

A Guide

to the

Graduate Programs

in English

at

The University

of North Texas

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Welcome to the Department of English

Welcome. We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue your graduate degree in English at UNT. You have passed through a competitive selection process to win a place here, and it is our hope that we will be able to further your career goals as you study with us. You have joined a friendly, supportive department of talented, productive scholar-teachers and graduate students, and we think that you will find ours an environment in which you can flourish. If you ever have a question about anything, feel free to make an appointment with either the graduate advisor or director, and we'll do our best to help you.

This brief guide is intended to answer the questions most frequently asked by our students. Naturally, not every situation can be covered, so please take this as a general guide; it is not a replacement for a real person answering your questions and advocating for you. Most importantly, you should not rely on the advice of other graduate students over that of your degree program administrators, so be sure to contact us when you have questions regarding your course of study.

First Steps

There are some classes that are better to have first (for example, Survey of Critical Theory or Bibliography), but in general, you should continue to explore those interests that brought you back for a graduate degree in the first place. If Faulkner, then take an American literature seminar, but do not fret if you find out you don't like working on Southern writers. Better to find out sooner than later. You are not bound to a particular author, field, or set of questions, and you're free to explore. For those

As you explore new areas of interests or delve deeper into established ones, it is always a good idea to have at hand a copy of the course requirements for your particular degree plan, which you can access easily on-line at <http://www.unt.edu/catalog/grad/engl.htm>. Fulfilling these requirements while exploring your interests or filling in gaps in your knowledge will introduce efficiency into the process and insure that you progress steadily toward the completion of your degree.

n.b. It is advantageous to have Scholarly Writing early on, but professors request that students should have at least one semester of graduate work and should have produced one article-length seminar paper before taking the class. Since one of the main purposes of the course is revising graduate-level work for presentation at a conference and/or publication in an academic journal, you will benefit most from having a graduate seminar paper to revise.

Transfer Credit – “Competencies”

With the increased mobility of students and the wide variety of online courses, summer courses, study-abroad programs, adult-education institutes staffed by real professors and the like, individuals can learn what they like when they like and how they like, it seems. For those in the upper tiers of academia, however, any degree still must ultimately reflect the values and standards of the institution's name on the diploma and the fact that you have satisfied all the requirements for that degree. This concern for substance and rigor explains why the Department of English reserves the right to determine whether or not your courses will count as “competencies” for the degree programs we administrate.

Counting as competencies graduate courses in English from accredited, MA and/or PhD granting institutions normally poses few problems, especially if you provide the graduate advisor with syllabi that clearly demonstrate the content and workload of the courses in question. Difficulties arise when, for example, the instructor of the graduate seminar does not hold a PhD, when the topic is not easily recognized as traditional in topic or scope (e.g. The English Novel), or as relevant to recent or emerging concerns in a field (e.g. eco-criticism), or as sufficiently rigorous (e.g. requiring a body of writing equivalent to a seminar paper). Under no circumstances will credit be given for graduate courses in which a student earns below a B. The maximum number of hours an MA student may transfer is 9, while the maximum for a PhD student is 24.

The Residence Requirement (PhD Students Only)

Every doctoral student must fulfill the UNT Graduate School Residence Requirement. The policy is found in the Graduate Catalog but can be summarized as follows: at some point (i.e. once) during their course of study, PhD students must maintain enrollment for **18 consecutive hours**. For English graduate students, the requirement can be most efficiently filled by taking 9 hours in consecutive semesters (fall and spring), as the number of summer offerings tend to be small and cannot be guaranteed. Should students wish to use the summer terms to fulfill the residence requirement, then they should take a minimum of 9 hours over the Summer sessions and 9 hours in the preceding spring or following fall term. The Graduate School strictly enforces the Residence Requirement.

Filing a Degree Plan

The Graduate School asks that MA and PhD candidates submit a degree plan soon after beginning their course of study, ideally during the second semester of their first year. That plan, frankly, is a mix of fact and fiction, as it will not only list courses that you will have taken during your first two semesters but will also include those you may take. It must also include members of your committee (for all PhDs and those MAs who elect to write a thesis), members which you may not have yet approached or even met. *You are not in any way bound to the elective courses listed on your initial degree plan or to the committee members that have been put forward, but filing early has real advantages for the student.* It outlines terms of the catalog under which you were admitted (should requirements change before you complete the degree), it confirms that you have met or will meet the Residence Requirement, and it insures that language coursework taken within the previous ten years will count toward satisfying the requirement and will not expire.

When you apply for graduation, we will revise the degree plan to reflect the reality of your course of study and will file any changes to your plan with the Graduate School. While we will assist in this process, the responsibility for scheduling appointments to complete the initial degree plan and to revise it later rests with the student.

The Language Requirement

- (A) Satisfying the Requirement with Coursework**
- (B) Satisfying the Requirement with the Graduate Reading & Translation Exam**
- (C) Satisfying the Requirement by Taking “French for Graduate Research”**
- (D) Satisfying the Requirement by Demonstrating Fluency in a Language not Typically Taught by the Department of Foreign Languages**

In the past, there has been a considerable amount of confusion about the language requirement. Some frequently asked questions are: “Do I have to complete it before I'm admitted?” “Does having coursework in two languages count?” “I CLEP'd out of my undergrad institution's language requirement – isn't that enough?” “What about literature in translation courses?” All of these are good questions, and this is the only place where you'll find a complete and accurate explanation of what the Department of English requires of you.

In the Graduate Catalog, you will find that there are several places where a Language Requirement is discussed. There is a general language requirement for the Graduate School, *but*, completely separate from that, there are two specific and different ones for [1] the MA programs and [2] the PhD program offered by the Department of English. You only need worry about the department's requirements; they are more rigorous than the Graduate School's and satisfy that general requirement as well.

The requirements for MA degrees state, in part:

All candidates pursuing a master's degree in the Department of English must have a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language. As evidence of such foreign language, a student may present the results of a standardized examination or have completed the sophomore year of a foreign language, or the equivalent, provided that the grade point average on all language courses is 2.75 or higher (133).

The requirements for the PhD program are nearly identical:

The student may demonstrate reading knowledge of a single foreign language in any of the following ways: (1) by showing proof of completion of 12 hours (through the sophomore level) of a single foreign language at the undergraduate level or graduate level with a minimum GPA of 3.0 via transcript(s) or (2) by passing the appropriate competency test as administered by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at UNT (137).

To satisfy the requirement with coursework, we require you to have had the four basic courses of language instruction in a single foreign language, Basic I and II, and Intermediate I and II, and have maintained a 2.75 GPA in those classes if you're an MA student, or a 3.0 if you're a doctoral student. Alternatively, to satisfy the requirement by means of a test, either the “standardized examination” in the MA requirements or the “competency test” in the PhD, you must receive a grade of Pass on the “Graduate Reading and Translation Exam” administered by the UNT Department of Foreign Languages (see below). Below we will address each path to satisfying the language requirement in turn. If you are a foreign student from a non-Anglophone country, you

also need to pursue a different course (Option D) with the help of the Department of Foreign Languages, but it isn't onerous.

(A) Satisfying the Requirement with Coursework

Here are a few answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about satisfying the language requirement through coursework.

1. If you have either [a] not enough credits in a single foreign language (fewer than 12 hours) or [b] a low GPA in the four language classes (lower than 2.75 for MAs, 3.0 for PhDs), the following advice applies to you:

You may make up the missing and/or grade-deficient coursework by taking classes either at UNT (a difficult proposition, since undergraduates get first crack at them) or somewhere else where college-level language courses are taught. You may “replace” your deficient coursework by retaking the classes and then counting them in the overall total.

