elect to stop at a Master of Arts degree by successfully passing the Department's Option II Final Oral Examination. Note that this examination requires knowledge of literature from a range of periods, for which students would need to prepare themselves.*

If the MA or MFA was completed in KU's Department of English, a doctoral student may petition the DGS to have up to 12 hours of the coursework taken in the English Department reduced toward the PhD.

## Responsible Scholarship and Research Skills (RSRS) Requirement

For Doctoral students, [the university requires completion of a course in responsible scholarship](#). For the English department, this would be ENGL 800, 780, or the equivalent). In addition, the Department requires reading knowledge of one approved foreign language: Old English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese, Greek, Latin, or Hebrew. Upon successful petition, a candidate may substitute reading knowledge of another language or research skill that is studied at the University or is demonstrably appropriate to the candidate's program of study.

Doctoral students must fulfill the requirement **before** they take their doctoral examination, or be enrolled in a reading course the same semester as the exam. Students are permitted

three attempts at passing each foreign language or research skill. Three methods of demonstrating reading knowledge for all approved languages except Old English are acceptable:

1. Presenting 16 hours, four semesters, or the equivalent of undergraduate credit, earned with an average of C or better.
2. Passing a graduate reading course at the University of Kansas or peer institution (e.g., French 100, German 100, etc.) with a grade of C or higher. In the past, some of these reading courses have been given by correspondence; check with the Division of Continuing Education for availability.
3. Passing a translation examination given by a designated member of the English Department faculty or by the appropriate foreign language department at KU. The exam is graded pass/fail and requires the student to translate as much as possible of a representative text in the foreign language in a one-hour period, using a bilingual dictionary.
4. Passing a translation examination given by the appropriate foreign language department at the MA-granting institution. Successful completion must be reflected either on the MA transcript or by a letter from the degree-granting department.

To fulfill the language requirement using Old English, students must successfully complete ENGL 710 (Introduction to Old English) and ENGL 712 (Beowulf).

## Residence Requirement

A doctoral student must fulfill [the university policy residence requirement](#) before taking the doctoral exam.

## Annual Review

Post-Coursework Ph.D. students must submit, with their committee chair(s), an annual review form to the DGS and Graduate Committee.

## Doctoral Exam

### Overview

Doctoral students must take their doctoral examination within three semesters (excluding summers) of the end of the semester in which they took their final required course. If a student has an Incomplete, the timeline is not postponed until the Incomplete is resolved. For example, a student completing doctoral course work in Spring 2018 will need to schedule their doctoral exam no later than the end of Fall semester 2019. Delays may be granted by petition to the Graduate Director in highly unusual circumstances. Failure to take the exam within this time limit without an approved delay will result in the student's falling out of good standing. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

**A student may not take their doctoral exam until the university's Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement is fulfilled (ENGL 800 or equivalent and reading knowledge of one foreign language or equivalent).**

## Doctoral Exam Requirements

### Reading Lists

All students are required to submit three reading lists, based on the requirements below, to their committee for approval. The doctoral exam will be scheduled a minimum of twelve weeks after approval from the whole committee is received. To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate academic advisor on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

During the two-hour oral examination (plus an additional 15-30 minutes for a break and committee deliberation), a student will be tested on three areas:

- The literature of Rhetoric and Composition;
- Two other areas of study selected in consultation with the student's committee
  - Rhetorical history
  - A contemporary body of theory
  - English language and linguistics
  - A literary period
  - Program studies
  - Literacy studies
  - Another major area defined in consultation with the student's committee

Comprehension of the literature of Rhetoric and Composition entails knowledge, primary and/or secondary, of the history, research, theories, methods, debates, and trends of scholarship in the field. Students should be able to discuss traditional and current issues by drawing upon their knowledge of the field's emergence and development.

No title from any field list may appear on either of the other two lists. See Best Practices section for more details on these six areas. See below for a description of the Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP), which the candidate takes the semester after passing the doctoral exam.

While many students confer with the DGS as they *begin* the process of developing their lists, they are also required to submit a copy of their *final* exam list to the DGS. Most lists will be left intact, but the DGS might request that overly long lists be condensed, or extremely short lists be expanded.

