

**A GUIDE**

**TO THE**

**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

**IN ENGLISH**

**AT**

**THE UNIVERSITY**

**OF NORTH TEXAS**

**(FALL 2022 REV.)**

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*Welcome to the Department of English*

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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 our hope is that we will be able to further your life and career goals as you study with us. You have joined a friendly, supportive department of talented, productive scholars, teachers, and writers. We feel confident ours is an environment in which you can flourish. If you ever have a question or concern about your studies, your funding situation, or another administrative matter, please make an appointment with either the graduate advisor or the graduate director. The Office of Graduate Studies in English is in Auditorium Building 116. We are here to help you.

This handbook answers 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. If you are a Ph.D. student, you will be assigned a temporary faculty advisor. Eventually, the director of your exam committee will take over advisory responsibilities from this temporary advisor. Try not to rely on the advice of other graduate students when making important decisions about your academic trajectory; instead, talk to your faculty advisor, the graduate advisor, or the graduate director. You should also bookmark the UNT graduate catalog (<http://catalog.unt.edu/index.php>) and the Toulouse Graduate School webpage (<http://tgs.unt.edu>), the sources for many policies referenced in this handbook.

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*First Steps*

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When you first come, you should meet with the graduate advisor to plan the courses that you will be taking. There are some classes that are better to have first (for example, if you are a Ph.D. student, we recommend that you take ENGL 5810, the required course in literary theory in the first term), but in general, you should continue to explore those interests that brought you back for a graduate degree in the first place. If you enjoy Faulkner, then take an American literature seminar, but do not fret if you find out you don't like working on Southern writers more generally. Better to find out sooner than later. Literature students are not bound initially to a particular author, field, or set of questions although they do need to commit to a field of study by the end of their coursework. The matter is different for creative writing students, who have been admitted into the program to study a specific genre. Creative writing students who wish to change genres must make a request to the Director of Creative Writing, who will consult with the relevant creative writing faculty (for example, a fiction writer who wishes to switch to poetry will need the permission of the faculty poets). If the Creative Writing division declines to grant permission, the student must stick with the original genre.

As you delve deeper into established interests and discover new ones, it is a good idea to keep in

mind the course requirements for your particular degree plan, which you can access easily online at <http://english.unt.edu/graduate/course-requirements>. Fulfilling these requirements while exploring your interests or filling in gaps in your knowledge will introduce efficiency into the process and ensure that you progress steadily toward the completion of your degree.

*n.b.* We recommend that all literature students take Scholarly Writing in their second term. By then students should have at least one article-length seminar paper completed. One main purpose of the course is revising graduate-level work for presentation at a conference and/or publication in an academic journal.

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### *Transfer Credit – “Competencies”*

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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. For those in the upper tiers of academia, however, any degree conferred by a university still must reflect the values and standards of that particular institution. Your diploma attests to the fact that you have satisfied all the requirements for the degree at our university. Our concern for substance, rigor, and consistency explains why the Department of English reserves the right to determine whether previous courses will count as “competencies” for the degree programs we administrate.

Counting as competencies graduate courses in English from accredited M.A. and/or Ph.D. granting institutions normally poses few problems, especially if you provide the graduate advisor with syllabi that demonstrate the content and workload of the courses in question. Difficulties can arise when the instructor of the graduate seminar does not hold a Ph.D., when the topic is not easily recognized as traditional in topic or scope (e.g. “The English Novel”), 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 M.A. student may transfer is 9, while the maximum for a Ph.D. student is 24.

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### *The Residence Requirement (Ph.D. Students Only)*

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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, Ph.D. students must maintain enrollment for **18 consecutive hours**. For English graduate students, the requirement can either be filled by taking 9 hours in consecutive long semesters (fall and spring), or a minimum of 6 hours in three consecutive long semesters. The Graduate School strictly enforces the Residence Requirement.

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*Filing a Degree Plan*

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The Graduate School asks that M.A. and Ph.D. candidates submit a degree plan soon after beginning their course of study, ideally during the second semester of their first year. That initial plan is a mix of fact and fiction, because it will not only list courses that you will have taken during your first two semesters but also those you may take in the future. The degree plan includes members of your committee (for all Ph.D.s and those M.A.s who write theses), whom you may not have yet approached or even met. Normally, your temporary faculty advisor will be listed as the “chair” of the committee. *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 listed, 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 ensures 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 your actual 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.