For example: let's say you have 4 courses in Spanish, and your grades are as follows: Spanish I – B; Spanish II – C; Spanish III – C; Spanish IV – B. Assuming that the first two courses are 4 credits (a common convention, since the extra credit is for “lab time”), that's a 2.5. If you take another Spanish II course and make an A, your GPA is raised to a 3.07.

Your coursework in language does not “transfer” as such to UNT; this coursework does not “count” towards your degree. The Graduate School verifies that you have done the necessary work here or elsewhere. Online courses at an accredited college are acceptable, as of this writing. Once you've completed the coursework, it is imperative that you file the transcript(s) with the Graduate School. Otherwise, the work won't count. It's also not a bad idea to make copies for your file in the English Graduate Office as well.

n.b. Coursework more than ten years old cannot be used toward the fulfillment of the language requirement. Under current practice (not written policy), the ten-year window is calculated back in time from the date when an official degree plan has been filed with the Graduate School. For example, a student who took a final language course in 1996, enrolled at UNT in 2001, but waited to file a degree plan just before graduation in 2008, will be ineligible to graduate because the ten-year window between the last course and the filing of the degree plan will have closed. The Graduate School will insist that the student take the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam to demonstrate proficiency in the foreign language. The lesson here is that should you have eligible coursework, be sure to meet with the graduate advisor to file a degree plan soon after you begin your degree program (ideally, your second semester). See “Filing a Degree Plan” above.

2. CLEP credit is good, and it counts towards the 12 hours and most likely is shown on your transcripts, somewhere; if it's not, talk to the graduate advisor, and we'll talk to the Graduate School about whether it's acceptable or not.
3. If your undergraduate minor (or major, perhaps) was in a foreign language, that's great,

and you don't need to give a second thought to the language requirement (unless, in the unlikely event, that your GPA was awful).

4. If you went to a college on the quarter system, ask the graduate advisor if your coursework satisfies the 12-hour requirement. (It does take a bit of calculation to work through it.)
5. If you had a course in translations of the literature of a foreign language, that doesn't count. Advanced courses in conversation, grammar, and the like will count.

(B) Satisfying the Requirement with the Graduate Reading & Translation Exam

If you have any kind of competency in French, German, or Spanish, we urge you give the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam a try. Currently, it is offered by the Department of Foreign Languages four times a year: October, February, June, and July. You must sign up no later than a month in advance, so consult the Foreign Language Office bulletin board (Language Building, Room 101) or contact the department for the exact deadlines (940.565.2404). The exam costs \$15 (as of this writing).

Students who have had at least one year of the foreign language in which they will test must present a transcript as proof before being allowed to register. Students who do not have sufficient coursework must take the undergraduate placement test and place into the 2040 level of the language. The placement test is offered multiple times prior to the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam, but a student may take the test only once. The 40 minute test (given in French, German, Italian, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish) consists of roughly 100 multiple choice questions, and scantron results are given when the test is completed. Once students “pass” the placement test, they are issued a “blue card” permitting them to sign up for the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam. The “blue card” must be signed by the Graduate School, where you’ll also pay the \$15 to register. All this must transpire no later than one month prior to the exam.

(n.b. should a student receive at least 12 hours of credit on the Placement Test, the Department of English will consider the language requirement to have been satisfied; such students should elect to have that credit posted on their transcripts (at a cost of \$53) and should file a copy of the results with the English Graduate Office. While the proficiency exam is offered in Italian, Japanese, and Latin, there is currently no Graduate Reading and Translation Exam offered in those languages.)

The format of the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam is as follows: you have three hours to translate at least 400 words of a 400- to 500-word passage, and you may bring a dictionary as an aid. The 400- to 500-word excerpt “will normally be general in nature and will be comparable to writings that a researcher in the candidate’s field of advanced study might reasonably have occasion to use.” (Dept. of FL, pdf on the ‘Nature of the Examination’). The Department of Foreign Languages advises that “[a]n accurate translation for research purposes must demonstrate a line by line understanding of the material in question...consistent with the ability to use the target language as a practical research tool” (ibid.)

Should you fail once or multiple times, it doesn't “count against you” and is not reported on any

transcript or externally available document concerning your work here. The results of the test are reported to the Graduate School, which will notify you. We strongly advise that you deposit a copy of the positive result in your file in the English Graduate Office.

(C) Satisfying the Requirement by Taking “French for Graduate Research”

“French for Graduate Research” is a two-course sequence consisting of French 5016 and 5026. Both are Pass/No Pass courses, and no prior knowledge of French is required for either course. Only by passing the exam at the end of French 5026 will you fulfill the language requirement, so *please be aware that French 5016 is a prerequisite for French 5026*. There is no final exam in French 5016, but there is at the end of 5026, and passing that exam (marked pass/no pass) will fulfill the language requirement. Once you pass the final exam, the Registrar enters the result into the system so that it’s part of your record. We suggest confirming that the results are reflected in your records and notifying the Graduate School of those results. It is also advisable to save any notification of a positive result and to file a copy with the English Graduate Office.

Should you take the class and fail the final exam, you will not fulfill the language requirement. You must pass the final in French 5026 to satisfy the requirement. You may take 5026 and the final exam again (and 5016 if necessary) or register for the Graduate Reading and Translation Exam (see above).

The first course, French 5016, is offered every fall and normally during 5 Week 1 of Summer. The second course, French 5026, is offered every spring and normally during 5 Week 2 of Summer. For the past several years these courses have been offered in the summer, but since summer courses are part of a different budget, there is no guarantee that they will be offered every summer.

Should the Department of Foreign Language offer equivalent courses in German or Italian, for example, these too would satisfy the requirement.

(D) Satisfying the Requirement if You Are Fluent in a Language not typically taught by the Department of Foreign Languages

In the past, we were able to mark international students as “fluent” in their native language if they were born and went to school in a non-Anglophone country. But as of 2008, the Graduate School wishes to have some proof of oral and written fluency for everyone whose native language isn't English. If you wish to claim fluency in your native language in fulfillment of the language requirement (and there is no reason why you should be dissuaded from doing so), you must get in touch with the Department of Foreign Languages and set up an interview with a language consultant chosen by them from the DFW community; this consultant then asks Foreign Languages to write a letter to the Graduate School verifying your fluency. As in other instances, we strongly suggest that you obtain a copy of this letter and deposit a copy with the Graduate Office as well.

MA Comprehensive Exam

The MA comprehensive exam assesses students’ powers of analysis, command of argumentation, and knowledge of subject matter to an extent considered essential in someone who holds a graduate degree in English. To that end, answers that summarize material, present a digest of

scholarly opinions, or lack nuanced interpretations will be deemed insufficient. Of course, essays that altogether fail to answer a question are also insufficient. Ideally, students will construct argumentative responses that take into account various critical perspectives and that offer their own complex interpretations in tightly-structured essays marked by clearly-written, error free prose. Perfection, of course, is not the goal, but polish is.

The exam consists of two essays written over the course of four hours (allotting two hours per question). Students respond to two different prompts or questions, each from a different section of the exam. There are three sections of the exam (Fiction, Poetry, and Literary Theory), and each section has two readings, for a total of six readings. Generally, though not always, there are two questions per reading. The readings for the fiction and literary theory sections are made available to students in advance of the exam, and students are encouraged to use the advance notice to explore and digest various critical responses on which they can draw during the exam.

Possible marks are Pass, Fail, and Pass with Distinction. The comprehensive examination may be taken twice, three times if the student successfully petitions the Director of Graduate Studies. Students will not be permitted to take the exam a fourth time.

As noted in the Graduate Catalog, MA candidates must first pass the Comprehensive Examination in order to register for thesis hours.