### **Review of Literature (*minimum 8 double-spaced pages/area; max of 36 double-spaced pages total*)**

The purpose of the Review of Literature is to develop and demonstrate an advanced awareness of the critical landscape for each list. The student will write an overview of the defining attributes of the field, identifying two or three broad questions that animate scholarly discussion, while using specific noteworthy texts from their list (*but not all texts on the list*) as examples.

The review also must accomplish the following:

- consider the historical context of major issues, debates, and trends that factor into the emergence of the field
- offer a historical overview of scholarship in the field that connects the present to the past
- note recent trends and emergent lines of inquiry
- propose questions about (develop critiques of, and/or identify gaps in) the field and how they might be pursued in future study (but not actually proposing or referencing a dissertation project)

For example, for a Rhetoric and Composition list, the review would give an overview

of major historical developments, research, theories, methods, debates, and trends of scholarship in the field.

For an English Language Studies (ELS) list, the review would give an overview of the subfields that make up ELS, the various methodological approaches to language study, the type of sources used, and major aims and goals of ELS. The review also usually involves a focus on one subfield of particular interest to the student (such as stylistics, sociolinguistics, or World/Postcolonial Englishes).

For a literary period, the student might include an overview of primary formal and thematic elements, of the relationship between literary and social/historical developments, of prominent movements, (etc.), as well as of recent critical debates and topics.

Students are encouraged to divide reviews into smaller sections that enhance clarity and organization. Students are not expected to interact with every text on their lists.

The review of literature might be used to prepare students for identifying the most important texts in the field, along with why those texts are important to the field, for the oral exam. It is recommended for students to have completed reading the bulk of (if not all) texts on their lists before writing the ROL.

The Reviews of Literature will not be produced in an exam context, but in the manner of papers that are researched and developed in consultation with all advisors/committee members, **with final drafts being distributed within a reasonable time for all members to review and approve in advance of the 3-week deadline.** While the Review of Literature generally is not the focus of the oral examination, it is frequently used as a point of departure for questions and discussion during the oral examination.

## Doctoral Exam Committee

Exam committees typically consist of 4 faculty members from the department—one of whom serves as the Committee Chair—plus a Graduate Studies Representative. University policy dictates the composition of exam committees. Students may petition for an exception for several committee member situations, with the exception of [the Graduate Studies Representative](#).

If a student wants to have as a committee member a person outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and Graduate Studies. Requests for exam/defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

### Remote participation of committee members via technology

Students with committee members who plan to attend the defense via remote technology must be aware of [college policy on teleconferencing/remote participation of committee members](#).

A majority of committee members must be physically present for an examination to commence; for doctoral oral examinations this requirement is 3 of the 5 members, for master's oral examinations the requirement is 2 of the 3 members. In addition, it is required that the student being examined, the chair of the committee, and the Graduate Studies Representative all be physically present at the examination or defense. Mediated attendance by the student, chair and Grad Studies Rep is prohibited.

## Doctoral Exam Timeline

The recommended time between completion of coursework and the doctoral examination is two semesters.

Final exam lists need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 12 weeks prior to the prospective exam date. This includes summers/summer semesters. The lists should then be submitted to the Graduate Secretary. Reviews of Literature need to be approved and signed by the committee at least 3 weeks prior to the exam date. Failure to meet this deadline will result in rescheduling the exam. No further changes to lists or Reviews of Literature will be allowed after official approval. The three-week deadline is the faculty deadline--the last date for them to confirm receipt of the ROLs and confer approval--not necessarily the student deadline for submitting the documents to the faculty. Please keep that timing in mind and allow your committee adequate time to review the materials and provide feedback.

Students taking the Doctoral Exam are allowed to bring their text lists, the approved Reviews of Literature, scratch paper, a writing utensil, and notes/writing for an approximately 5-minute introductory statement to the exam. (This statement does not need to lay out ideas or any aspect of the dissertation project.)