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*The Language Requirement*

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- (A) Satisfying the Requirement with Coursework**
- (B) Satisfying the Requirement with the Graduate Reading & Translation Exam**
- (C) Satisfying the Requirement by Demonstrating Fluency in a Language not Typically Taught by the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures**

In the past, there has been considerable 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 M.A. programs and [2] the Ph.D. 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 M.A. degrees state:

*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 knowledge, 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. A student who has permission to write a thesis or to enroll in ENGL 5930 will not be allowed to register for these courses until the foreign language requirement has been met.*

The requirements for the Ph.D. program are nearly identical:

*Students must demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language other than his or her own native language. The student will work with his or her major advisor to decide what foreign language is most appropriate for his or her graduate program and scholarly interests. Some advisors may require additional foreign language work. The student's advisor may also set specific requirements based on individual and scholarly needs. 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 World Languages, Literatures and Cultures at UNT.*

To satisfy the requirement with coursework, you must 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 M.A. 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 M.A. requirements or the “competency test” in the Ph.D., you must receive a grade of Pass on the “Graduate Reading and Translation Exam” administered by the UNT Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (<http://worldlanguages.unt.edu/resources/testing/graduate-foreign-language-requirement>) or the UNT Department of Spanish. Below we will address each path to satisfying the language requirement in turn. If you are a foreign student from a non-Anglophone country, or if you are fluent in a second language, you also need to pursue a different course (Option C) with the help of the Department of World Languages, Literatures and Culture or the Department of Spanish 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” to UNT and 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.

*n.b.* In general, 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.

**If your language course credits are older than 10 years at the time you enter a graduate program here, we must ask permission of Toulouse to accept those credits on your behalf.**

2. CLEP credit is good. 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.

Another way to gain placement credit is to take a computer-based placement exam in the World Languages Department or Spanish Department lab. One of our students placed out of both years via a Spanish placement exam; once he paid the fee to put those credits on his transcript, he was done with the language requirement for good.

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 (except if 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 World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures four times a year: October, February, June, and July. The Spanish Department offers proficiency exams several times throughout the semester. You must sign up no later than a month in advance, so consult the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Office webpage <https://worldlanguages.unt.edu/resources/testing/graduate-foreign-language-requirement> or contact the department for the exact deadlines (Language Building, Room 101; 940.565.2404). The exam costs \$15 (as of this writing). The Spanish Department can be reached at the same place and phone number.

1. 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 can take the undergraduate placement test and place into the 2040 level of the language. See <http://worldlanguages.unt.edu/resources/testing/placement>.

*n.b.* As described in A(2) above, should a student receive at least 12 hours of credit on the Placement Test, the Department of English and Toulouse 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.)

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 from an article in the target language, and you may bring a dictionary as an aid. (For further details, see [http://worldlanguages.unt.edu/sites/worldlanguages.unt.edu/files/worldlanguages/FLPE\\_info\\_revised\\_11feb2015.pdf](http://worldlanguages.unt.edu/sites/worldlanguages.unt.edu/files/worldlanguages/FLPE_info_revised_11feb2015.pdf).) This test may be retaken multiple times. 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 if You Are Fluent in a Language not typically taught by the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures or the Department of Spanish**

International students can use their native language to fulfill the requirement, as can students who went to an international school, and have the diplomas and transcripts to prove it. If you wish to claim fluency 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 World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures to set up a proficiency test (see <http://worldlanguages.unt.edu/resources/testing/proficiency-testing>). As in other instances, we strongly suggest that you obtain a copy of the results and deposit a copy with the Graduate Office as well.

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*Choosing the Thesis Option or Non-Thesis Option (M.A. in English only)*

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Depending on your specific goals for obtaining your M.A., you may choose whether or not to write a thesis. If you plan to apply to a Ph.D. program in English, a thesis can help demonstrate 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. The non-thesis option is appropriate for all students, whether or not they intend to apply to Ph.D. programs. Students choosing the non-thesis option take one more elective and ENGL 5930 (Research Problems in Lieu of a Thesis). This option offers a valuable opportunity to fill in gaps in knowledge, or to explore a new field of inquiry, while working on a research-based essay of publishable length (20-25 pages).