Choosing the Thesis Option or Non-Thesis Option (MA in English only)

Depending on your specific goals for obtaining your MA, you may choose whether or not to write a thesis. If you plan to apply to a PhD program in English, writing a thesis is advisable, as it demonstrates your in-depth knowledge of a subject and your ability to construct and sustain an argument over several chapters. Additionally, you will provide yourself a body of work from which to craft a writing sample, and by working closely with a committee, you will have given its members opportunities to observe your habits of close reading, thorough research, and careful composition, which they can tout in letters of recommendation. If you do not plan to attend a PhD program but wish to face the challenge of producing 60 to 80 pages of scholarly writing that not only contribute a new interpretation to literary studies but also situate it within an on-going critical conversation, then that is reason enough to pursue the thesis option. Others, however, may benefit from more range than depth, and the non-thesis option, which allows a student to take two more courses in lieu of the thesis, may prove a valuable opportunity to fill in gaps in one's knowledge or to explore a new field of inquiry.

Choosing a Thesis/Dissertation Committee

Picking a thesis or dissertation committee is not very complicated, though it can be intimidating for some. This is natural; everybody feels nervous about beginning work on such a long and daunting task, and on top of that, you've got to approach busy faculty members and ask them to spend time working with you. The reality is that you really shouldn't be apprehensive about this at all. Everybody available to serve on thesis and dissertation committees is already predisposed to working with graduate students, so they expect to be asked. Working on a committee is always exciting for everyone involved, as it entails fostering the student's growth as a scholar, which is the entire reason graduate programs exist in the first place. Whatever else you feel about beginning your work, you should not be shy about approaching people to help you.

The first person you should approach is the person you want to chair your committee. Keep in mind that you will work most closely with your chair during the process. For doctoral students that means relying on a chair's guidance during the course of several years, from the comprehensive examinations through the dissertation defense. Your choice of a chair, in most all cases, will be someone you've at least had one class with and who judged your work to be exemplary, perhaps someone you've developed a good working relationship with, and definitely someone whose specialty is the field you yourself wish to specialize in. (If you're barking up the wrong tree, she or he will tell you.) When you approach your potential chair, your dissertation or thesis idea should be reasonably fleshed-out, as detailed as you can make it. Optimally, you will have a justification for your topic, outlines for each chapter, and a bibliography containing 30 or 40 items, both primary and secondary. Schedule an appointment with the faculty member, and make your pitch.

If the professor says yes, then your new chair may suggest other people to round out the three positions on the committee. Usually, the second committee member will be the same field as your chair, and the third will be outside the primary field, specializing in a complementary topic (for example, if your work contains a strong theoretical component, say post-colonial theory, you can select somebody who does that as your third reader). Selecting the other two members of your committee will entail repeating what you've just done. Keep in mind that you will work most closely with your chair, and you may need to replace your second and third readers if your topic changes. Don't be intimidated about replacing people on your committee; the professors involved will understand.

Most likely, your second and third readers won't be involved with the thesis until your chair has approved individual chapters. While second readers often comment on individual chapters, it is customary that the third reader doesn't see the work until it's completed. This doesn't mean that you can't ask your second and third readers for advice or comments, but throughout the dissertation or thesis, understand you'll be sending chapter drafts to your director, whose advice you'll primarily follow.

For doctoral students, the selection of a committee should not be taken lightly. You should keep in mind the stakes of your choice, taking into consideration the ability and willingness of individual faculty members to further your long-term goals. Knowledge of a faculty member's record of publication, reputation for attentiveness, rigor, and concern, and the number of completed dissertations chaired may aid in making a decision. Also, should your topic morph into a different one in the course of your research, or should faculty with specialties closer to your own be hired before you begin to write your dissertation, it is possible to replace committee members, though doing so requires the approval of the committee chair and Director of Graduate Studies.

Once you have settled on a committee, please notify the English Graduate Office so that your degree plan can be updated.

Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Students Writing Theses or Dissertations

The Continuous Enrollment Requirement should not be overlooked, since failing to maintain it

will cost time and money.

The policy is as follows: “Continuous enrollment applies to the student admitted to a master’s or doctoral degree program that requires completion of a thesis or dissertation. Once enrollment in thesis or dissertation has begun, the student must continuously enroll in a minimum of 3 semester hours of thesis (5950) or dissertation (6950) during each long term/semester until the thesis or dissertation has been completed, defended and submitted to the graduate dean for acceptance. Thesis or dissertation registration in at least one summer session/term is required if the student is using university facilities and/or faculty time during that summer session/term or to graduate in August. Doctoral students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation subsequent to passing the qualifying examination for admission to candidacy”

(<http://www.unt.edu/catalog/grad/academics.htm>).

Registering for Thesis or Dissertation Hours

Students may not register themselves for thesis or dissertation hours but must be enrolled by a staff member in the Graduate English Office. That person will need to know how many thesis or dissertation hours you will take in a given semester and the name of your major professor. Enrollment begins on the first day of early registration.

PhD Comprehensive Exams

PhD students must pass a set of written and oral comprehensive exams administered by your committee before you can register for dissertation hours. You may take directed research hours while you study for your exams, but try to schedule your exams at the end of the first long semester after you finish your coursework. Different chairs and committee members will choose varying levels of involvement in the student’s preparation, but it is wise to consult frequently with all members of the committee when preparing for exams and to request periodic meetings with each member of the committee in the final month or two of preparation. Not to consult with the chair and members between the approval of the lists and the exams is unwise.

Reading Lists

In consultation with your chair, you will designate a primary and secondary area of specialty and will work out lists of texts, primary and secondary, over which you will be examined. The secondary area is usually related to the primary area; Renaissance scholars, for example, may designate 17th century or late medieval their secondary area, or they might choose a more theoretical field – gender and sexuality, post-colonial studies, textual criticism, eco-criticism, and the like. The primary purpose of the lists and thus the exams is to ensure mastery of a particular field, broadly conceived (e.g. American or medieval English literature). Keep in mind that a doctoral dissertation demonstrates mastery of a *subfield*. So, while your lists may include primary and secondary works central to your topic, the written and oral exams are intended to be comprehensive. Your lists must, therefore, range widely, include a variety of critical perspectives, and be of sufficient intellectual magnitude.

Written Comprehensive Examination

The written comprehensive exam precedes the oral examination and is spread over two days. The first day involves a four-hour exam covering only your primary field. The second day involves a four-hour exam covering your secondary field. Individual committees determine the number of

essays required in each exam, as well as the number of prompts or questions a student has to choose from, if any. Notes are not permitted in the exam, but access to books is at the discretion of the committee (to this end, the exam may be taken in the library—allowing full use of books, but without the benefit of notes or Internet sources). You may use the writing implement or word processor of your choice, provided your exam is legible and easily distributed to committee-members. The distribution of questions and the collection of exam materials may be done through email or in hard copy, and can be coordinated through the English Graduate Office.

The emphasis of the written exam is on the student's ability to display her analytical and historical knowledge of a range of texts while employing her understanding of literary criticism, theory, or mode of exegesis that elucidate works from the reading list(s). The essays must demonstrate expert knowledge of the primary area and general comprehensive knowledge of the secondary area. All members of the dissertation committee will read the essays, marking them Pass or Fail. Should at least two members judge an essay or the essays to be failing, the Committee may permit the student to retake those section once. Such permission is at the discretion of the Committee, and should the Committee not grant it, the student will be removed from the program. Responsibility for planning, composing, scheduling, and grading the exam rests with the dissertation committee, but primary responsibility falls to the chair.