Each portion of the oral examination must be deemed passing before the student can proceed to the Review of the Dissertation Proposal. If a majority of the committee judges that the student has not answered adequately on one of the three areas of the exam, the student must repeat that portion in a separate oral exam of one hour, to be taken as expeditiously as possible. **Failure in two areas constitutes failure of the exam and requires a retake of the whole.** The doctoral examining committee will render a judgment of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory on the entire examination. A student who fails the exam twice may, upon successful petition to the Graduate Committee, take it a third and final time.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the exam. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## Best Practices for Doctoral Exam

### Purposes of the doctoral oral examination:

1. To establish goals, tone, and direction for the pursuit of the Ph.D. in English for the Department and for individual programs of study;
2. To make clear the kinds of knowledge and skills that, in the opinion of the Department, all well-prepared holders of the degree should have attained;
3. To provide a means for the Department to assess each candidate's control of such knowledge and skills in order to certify that the candidate is prepared to write a significant dissertation and enter the profession; and
4. To enable the Department to recommend to the candidate areas of strength or weakness that should be addressed.

### Advising

In consultation with the Graduate Director, a student will ask a member of the Department's graduate faculty (preferably their advisor) to be the chairperson of the examining committee. The choice of examination committee chair is very important, for that person's role is to assist the candidate in designing the examination structure, preparing the Review of Literature (see below), negotiating reading lists and clarifying their purposes, and generally following procedures here outlined. The other three English Department members of the committee will be chosen in consultation with the committee chair. (At some point an additional examiner from outside the Department, who serves as the Graduate School representative, will be invited to join the committee). Any unresolved problems in negotiation between a candidate and their committee should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Director, who may choose to involve the Graduate Committee. A student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the examining committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.



## Reading Lists

Copies of some approved reading lists and Reviews of Literature are available from the Graduate Secretary and can be found on the U: drive if you are using a computer on campus. Despite the goal of fairness and equity, some unavoidable unevenness and disparity will appear in the length of these lists. It remains, however, the responsibility of the examining committee, and especially the student's chair, to aim toward consonance with the most rigorous standards and expectations and to insure that areas of study are not unduly narrow.

To facilitate quick committee approval, students may copy the graduate secretary on the email to the committee that contains the final version of the lists and reviews of literature. Committee members may then respond to the email in lieu of signing a printed copy.

### Criteria for Reading Lists

As an interdisciplinary field, study in Rhetoric and Composition might involve work in other departments, programs, or schools as well as English, including, for example, Communication Studies, Linguistics, Education, Psychology, American Studies, Women's Studies, or History.

Comprehension of modern composition studies entails knowledge, primary and/or secondary, of the history, research, theories, methods, debates, and trends of scholarship in the field. Students should be able to discuss traditional and current issues by drawing upon their knowledge of the field's emergence and development.

Comprehension of rhetorical history entails knowledge of major themes, concepts, issues, figures and events in the field, with a demonstrated awareness of their relevance to modern composition studies.

Comprehension of one of several theories that bears demonstrable relevance to composition studies: genre, discourse, cultural, feminist, literary, critical, dialogic, pedagogical, theories of composing, etc. In consultation with appropriate faculty, students will choose a theoretical emphasis and will be expected to discuss the significance of their chosen theories for composition studies.

Comprehension of English language and linguistics entails an overall grasp of the field's theoretical concepts, research, and current issues, as well as a familiarity with significant works within given sub areas (the specific topics of which will be arranged through consultation with appropriate faculty).

Comprehension of one of the following literary emphases: period (e.g. nineteenth-century British), movement (e.g. Romanticism), genre (e.g. fiction), author (e.g. Chaucer, Donne), author grouping (e.g. the Beats, the Bloomsbury Group), or specialty (e.g. Caribbean literatures, Native American literatures). In consultation with an appropriate faculty



member, students will choose a specific emphasis and be able to demonstrate knowledge of both primary and secondary works relevant to that selection.

Comprehension of the historical, social, and political implications of literacy, especially as these relate to a broad understanding of written literacy. Students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of methods and developments in recent literacy scholarship, and should be able to discuss the significance of such research for composition studies.

Comprehension of one of several institutional programs related to university writing instruction: writing program administration, writing centers, writing across the curriculum, service learning, English as a second language. In consultation with appropriate faculty, students will choose a single program focus and be expected to discuss the significance of its published literature for composition studies.

Doctoral students may take graduate courses outside the English Department if, in their opinion and that of the Graduate Director, acting on behalf of the Graduate Committee, those courses will be of value to them. Their taking such courses will not, of course, absolve them of the responsibility for meeting all the normal departmental and Graduate School requirements.

## **Post-Exam Enrollment**

Ph.D. candidates must be continuously enrolled in Dissertation hours each Fall and Spring semester from the time they pass the doctoral examination until successful completion of the final oral examination (defense of dissertation).

- Students enroll for a minimum of 6 hours each Fall and Spring semester until the total of post-doctoral exam Dissertation hours is 18. One hour each semester must be ENGL 999. In order to more quickly reach the 18-hour minimum, and to be sooner eligible for GRAships, it is highly recommended that students enroll in 9 hours of Dissertation in the Spring and Fall semesters.
- Once a student has accumulated 18 post-doctoral exam hours, each subsequent enrollment will be for a number of hours agreed upon as appropriate between the student and their advisor, the minimal enrollment each semester being 1 hour of ENGL 999.
- A student must be enrolled in at least one hour of credit at KU during the semester they graduate. Although doctoral students must be enrolled in ENGL 999 while working on their dissertations, per current CLAS regulations, there is no absolute minimum number of ENGL 999 hours required for graduation.
- Students who live and work outside the Lawrence area may, under current University regulations, have their fees assessed at the Field Work rate, which is somewhat lower than the on-campus rate. Students must petition the College Office of Graduate Affairs before campus fees will be waived.

Please also refer to [the COGA policy on post-exam enrollment](#) or the [Graduate School's policy](#).

## Review of the Dissertation Proposal (RDP)

As soon as possible following successful completion of the doctoral exam, the candidate should establish their three-person core dissertation committee, and then expeditiously proceed to the preparation of a dissertation proposal. **Within the semester following completion of the doctoral exam**, the student will present to their core dissertation committee a written narrative of approximately **10-15 pages**, not including bibliography, of the dissertation proposal. Copies of this proposal must be submitted to the members of the dissertation committee no later than **three weeks prior** to the scheduled examination date.

In the proposal, students will be expected to define: the guiding question or set of questions; a basic thesis (or hypothesis); how the works to be studied or the creative writing produced relate to that (hypo)thesis; the theoretical/methodological model to be followed; the overall formal divisions of the dissertation; and how the study will be situated in the context of prior scholarship (i.e., its importance to the field). The narrative section should be followed by a bibliography demonstrating that the candidate is conversant with the basic theoretical and critical works pertinent to the study. For creative writing students, the proposal may serve as a draft of the critical introduction to the creative dissertation. Students are expected to consult with their projected dissertation committee concerning the preparation of the proposal.

The review will focus on the proposal, although it could also entail determining whether or not the candidate's knowledge of the field is adequate to begin the composition process. The examination will be graded pass/fail. If it is failed, the committee will suggest areas of weakness to be addressed by the candidate, who will rewrite the proposal and retake the review **by the end of the following semester**. If the candidate abandons the entire dissertation project for another, a new RDP will be taken. (For such a step to be taken, the change would need to be drastic, such as a move to a new field or topic. A change in thesis or the addition or subtraction of one or even several works to be examined would not necessitate a new proposal and defense.) **If the student fails to complete the Review of the Dissertation Proposal within a year of the completion of the doctoral exams, they will have fallen out of departmental good standing.** For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see "Falling Out of Good Standing," in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

After passing the Review of the Dissertation Proposal, the student should forward one signed copy of the proposal to the Graduate Secretary. The RDP may last no longer than 90 minutes.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the review. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student exams but not others.

## The Doctoral Dissertation

## Overview

The Graduate Catalog states that the doctoral candidate “must present a dissertation showing the planning, conduct and results of original research, and scholarly creativity.”