Oral Comprehensive Examination

A student must pass both sections of the written exam before taking the Oral Comprehensive Examination. In terms of scheduling, that means that sufficient time must be allowed between the written and oral exams for the committee to grade the full written exam. What counts as sufficient will vary based on the time of year and responsibilities of committee members, but ideally it should be no less than 2 days and no more than 10 days. The “Orals” provides another opportunity for students to display their critical acumen and articulateness, and this two-hour examination covers the primary and secondary areas as well as the answers submitted on the written portion of the exam. Again, **expert** knowledge of the primary area and general comprehensive knowledge of the secondary area are required.

For the exam, your committee assembles in the departmental conference room (usually) and questions you with regard to your written exam and your reading lists. Depending on the committee, the exam may take a more conversational course, with different members joining in the questioning at will, or the chair may decide to divide the time evenly between members and allow each to pursue his or her own lines of questioning. Roughly two-thirds of the time should be allotted to the primary field, with one-third devoted to the secondary field. After the questioning period is over, the candidate leaves the room while the committee discusses his or her performance, and makes a decision on whether the student passed the exams. Possible marks are Pass, Pass with Distinction, or Fail. In case of a failing grade, permission to retake the Orals will be granted at the discretion of the Committee. Should the Committee not allow a retake, the student will be removed from the program. Should the Committee allow the student to retake the Orals, the student will be told what to work on for another examination at some later date. After a Pass or Pass with Distinction, the candidate should move immediately to work on the prospectus, ideally finishing and filing it during the following term.

Advice for Students

Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with members of their committees regarding the exams, not to wheedle out of them possible questions they might ask but to share with them your own approaches to the reading and to seek their advice about avenues of analysis that they find particularly fruitful or would be interested hearing you discuss. Arriving for either the written or oral exam without working in close concert with your examiners is ill advised.

Once a student has passed both the written and oral comprehensive exams, copies of the reading lists, exam questions and responses, and the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Form (included in the Appendix or available from the English Graduate Office) must be filed in the English Graduate Office. In addition, a Qualifying Examinations Results Form must be filed with the Toulouse Graduate School and is available from the Graduate Office Coordinator. Bring both forms to the Orals and have your committee members sign them there.

Ph.D. Prospectus

You must complete a prospectus after you've passed your comprehensive exams. A prospectus is, generally, a 15- to 20-page description of the dissertation project that is also accompanied by a complete bibliography. Most prospectuses include a general description of the goals of the project, the questions underpinning it, the methodologies employed, a chapter by chapter summary, and, finally, a clear statement of its contribution to the field of study. We have several model prospectuses on file in the Graduate Office and will be happy to make copies for you.

Once the prospectus is drafted, each member of the committee must approve it. A copy of the approved prospectus and a signed Prospectus Approval Form (included in the Appendix) must be filed with the Graduate English Office.

What is a Dissertation or Thesis, and How Do I Go About Writing One?

Whether you are pursuing a degree in creative writing or literature, the thesis or dissertation is an extended work that represents serious, significant scholarship, constituting an original contribution to the body of knowledge associated with an academic discipline. Often the word “thesis” is used interchangeably with “dissertation,” but they differ significantly in scope and length. MA students in literature write theses, which typically run 60 to 80 pages. PhD students in literature write dissertations of some 200 pages, which are intended to be the first complete draft of a book-length study. Usually, in the world of literary studies, first books are (heavily edited and modified) versions of dissertations. The dissertation or thesis is invariably divided into chapters, whose lengths may roughly correspond to the parameters of a scholarly article. Three chapters for theses and four for dissertations is a typical (though not mandatory) framework, not counting the introduction, conclusion, and bibliography. These definitions, of course, don't apply to MA or PhD students in creative writing, in which students set about writing a complete work appropriate to their chosen *métier*.

Writing a dissertation or thesis is difficult. It's hard and often lonely work, and roughly 40% of English graduate students' ships founder on the rocks of ABD (All But Dissertation). Yet writing a dissertation is *supposed* to be difficult; that's why a PhD has value. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you write:

1. The only good thesis or dissertation is one that has been completed, revised, defended, and filed. Nobody expects it to be perfect or the last word on the subject. Don't think of it as your ultimate work but the first in a long career of writing and thinking about ideas you care deeply about.
2. With your chair, develop a plan, including a *realistic* timetable, for completing the project, keeping in mind the Satisfactory Progress Charts below. An MA thesis can be completed in a semester, no more than two, and a dissertation can be written, revised, and defended in two years. Submit polished drafts of individual chapters to your chair for comments while drafting the next installment.
3. Meet often with your chair, several times a term if an MA student and at least once a semester if a doctoral candidate, if not more frequently.
4. Don't let the thesis or dissertation swallow up your normal life. Maintaining a balance between things you like and those you love while you research, write, and work or teach is exactly what you'll be doing as a PhD student or assistant professor. Figuring out how to achieve a balance now will only ease the transition later.

Defending your Dissertation/Thesis

Once your committee chair has determined that your thesis or dissertation is ready to be defended, he or she will contact other members of the committee to agree upon a date and time for the defense. Once the defense date is set, the chair can notify the Graduate English Office for assistance in reserving the departmental conference room for the event. Should you or a committee member reside at some distance from Denton, the English Graduate Office can also arrange for the defense to take place via teleconference. About two weeks before the defense, you will supply all committee members with a complete copy of your thesis or dissertation, as you intend to submit it to the Graduate School. Then, on the appointed day, your committee gathers in a designated room and, typically, the chair initiates the discussion by asking you for a précis of the work before opening the floor for questions from the other committee members. Doctoral candidates may be asked to defend certain choices or readings, or to reflect on the strengths and weakness of a chosen methodology, and many doctoral defenses include a discussion of what work the candidate might consider as the dissertation is revised for publication, either as articles, book, or both. Typically, a thesis defense lasts about one hour, a dissertation defense about two. At the conclusion of the discussion, the candidate is asked to leave the room while the committee makes its decision. Once a decision has been reached, the candidate is invited back into the room and the decision is announced. If the defense has been successful, the committee signs the defense form, indicating the candidate has passed; if the defense has been unsuccessful, the committee refrains from signing the defense form, and the student is instructed regarding necessary revisions and/or further research. The chair will schedule a second defense when he or she determines the candidate is ready.

You must plan to defend your thesis or dissertation no later than the seventh week of the semester. Successfully defended theses and dissertations, and signed defense forms must then be filed with the Graduate School, normally around the eighth week of term. Check published deadlines for the submission of defended theses and dissertations, and do not schedule your

defense on the day you are to turn in your thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.

Remember to distribute copies of the appropriate Thesis/Dissertation Assessment Form (found in the Appendix) to members of the committee at the defense.

Applying to Graduate

The application deadline for graduation in a given semester is published in the Academic Calendar (in print and on the UNT website). For specific dates and guides to the process, consult the Graduate School website (at this writing located at [http://www.tsgs.unt.edu /content/graduation](http://www.tsgs.unt.edu/content/graduation)). Should you miss the first deadline, there is a second one, but should you apply then, you will incur a late fee. Should you miss the second deadline, you will not graduate until the following term.

You may pick up an application packet, with all the instructions on applying to graduate, and what you need to apply successfully, at the front desk of the Graduate School, which is located on the third floor of the Eagle Student Services Center. Included within each packet are also the instructions on submitting your defended thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.

Please note that a copy of a signed, updated degree plan must be filed with the graduation application.

Formatting and Filing the Dissertation/Thesis

As the graduation packet mentioned in the previous paragraph includes instructions on filing a defended thesis or dissertation, we advise everyone to pick up a graduation packet and familiarize yourself with the formatting of theses and dissertations before you even begin writing. You will save yourself time, and the process of filing and graduating will go more smoothly if you do.

We strongly recommend that you schedule a meeting with the graduate reader prior to beginning your final formatting.

One caveat: in spite of instructions from the Graduate School regarding specific fonts, do not format your thesis or dissertation in any sans serif font, e.g. Arial. It is true that Arial may be appropriate for digital documents intended for the Web (it is a display font, after all), but sans serif fonts are simply not to be used for any text that is meant to be read in a print medium. It is unprofessional for any humanities scholar to use sans serif fonts to format his or her work, and no journal or academic publisher will take you seriously if you do.

Job Market Preparation

The Department of English appoints a faculty member as Job Placement Officer, whose role it is to help advanced graduate students (usually those who will defend their dissertations in a given academic year) navigate a fiercely competitive job market. Guidance is offered concerning the preparation of job letters, curriculum vitae, teaching letters, and writing samples. Once a student secures an interview, the Job Placement Officer can schedule a mock interview to help the candidate prepare. The MLA Job List comes out on-line in September, applications are due (generally speaking) in October or November, and interviews occur in December. It is advisable

that students attend departmental meetings about the job market a year in advance of “going on the market” themselves.

Mailing of Dossiers

The Department of English will cover all costs of copying and mailing letters of recommendation to prospective academic employers for a period of two years after the date of the initial request. After the two year period has expired, a charge of \$10 per year will apply. Requests made without prior payment will not be fulfilled. Individual graduate students remain responsible for mailing application letters, vitas, or writing samples.

Prior to the conferral of the degree, however, the department will cover the costs of preparing and mailing materials associated with applications for external academic scholarships, fellowships, or post-doctoral positions. This coverage does not apply for MA candidates applying for admission to MFA or PhD programs.

A preferable option for many as it offers more supervision and control over the application process is to use the very affordably priced Dossier Service provided by Interfolio (<http://www.interfolio.com/>).

Satisfactory Progress Policy for Ph.D. Students in English

Periodic Evaluation

The Department of English will periodically (at least once a year prior to the fall semester) evaluate each Ph.D. student. The evaluation will be based on the student

- Maintaining a satisfactory academic record
- Achieving the Milestones for Satisfactory Progress in a timely manner.

The Director of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate Adviser, with the assistance of the Graduate Office Coordinator and/or a student's major professor may perform this evaluation and will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of any unsatisfactory progress. The Department may review a student's record at any time to make an evaluation of satisfactory progress and act accordingly.

Satisfactory Academic Record

The Department of English expects each Ph.D. student to:

- understand and demonstrate professional and collegiate behavior toward faculty, peers, and students as outlined in the UNT Code of Student Conduct (http://conduct.unt.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/code_of_conduct.pdf) and the Handbook for Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants (<http://www.hist.unt.edu/handbook/TA&TF%20Handbook.pdf>);
- meet all University expectations as presented in the Graduate Catalog and all other guidelines provided by the Graduate School and University; and
- fulfill all responsibilities of a Ph.D. student regarding coursework and degree requirements in a timely manner.
 - The department expects students entering the program with a BA to complete the dissertation in 6 years and those entering with an MA/MFA to complete the dissertation in 5 years.
 - Any extension of time beyond the limits set forth in the Satisfactory Progress Policy must be petitioned for in writing by the student no later than the second week of the long semester in which the student is expected to finish according to the Satisfactory Progress Policy. Any extension of time will be at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies in English.
 - For whatever reason, any student not completing all degree requirements by the end of the 8th academic year after the date of the first doctoral course will be removed from the graduate program in English.

Milestones for Satisfactory Progress

These milestones are meant to function as general guidelines for satisfactory progress. The progress of students not passing these milestones at a steady rate may be deemed unsatisfactory.

(A) Students who enter the PhD program with a BA

Year	What you should have completed
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First Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 consecutive hours (thereby fulfilling the Residence Requirement) • A signed degree plan filed with the Graduate Office and Graduate School
Second Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 hours of coursework • Foreign language requirement
Third Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 hours of coursework (all requirements met)
Fourth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 6 hours of directed research in the Fall semester • PhD comprehensive exams in the Fall semester • at least 6 hours of directed research in the Spring semester • Dissertation Prospectus approved in the Spring semester
Fifth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 3 dissertation hours in the Fall semester • at least 3 dissertation hours in the Spring semester <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>
Sixth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least three dissertation hours in the Fall semester • at least three dissertation hours in the Spring semester • Dissertation defense in the Spring semester • Graduation application with the Graduate School <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>

(B) Students who enter the PhD program with an MA

Year	What you should have completed
First Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 consecutive hours (thereby fulfilling the Residence Requirement) • A signed degree plan filed with the Graduate Office and Graduate School
Second Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 hours of coursework (all requirements met) • Foreign language requirement
Third Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 6 hours of directed research in the Fall semester • PhD comprehensive exams in the Fall semester • at least 6 hours of directed research in the Spring semester • Dissertation Prospectus approved in the Spring semester
Fourth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 3 dissertation hours in the Fall semester • at least 3 dissertation hours in the Spring semester <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>
Fifth Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least three dissertation hours in the Fall semester • at least three dissertation hours in the Spring semester • Dissertation defense in the Spring semester • Graduation application with the Graduate School <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>

Satisfactory Progress for Students Who are ABD

To determine satisfactory progress for students who are ABD, the student’s major professor will evaluate annually the student's progress toward completing the dissertation. The major professor will be asked to review the student's progress through the various stages of the dissertation process: the writing of the prospectus, the timely submission of dissertation chapters, and the scheduling of the dissertation defense. The major professor's evaluation provides important input into the evaluation of satisfactory progress (**Form A**).

A student found by his/her major professor, the Graduate Adviser, and/or the Director of Graduate Studies to be in non-compliance with department or university policies for Satisfactory Progress will be evaluated as unsatisfactory and will receive a Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress (**Form B**). The student must then schedule an appointment for advising with the Director of Graduate Studies (**Form C**). Failure to schedule an appointment for advising will result in another Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress. If the unsatisfactory evaluation is not the student's first, the student may also be placed on probation or removed from the Ph.D. program.

Probation

When a student receives one grade of "C" or below, two "W" grades, or two concurrent Incompletes, the student will receive a Notice of Probationary Status (**Form D**) and will be placed on probation for the remainder of the coursework phase of his/her program. Likewise two unsatisfactory evaluations from the major professor of a student who is ABD may result in a student being placed on probation. The Director of Graduate Studies will notify the student of his/her probationary status and will send copies of the notice to the student's major professor and the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies. Another copy will be placed in the student's permanent file.

After receipt of notice of probationary status, the student must schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss his/her plans for doctoral study and to complete a probationary Student Advising Form (**Form E**). Failure to schedule and keep an appointment for advising may result in another Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress. Students on probation may not withdraw from any future courses without the consent of their major professor and the graduate adviser. Unauthorized withdrawal constitutes grounds for removal from the program.

Removal from the Ph.D. Program

If a doctoral student receives a second grade of "C" or below, or a third grade of "W", or has three concurrent Incompletes, the student risks being removed from the doctoral program. Likewise, a student who fails a portion of the Qualifying Examinations and whose Committee will not permit a retake will be removed from the program. Similarly, a student failing a portion of the qualifying exams twice will be removed from the program. Additionally, any student receiving three or more reports of unsatisfactory progress may be removed from the program. Failure to maintain a Satisfactory Academic Record (enumerated above) may also constitute grounds for dismissal. The Director of Graduate Studies in English will notify the student of his/her removal from the program (**Form F**) and will send copies of the notice to the student's major professor, the department chair, and the Graduate School. The student then has one week to make a formal written response to the Director of Graduate Studies. Should the decision to remove the student from the program stand, the Director will send the student a Confirmation of Removal (**Form G**) and will copy each of the parties named above.