## Committee

The dissertation committee will consist of at least five members—three “core” English faculty members, a fourth faculty member (usually from English), and one faculty member from a different department who serves as the Graduate Studies representative. The committee may include (with the Graduate Director’s approval) members from other departments and, with the approval of the University’s Graduate Council, members from outside the University. If a student wants to have a committee member from outside the university, or a person who is not in a full-time tenure-track professorship at KU, the student must contact the Graduate Secretary as early as possible. Applications for special graduate faculty status must be reviewed by the College and the Office of Graduate Studies. Requests for defense approval will not be approved unless all committee members currently hold either regular or special graduate faculty status.

The candidate’s preferences as to the membership of the dissertation committee will be carefully considered; the final decision, however, rests with the Department and with the Office of Graduate Studies. All dissertation committees must get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies before scheduling the final oral exam (defense). Furthermore, any changes in the make-up of the dissertation committee from the Review of the Dissertation Proposal committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once the dissertation proposal has passed and the writing of the dissertation begins, membership of the dissertation committee should remain constant. However, under extraordinary circumstances, a student may request a substitution in, or a faculty member may ask to be dismissed from, the membership of the dissertation committee. Such requests must be approved, in writing, by the faculty member leaving the committee and by the Graduate Director.

If a student does not make progress during the dissertation-writing stage, and accumulates more than one “Limited Progress” and/or “No Progress” grade on their transcript, they will fall out of good standing in the department. For details on the consequences of falling out of good standing, see “Falling Out of Good Standing,” in General Department Policies and Best Practices.

## Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense)

When the dissertation has been tentatively accepted by the dissertation committee (not including the Graduate Studies Representative), the final oral examination will be held, on the recommendation of the Department.

Although the dissertation committee is responsible for certification of the candidate, any member of the graduate faculty may be present at the examination and participate in the questioning, and one examiner—the Graduate Studies Representative—must be from outside

the Department. The Graduate Secretary can help students locate an appropriate Grad Studies Rep. The examination normally lasts no more than two hours. It is the obligation of the candidate to advise the Graduate Director that they plan to take the oral examination; this must be done at least one month before the date proposed for the examination.

***At least three calendar weeks prior to the defense date, the student will submit the final draft of the dissertation to all the committee members (including the GSR) and inform the Graduate Secretary. Failure to meet this deadline will necessitate rescheduling the defense.*** The final oral examination for the Ph.D. in English is, essentially, a defense of the dissertation. When it is passed, the dissertation itself is graded by the dissertation director, in consultation with the student's committee; the student's performance in the final examination (defense) is graded by the entire five-person committee.

Students cannot bring snacks, drinks, treats, or gifts for committee members to the defense. Professors should avoid the appearance of favoritism that may occur if they bring treats to some student defenses but not others.

## **Rubric for an Honors dissertation in Literature**

These sets of attributes are adapted from the Graduate Learner Outcomes that are a part of our Assessment portfolio. "Honors" should only be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the following categories:

1. Introduction/Statement of the Problem/Focus/Thesis is significant and innovative; the introduction clearly places the problem/focus/thesis in context.
2. The doctoral candidate demonstrates a full and up-to-date grounding in existing literature; the writer also engages in an extensive critique of the literature, not just a summary of it.
3. The doctoral candidate thoroughly understands methodology/approach/theory. Their application of methodology/approach/theory is innovative and convincing.
4. Summary of materials under examination is clear, concise, and insightful.
5. Detailed discussion of the implications of the research and future directions for research.
6. The dissertation demonstrates original and sophisticated analysis. Novel, important conclusions are drawn, and the results are thoroughly contextualized.

After much discussion about whether the "honors" designation assigned after the dissertation defense should be for the written product only, for the defense/discussion only, for both together, weighted equally, or eradicated altogether, the department voted to accept the Graduate Committee recommendation that "honors" only apply to the written dissertation. "Honors" will be given to dissertations that are rated "Outstanding" in all or most of the categories on the dissertation rubric

## Best Practices for the Doctoral Dissertation

Normally, the dissertation will present the results of the writer's own research, carried on under the direction of the dissertation committee. This means that the candidate should be in regular contact with all members of the committee during the dissertation research and writing process, providing multiple drafts of chapters, or sections of chapters, according to the arrangements made between the student and each faculty member. Though accepted primarily for its scholarly merit rather than for its rhetorical qualities, the dissertation must be stylistically competent. The Department has accepted the MLA Handbook as the authority in matters of style. The writer may wish to consult also *the Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Dissertations, Theses, and Term Papers*.