Appeal of Removal

A student may appeal his/her removal from the doctoral program to the Chair of the Department within thirty days of the date of the notification of removal. To begin the appeals process, the student should write a letter to the Chair of the Department that contains the following information:

- the student’s name, ID number, address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- the reasons why the student believes he/she should not be removed from the program.

Attach to the letter any documents that support the claims made in the letter.

The department Chair will then initiate the department’s part of the procedure by means of the following:

- photocopy the student’s letter of appeal and any supporting documents and forward these materials to the Director of Graduate Studies
- ask the Director to write a letter explaining the reasons for the student’s removal from the graduate program and to submit any relevant documents within 15 days of receiving the student’s materials
- review all the documents submitted by the student and the director and recommend either that the Director of Graduate Studies rescind the decision to remove the student from the program or that the decision should stand.

Only the Director of Graduate Studies has the authority to rescind the decision to remove a student from the program. In most cases, the Director follows Chair’s recommendation, but the Department of English can give no guarantee.

If a student disagrees with the recommendation of the Chair of the Department of English, he/she can appeal to the Dean of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies within 15 days of the date of the notification of the Chair’s recommendation. The Graduate Dean will review the department’s handling of the appeal to determine if there were any irregularities in the process. A student may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School only *if the appeal is based solely on alleged violations of the procedures stated here*. As noted in the Graduate Catalog, “substantive matters” may not be appealed to the graduate dean. Instructions for appealing alleged procedural violations to the dean of the Graduate School and, if necessary, for appealing the Dean’s decision to the Appeals Committee of the Graduate School, are found under “Appeal Processes” in the Graduate Catalog.

Leave of Absence

If, during any long (Fall or Spring) semester, a Ph.D. student does not enroll in any approved coursework, he/she must schedule an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the reasons for the leave. Once a leave is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, he or she will complete a Leave of Absence Approval (**Form H**) and send a copy to the Dean of the Graduate School. Leaves of absence are *not* factored into the ten-year time limitation on the completion of the doctoral degree.

Any student failing to apply for a leave of absence and not registering for courses for one calendar year will be placed on inactive status by the Registrar. The Graduate School requires inactive Ph.D. students to reapply formally to the program, and the department can give no guarantee of readmission.

Please note this caveat from the Graduate Catalog: “If the student has begun thesis or dissertation [hours], a waiver of continuous enrollment must also be requested and approved by the Graduate School.”

It is the student’s responsibility to insure that a leave of absence does not jeopardize his/her standing with the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.

Withdrawal

A student who intends to withdraw from the program should submit a letter indicating their intent to withdraw to the Director of Graduate Studies in English, who will then notify the Graduate School.

Sample Form A (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Satisfactory Progress Report**

To: Major Professor

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date:

Subject: Satisfactory Progress Report for STUDENT NAME (ID NUMBER)

Date of Ph.D. Program Entry: xxx

Date of 1st Doctoral Course: xxx

Please use this form to assist us in evaluating whether or not the student named above is making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the Ph.D. in English. In accordance with the departmental policy, each major professor is asked to review a student's progress through the various stages of the dissertation process once the student has passed the written and oral comprehensive exams: the writing of the prospectus, the timely submission of dissertation chapters, and the scheduling of the dissertation defense.

- ___ The prospectus has been submitted and approved.
- ___ The student has submitted drafts of ___chapter(s) of a total of ___ chapters planned.
- ___ The student has tentatively scheduled a dissertation defense for _____ (semester/year).
- ___ The student has not submitted work for ___ semester(s).
- ___ The student has not been in contact with me for ___ semester(s).
- ___ The student has never submitted a draft or working draft of a dissertation chapter.

Major Professor Date

Sample Form B (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress**

To: Student Name (ID Number)

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date:

Re: 1st Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress

You are receiving this notice because the Department of English has deemed your progress in the graduate program in English to be unsatisfactory. Should you receive a second Notice of Unsatisfactory Progress, you will be placed on probationary status until the Director of Graduate Studies and/or your major professor attests in an evaluation that you are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of the dissertation and final defense. A third notice of unsatisfactory progress provides grounds for removal from the program.

Within one week of the date of this notification, you must schedule an appointment for advising with the Director of Graduate Studies, at which time a Student Advising Form will be completed. Failure to schedule and keep an advising appointment will result in an evaluation of unsatisfactory progress, and, as noted above, repeated unsatisfactory evaluations are grounds for removal from the program. Please contact the Graduate English Office at 940.565.2114 to schedule an appointment. If applicable, I strongly urge you to meet with your chair in advance of this advising session in order to discuss your lack of satisfactory progress and to devise a proposed plan for completing your Ph.D. in a timely manner.

cc: Major Professor
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form C (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Student Advising Form (Unsatisfactory Progress)**

Date:

Student Name:

Student ID Number:

Student's Major Professor:

On this date an advising session was held with STUDENT NAME (ID NUMBER) concerning the difficulty he/she has encountered in the program that has resulted in him/her receiving an evaluation of Unsatisfactory Progress. The problem(s) discussed are as follows:

The student has been informed of the consequences of the problem(s) and acknowledges that further lack of satisfactory progress may result in being placed on probation or removed from the Ph.D. program.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Major Professor
 Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form E (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Student Advising Form (Probation)**

Date

Student Name

Student ID Number

On this date an advising session was held with STUDENT NAME (ID NUMBER) concerning the difficulty he/she has encountered in the program that has resulted in him/her being placed on probationary status. The problem(s) discussed are as follows:

- _____ student earned one letter grade of “C” or below
- _____ student earned two grades of “W”
- _____ student earned two concurrent grades of “Incomplete”
- _____ student earned two evaluations of unsatisfactory progress
- _____ (other).

The student has been informed of the consequences of the problem(s) and acknowledges that further lack of satisfactory progress may result in removal from the Ph.D. program.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
 Major Professor
 Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form F (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Notification of Removal**

To: Student Name (ID Number)
From: Director of Graduate Studies in English
Date of Notification:
Subject: Notice of Removal from Ph.D. Program

This memorandum is to inform you that the Department of English intends to remove you from the Ph.D. program in English for the following reason(s):

- a second grade of “C” or below
- a third grade of “W”
- three concurrent grades of “Incomplete”
- three or more evaluations of unsatisfactory progress
- two consecutive long semesters in inactive status
- a third failure on a portion of the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination
- (other).

Should you wish to take the opportunity put your issue in context, please make a formal response in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies within one week of the date of this notification. In the absence of any written communication from you within that time frame, removal from the Ph.D. program will be effective immediately. If you feel that you have justifiable grounds to appeal your removal, instructions regarding the appeals process are found in *The Guide to the Graduate Programs in English*.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Department Chair
Major Professor
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form G (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Confirmation of Removal**

To: Student Name (ID Number)

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date of Notification:

Subject: Confirmation of Removal from the Ph.D. Program in English

The Department of English “Satisfactory Progress Policy for Ph.D. Students in English” provides that “any student receiving three or more reports of unsatisfactory progress may be removed from the program.” Based on the reports of unsatisfactory progress delivered to you on DATE, DATE, and DATE, you were notified on DATE of the Department of English’s intent to remove you from the Ph.D. program. You were provided an additional period to offer a formal response in writing.

By this letter you are formally notified that you have been removed from the Graduate Program in the Department of English.