Naturally, both the student and the dissertation committee have responsibilities and obligations to each other concerning the submitting and returning of materials. The student should plan on working steadily on the dissertation; if they do so, they should expect from the dissertation committee a reasonably quick reading and assessment of material submitted.

Students preparing their dissertation should be showing chapters to their committee members as they go along, for feedback and revision suggestions. They should also meet periodically with committee members to assess their progress. Prior to scheduling a defense, the student is encouraged to ask committee members whether they feel that the student is ready to defend the dissertation. Ideally, the student should hold the defense only when they have consulted with committee members sufficiently to feel confident that they have revised the dissertation successfully to meet the expectations of all committee members.

Students should expect that they will need to revise each chapter at least once. This means that all chapters (including introduction and conclusion) are shown to committee members once, revised, then shown to committee members again in revised form to assess whether further revisions are needed, prior to the submitting of the final dissertation as a whole. It is not unusual for further revisions to be required and necessary after the second draft of a chapter; students should not therefore simply assume that a second draft is necessarily "final" and passing work.

If a substantial amount of work still needs to be completed or revised at the point that the dissertation defense is scheduled, such a defense date should be regarded as tentative, pending the successful completion, revision, and receipt of feedback on all work. Several weeks prior to the defense, students should consult closely with their dissertation director and committee members about whether the dissertation as a whole is in a final and defensible stage. A project is ready for defense when it is coherent, cohesive, well researched, engages in sophisticated analysis (in its entirety or in the critical introduction of creative dissertations), and makes a significant contribution to the field. In other words, it passes each of the categories laid out in the Dissertation Rubric.

If the dissertation has not clearly reached a final stage, the student and dissertation director are advised to reschedule the defense.

### Prior Publication of the Doctoral Dissertation

Portions of the material written by the doctoral candidate may appear in article form before completion of the dissertation. Prior publication does not ensure the acceptance of the dissertation by the dissertation committee. Final acceptance of the dissertation is subject to the approval of the dissertation committee. Previously published material by other authors included in the dissertation must be properly documented.

## **Misc. Best Practices for Rhetoric & Composition PhD Track**

Each student beyond the Master's degree should confer regularly with the Graduate Director regarding their progress toward the doctoral examination and the doctorate.

Doctoral students may take graduate courses outside the English Department if, in their opinion and that of the Graduate Director, acting on behalf of the Graduate Committee, those courses will be of value to them. Their taking such courses will not, of course, absolve them of the responsibility for meeting all the normal departmental and Graduate School requirements.

Doctoral students in creative writing are strongly encouraged to take formal literature classes in addition to forms classes. Formal literature classes, by providing training in literary analysis, theory, and/or literary history, will help to prepare students for doctoral exams (and future teaching at the college level).

## **Ph.D. Timeline, Standard Track**

### YEAR 1

#### FALL SEMESTER

- GTAs take 2 courses (801 + one), teach 2 courses; GRAs take 3 courses.
- Visit assigned advisor once a month to update on progress & perceptions. 1<sup>st</sup>-year advisors can assist with selecting classes for the Spring semester, solidifying and articulating a field of specialization, advice about publishing, conferences, professionalization issues, etc.

#### SPRING SEMESTER

- GTAs take 2 courses (780/800/880 + one), teach 2 courses. GTAs also take ENGL 802 for 1 credit hour. GRAs take 3 courses.
- Visit assigned advisor or DGS once during the semester; discuss best advisor choices for Year 2.

## SUMMER SEMESTER

- Enroll in Summer Institute if topic and/or methodology matches interests.
- Consider conferences suited to your field and schedule; choose a local one for attendance in Year 2 and draft an Abstract for a conference paper (preferably with ideas/materials/writing drawn from a seminar paper). Even if abstract is not accepted, you can attend the conference without the pressure of presenting.

## YEAR 2

- Attend at least one conference to familiarize yourself with procedure, network with other grad students and scholars in your field, AND/OR present a paper.

## FALL SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses.
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester.

## WINTER BREAK

- Begin revising one of your seminar papers/independent study projects/creative pieces for submission to a journal; research the journals most suited to placement of your piece.

## SPRING SEMESTER

- Take 2 courses, teach 2 courses.
- Begin thinking about fields and texts for comprehensive examinations.
- Choose an advisor to supervise you through the doctoral examination process.
- Visit assigned 1<sup>st</sup>-year advisor in person at least once during the semester (at least to formally request doctoral exam supervision OR to notify that you are changing advisors).

## SUMMER SEMESTER

- Summer teaching, if eligible.
- Continue revising paper/creative writing for submission to a journal.
- Begin reading for comprehensive exams.

## YEAR 3

- Attend one conference and present a paper. Apply for one-time funding for out-of-state travel [from Graduate Studies](#).

#### FALL SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses; take 997 (exam prep).
- Finalize comps list by end of September; begin drafting rationales.
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester.
- Circulate the draft of your article/creative piece to your advisor, other faculty in the field, and/or advanced grad students in the field for suggestions.

#### WINTER BREAK

- Revise article/creative piece with feedback from readers.

#### SPRING SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses; take 997 or 999 (dissertation hours). Enroll in 999 if you plan to take your comps this semester, even if you don't take them until the last day of classes.
- Take comps sometime between January and May.
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester.

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Summer teaching, if available.
- Submit article/creative work for publication.
- Continuous enrollment after completing doctoral exam (full policy on p. 20)
- Research deadlines for grant applications—note deadlines come early in the year.

#### YEAR 4

- Attend one conference and present a paper.

#### FALL SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Compose dissertation proposal by November.
- Schedule Review of Dissertation Proposal (RDP—formerly DPR).
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester.

#### SPRING SEMESTER



- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Apply for at least one grant or fellowship, such as a departmental-level GRAship or dissertation fellowship. (Winning a full-year, non-teaching fellowship can cut down your years-to-degree to 5 1/2, or even 5 years.)
- Conduct research for and draft at least 1 dissertation chapter.
- Visit advisor in person at least once during the semester.

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Conduct research and complete a draft of at least 1 dissertation chapter.
- Summer teaching, if available.
- Revise & resubmit journal article, if necessary.

#### YEAR 5

- Attend one conference and present a paper.

#### FALL SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Attend 1<sup>st</sup> round of job market meetings with Job Placement Advisor (JPA) to start drafting materials and thinking about the process.
- Research and complete a draft of at least 1 dissertation chapter, if teaching (1-2 chapters if not).
- Visit dissertation chair and committee members in person at least once during the semester.

#### SPRING SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Research and complete a draft of at least 1 dissertation chapter (1-2 chapters if not teaching).
- Apply for a departmental grant or fellowship, or, if already held, try applying for one from outside the department, such as those offered by KU's Hall Center for the Humanities or the Office of Graduate Studies. For [a monthly list of funding opportunities](#), visit the Graduate Studies website.
- Visit dissertation chair and committee members in person at least once during the semester.

#### SUMMER SEMESTER

- Research and complete a draft of at least 1 dissertation chapter.
- Summer teaching, if available.

## YEAR 6

### FALL SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Attend job market meetings with JPA in earnest.
- Apply for external grants, research fellowships, postdoctoral positions with fall deadlines (previous fellowship applications, your dissertation proposal, and subsequent writing should provide a frame so that much of the application can be filled out with the “cut & paste” function).
- Research and complete a draft of at least 1 dissertation chapter (1-2 if not teaching).
- Visit dissertation chair and committee members in person at least once during the semester.

### SPRING SEMESTER

- Teach 2 courses, take 999.
- Polish dissertation chapters.
- Apply for grants and fellowships with spring deadlines.
- Visit dissertation chair and committee members in person at least once during the semester.
- Defend dissertation.