Enclosed please find a complete copy of the “Satisfactory Progress Policy for Ph.D. Students in English,” including the process of “Appeal of Removal.” Should you choose to appeal this removal, please proceed in accordance with the established process.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Department Chair
Major Professor
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form H (PhD)

**Ph.D. Program in English
Leave of Absence Approval**

To: Dean of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Director of Graduate Services/Graduate Admissions

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date:

Re: Leave of Absence Approval

STUDENT'S NAME (ID NUMBER) has been approved for a leave of absence from the Ph.D. program in English for the following semester(s) and the following reason(s):

___ The Leave of Absence Approval does not require a waiver of continuous enrollment.

___ The Leave of Absence Approval does require a waiver of continuous enrollment. This approval constitutes a request for such a waiver and is submitted to the Director of Graduate Services of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies with the full support of the Office of Graduate Studies in English and the Department of English.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Major Professor
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Satisfactory Progress Policy for M.A. Students in English

Probation

When a student receives one grade of "C" or below, two "W" grades, or two concurrent Incompletes, the student will be placed on departmental probation for one academic year (two long semesters). Should a student fail to fulfill his/her responsibilities regarding coursework and degree requirements in a timely manner, to demonstrate professional and collegiate behavior toward faculty, peers, and students, and to meet all University expectations provided by the Graduate School, he/she may also be placed on probation. The Director of Graduate Studies will send the student a Notice of Probationary Status (**Form A**) and will send copies of the notice to Graduate School and, if applicable, to the student's thesis adviser. Another copy will be placed in the student's permanent file.

After receipt of a Notice of Probationary Status, the student must schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss his/her plans for obtaining the M.A. and to complete a probationary Student Advising Form (**Form B**). Failure to schedule and keep an advising appointment constitutes a breach of the professional and collegiate standards of behavior expected of a master's student and presents grounds for removal from the program. Students on probation may not withdraw from any future courses without the consent of the graduate adviser, and unauthorized withdrawal constitutes grounds for removal from the program.

Removal from the M.A. Program

If a master's student receives a second grade of "C" or below, or a third grade of "W", or has three concurrent Incompletes, the student may be removed from the M.A. program. Likewise, a student who fails the M.A. Comprehensive Examination a third time will be removed from the program. Additionally, any student on probation for more than one academic year may be removed from the program. The Director of Graduate Studies in English will notify the student of his/her removal from the program (**Form C**) and will send copies of the notice to the department chair, the Graduate School, and, if applicable, the student's thesis adviser. Another copy will be placed in the student's permanent file. The student then has one week to make a formal written response to the Director of Graduate Studies. Should the decision to remove the student from the program stand, the Director will send the student a Confirmation of Removal (**Form D**) and will copy each of the parties named above.

Appeal of Removal

A student may appeal his/her removal from the master's program to the Chair of the Department within thirty days of the date of the notification of removal. To begin the appeals process, the student should write a letter to the Chair that contains the following information:

- the student's name, ID number, address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- the reasons why the student believes he/she should not be removed from the program.

Attach to the letter any documents that support the claims made in the letter.

The department Chair will then initiate the department's part of the procedure by means of the following:

- photocopy the student's letter of appeal and any supporting documents and forward these materials to the Director of Graduate Studies
- ask the Director to write a letter explaining the reasons for the student's removal from the graduate program and to submit any relevant documents within 15 days of receiving the student's materials
- review all the documents submitted by the student and the director and recommend either that the Director of Graduate Studies rescind the decision to remove the student from the program or that the decision should stand.

Only the Director of Graduate Studies has the authority to rescind the decision to remove a student from the program. In most cases, the Director follows Chair's recommendation, but the Department of English can give no guarantee.

If a student disagrees with the recommendation of the Chair of the Department of English, he/she can appeal to the Dean of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies within 15 days of the date of the notification of the Chair's recommendation. The Graduate Dean will review the department's handling of the appeal to determine if there were any irregularities in the process. A student may appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School only *if the appeal is based solely on alleged violations of the procedures stated here*. As noted in the Graduate Catalog, "substantive matters" may not be appealed to the graduate dean. Instructions for appealing alleged procedural violations to the dean of the Graduate School and, if necessary, for appealing the Dean's decision to the Appeals Committee of the Graduate School, are found under "Appeal Processes" in the Graduate Catalog.

Leave of Absence

If, during any long (Fall or Spring) semester, a master's student does not enroll in any approved coursework, he/she must schedule an appointment with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the reasons for the leave. Once a leave is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and, he or she will complete a Leave of Absence Approval (**Form E**) and send a copy to the Graduate School. Leaves of absence are *not* factored into the six-year time limitation on the completion of 30-hour master's degree (thesis option) or the eight-year limit on the 36-hour master's degree (non-thesis option).

Any student failing to apply for a leave of absence and not registering for courses for one calendar year will be placed on inactive status by the Registrar. The Graduate School requires that inactive students reapply to the program, and the department can give no guarantee of readmission.

Please note this caveat from the Graduate Catalog: "If the student has begun thesis or dissertation [hours], a waiver of continuous enrollment must also be requested and approved by the Graduate School."

It is the student's responsibility to insure that a leave of absence does not jeopardize his/her standing with the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies.

Withdrawal

A student who intends to withdraw from the program should submit a letter indicating their intent to withdraw to the Director of Graduate Studies in English, who will then notify the Graduate School.

Sample Form A (MA)

**M.A. Program in English
Notice of Probationary Status**

To: Student Name (ID Number)
From: Director of Graduate Studies in English
Date of Notification:
Subject: Notice of Probationary Status

This memorandum is to inform you that you have been placed on probationary status in the M.A. program in English for the following reason(s):

- _____ student earned one letter grade of “C” or below
- _____ student earned two grades of “W”
- _____ student earned two concurrent grades of “Incomplete”
- _____ (other).

You will remain on probationary status for one academic year (two long semesters).

Within two weeks of the date of this notification, you must schedule an appointment for advising with the Director of Graduate Studies, at which time you will complete a Probationary Student Advising Form. Failure to schedule and keep an advising appointment constitutes a breach of the professional and collegiate standards of behavior expected of a master’s student and presents grounds for removal from the program. Please contact the Graduate English Office at 940.565.2114 to schedule an appointment.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form B (MA)

**M.A. Program in English
Probationary Student Advising Form**

Date

Student Name

Student ID Number

On this date an advising session was held with STUDENT NAME (ID NUMBER) concerning the difficulty he/she has encountered in the program that has resulted in him/her being placed on probationary status. The problem(s) discussed are as follows:

- _____ student earned one letter grade of “C” or below
- _____ student earned two grades of “W”
- _____ student earned two concurrent grades of “Incomplete”
- _____ student earned two evaluations of unsatisfactory progress
- _____ (other).

The student has been informed of the consequences of the problem(s) and acknowledges that further lack of satisfactory progress may result in removal from the M.A. program.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
 Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form C (MA)

**M.A. Program in English
Notification of Removal**

To: Student Name (ID Number)
From: Director of Graduate Studies in English
Date of Notification:
Subject: Notice of Removal from M.A. Program

This memorandum is to inform you that the Department of English intends to remove you from the M.A. program in English for the following reason(s):

- _____ a second grade of “C” or below
- _____ a third grade of “W”
- _____ three concurrent grades of “Incomplete”
- _____ three or more evaluations of unsatisfactory progress
- _____ two consecutive long semesters in inactive status
- _____ a third failure of the M. A. Comprehensive Examination
- _____ (other).

Should you wish to take the opportunity put your issue in context, please make a formal response in writing to me within one week of the date of this notification. In the absence of any written communication from you within that time frame, removal from the M.A. program will be effective immediately. If you feel that you have justifiable grounds to appeal your removal, instructions regarding the appeals process are found in *The Guide to the Graduate Programs in English*.

Director of Graduate Studies

Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Department Chair
Thesis Adviser (if applicable)
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form D (MA)

**M.A. Program in English
Confirmation of Removal**

To: Student Name (ID Number)

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date of Notification:

Subject: Confirmation of Removal from the M.A. Program in English

In accordance with the “Satisfactory Progress Policy for M.A. Students in English”, you were notified on DATE of the Department of English’s intent to remove you from the M.A. program. You were provided an additional period to offer a formal response in writing.

By this letter you are formally notified that you have been removed from the Graduate Program in the Department of English.

Enclosed please find a complete copy of the “Satisfactory Progress Policy for M.A. Students in English,” including the process of “Appeal of Removal,” which can be found at pages 1-2 of the document. Should you choose to appeal this removal, please proceed in accordance with the established process.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Department Chair
Thesis Adviser (if applicable)
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Sample Form E (MA)

**M.A. Program in English
Leave of Absence Approval**

To: Dean of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Director of Graduate Services/Graduate Admissions

From: Director of Graduate Studies in English

Date:

Re: Leave of Absence Approval

STUDENT'S NAME (ID NUMBER) has been approved for a leave of absence from the M.A. program in English for the following semester(s) and the following reason(s):

___ The Leave of Absence Approval does not require a waiver of continuous enrollment.

___ The Leave of Absence Approval does require a waiver of continuous enrollment. This approval constitutes a request for such a waiver and is submitted to the Director of Graduate Services of the Toulouse School of Graduate Studies with the full support of the Office of Graduate Studies in English and the Department of English.

Director of Graduate Studies Date

cc: Toulouse School of Graduate Studies
Thesis Adviser (if applicable)
Graduate English Office Coordinator

Grade Appeal Procedures for the Department of English

When should a student appeal?

If you receive a grade in a course that you believe is incorrect, you should

1. Contact the instructor, and if possible, make an appointment with him/her to discuss the grade.

Remember that instructors may not be available until the beginning of the next long semester (fall or spring), so you may have to wait several weeks or (during the summer) several months.

2. If your discussion with the instructor fails to resolve your concerns, you should initiate a formal appeal before the 30th day of the fall semester.

For example, if you took the class in the fall, you would have until the 30th day of the spring semester. If you took the class in the spring or summer, you would have until the 30th day of the fall semester.

How does a student initiate a formal appeal?

To begin the appeals process, you should write a letter addressed to the Assistant Chair of the Department of English **before the 30th day of the next long semester**. The letter should contain the following information:

- Your name, address, telephone number, and UNT student ID number
- The course and section numbers of the class for which you received the grade
- The semester in which you took the course
- The name of the instructor
- The grade you received and the grade you think you earned
- The reasons why you believe you earned a different grade

Attach to the letter any documents that you have in your possession to support your claim. Such documents may include a course syllabus, tests, papers, and the like.

What happens after I write my appeal letter?

After you give your letter to the Assistant Chair, he/she will begin the department's part of the procedure. Here is what the department will do next:

1. Photocopy your appeal letter and any other documents that you submitted.
2. Give the photocopies to the instructor, and ask the instructor to write a letter explaining the reasons for the grade, and to submit any relevant documents (e.g., tests, essays).

If the instructor is currently teaching, he/she will be asked to respond within 10 days.

3. Provide all the above documents to the Department Chair, who will then review

them and recommend either that the instructor change the grade or that the grade should stand.

Who can change a student's grade?

Only the instructor has the authority to change your grade. In most cases, the instructor follows the recommendation of the Department Chair, but the department can give no guarantee.

What if I disagree with the Department Chair's Recommendation?

If you disagree with the Department Chair's recommendation, you may appeal to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Dean will review the department's handling of the appeal to determine if there were any irregularities in the process.

Appendix

PhD Comprehensive Examination Form

PhD Prospectus Approval Form

Thesis/Dissertation Assessment Forms

- **Thesis Assessment Form for MA in English with a Major in Creative Writing**
- **Thesis Assessment Form for MA in English**
- **Dissertation Assessment Form for PhD in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing**
- **Dissertation Assessment Form for PhD in English**

PhD Comprehensive Examination Form

Department of English
University of North Texas

Date _____

Student Name _____

Student ID number _____

Primary Area of Specialization _____

Secondary Area of Specialization _____

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in English at the University of North Texas, _____ has successfully completed the following:

- (a) a four-hour written comprehensive examination in the primary area;
- (b) a four-hour written comprehensive examination in the secondary area; and
- (c) a two-hour oral examination in both the primary and secondary area

with a grade of

_____ Pass

_____ Pass with Distinction.

Chair of Dissertation Committee _____
(sign and print)

Second Reader _____
(sign and print)

Third Reader _____
(sign and print)

The student must file this form, along with copies of the reading list(s) and of the questions and answers for the written portion of the exam in the Graduate English Office.

*The student must also file an accompanying **Qualifying Examination Results Form** with the **Toulouse Graduate School**. This form is available from the Graduate Office Coordinator.*

PhD Prospectus Approval Form

Department of English
University of North Texas

Date _____

Student Name _____

Student ID number _____

Primary Area of Specialization _____

Secondary Area of Specialization _____

Proposed Title of the Dissertation _____

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in English at the University of North Texas, _____ has submitted a dissertation prospectus that meets with our approval.

Chair of Dissertation Committee _____
(sign and print)

Second Reader _____
(sign and print)

Third Reader _____
(sign and print)

The student must file this form and a copy of the prospectus in the Graduate English Office.

Thesis Assessment Form
UNT MA in English with a Major in Creative Writing

Student Name:

Semester Defended:

Thesis Committee Member:

The CW Thesis...	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Acceptable (3)	Unsatisfactory (2)	Poor (1)
Demonstrates a familiarity and facility with the technical aspects of the chosen genre					
Develops a distinctive sense of style and voice					
Integrates individual elements of the creative project into a coherent work					
Locates the student's own writing in relation to a larger literary tradition in the Preface					
Offers a closely-read, closely-argued analytical Preface					

Faculty: Please return this form to the Graduate English Office.

**Thesis Assessment Form
UNT MA in English**

Student Name:

Semester Defended:

Thesis Committee Member:

The MA Thesis...	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Acceptable (3)	Unsatisfactory (2)	Poor (1)
Offers original, contributive readings of a literary text or texts					
Locates the student's own contribution in relation to current scholarly conversations or debates					
Integrates individual chapters into a coherent whole					
Demonstrates a familiarity and facility with the technical aspects of academic writing					
Is of a scope commensurate with the argument					

Faculty: Please return this form to the Graduate English Office Coordinator.

Dissertation Assessment Form
UNT PhD in English with a Concentration in Creative Writing

Student Name:

Semester Defended:

Dissertation Committee Member:

The PhD Dissertation...	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Acceptable (3)	Unsatisfactory (2)	Poor (1)
Demonstrates a familiarity and facility with the technical aspects of the chosen genre					
Develops a distinctive sense of style and voice					
Integrates individual elements of the creative project into a coherent work					
Locates the student's own writing in relation to a larger literary tradition in the Preface					
Offers a closely-read, closely-argued analytical Preface					

Faculty: Please return this form to the Graduate English Office Coordinator.

Dissertation Assessment Form
UNT PhD in English

Student Name:

Semester Defended:

Dissertation Committee Member:

The PhD Dissertation...	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Acceptable (3)	Unsatisfactory (2)	Poor (1)
Offers original, contributive readings of a literary text or texts					
Locates the student's own contribution in relation to current scholarly conversations or debates					
Integrates individual chapters into a coherent whole					
Demonstrates a familiarity and facility with the technical aspects of academic writing					
Is of a scope commensurate with the argument					

Faculty: Please return this form to the Graduate English Office Coordinator.