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*Choosing a Thesis/Dissertation Committee*

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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. Serving on such committees is part of a faculty member's job. Ideally, working on a committee is 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. You should not, therefore, be shy about approaching people to sit on your committee.

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 qualifying examinations through the dissertation defense. Your success in the program and beyond depends on finding the right chair. In making your selection, you should bear in mind that interpersonal as well as professional fit matters. Insofar as possible, you should select a specialist in the field that you wish to join (if you're barking up the wrong tree, she or he will tell you.) Your director should also be someone with whom you've had at least one class, and who has judged your work positively. Finally, he or she should be someone with whom you feel you can establish a good working relationship. When you approach your potential chair, your dissertation or thesis idea should be reasonably fleshed-out. Schedule an appointment with the faculty member and make your pitch. Remember, this is a long-term relationship, which works best if both parties are clear about their expectations from the beginning. In the initial meeting with a potential chair, you

should aim to communicate your academic and professional goals clearly. You should also develop a sense of what the faculty member's expectations might be. Appropriate questions for students to ask at such a meeting include "What is your mentoring approach?" "What do you expect of a dissertation-level student?" "What do you think students need to do to get ready for the job market and how do you help your students do that?"

If the professor says yes, then your new chair may suggest other people to round out the committee. If possible, the second committee member should be in the same field as your chair. The third member will likely 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). Inviting the other two members onto the 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 committee members. The professors involved will understand. Although you are allowed to have more than three faculty members on your committee, we advise against doing so, on the principle that too many cooks can spoil the broth.

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, the third reader usually 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, and who will be responsible for communicating his or her expectations to you and to the committee.

The selection of committee members should not be taken lightly. You should keep in mind the stakes of your choices, 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 rigor, and willingness to provide feedback may aid in making a decision. In the case of a chair, you might also consider the number of completed dissertations that the person has directed and his or her success in helping students publish and find employment. Should your topic morph into a different one in the course of your research, should faculty with specialties closer to your own be hired before you begin to write your dissertation, or should your relationship with a particular member become unsatisfactory, it is possible to replace committee members, though doing so requires the approval of the committee chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. Changing the chair of your committee requires an actual consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Once you have settled on a committee, please submit the Ph.D. Committee Establishment Form (see appendix) to the Graduate Office.

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*Continuous Enrollment Requirement for Students Writing Theses or Dissertations*

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M.A. students and Ph.D. students must maintain continuous enrollment while writing their thesis or dissertation. The policy for Ph.D. students is as follows: “The student is required to enroll for dissertation credit in the major department under the course number 6950 and must maintain continuous enrollment in a minimum of 3 semester hours of 6950 during each fall and spring term/semester until the dissertation has been accepted by the graduate school. Maximum enrollment in 6950 is 9 hours in a fall or spring term/semester. 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 subsequent to passing the qualifying examination for admission to candidacy. Grades of PR will be recorded at the end of each term/semester of enrollment with satisfactory progress until the dissertation is filed with and approved by the Toulouse Graduate School.” For more, see the graduate catalog (<http://catalog.unt.edu/content.php?catoid=31&navoid=3458> for M.A. students; <http://catalog.unt.edu/content.php?catoid=31&navoid=3459> for Ph.D. Students). **Failing to observe the continuous enrollment will cost you time and money.**

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*Registering for Scholarly Writing, Creative Writing Workshops, and Thesis or Dissertation Hours*

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To register for Scholarly Writing (ENGL 5760) or the graduate creative writing workshops (ENGL 5162, ENGL 5420, and ENGL 5820) students must obtain a code from the Graduate Office. As of Fall 2018, if you have not been admitted as a creative writing student, you must file a “Consent of Department Form for Graduate Creative Writing Workshops” (see appendix) before the Graduate Office will issue a code.

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.

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### *Ph.D. Qualifying Exams*

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Ph.D. students must pass a set of written and oral examinations administered by their committee before they 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. We recommend that students consult frequently with all members of the committee when preparing for exams. 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 over which you will be examined. The secondary area is usually related to the primary area; Renaissance scholars, for example, might designate seventeenth century or late medieval literature their secondary area, or they might choose to focus the secondary list on a methodological approach—e.g., gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial studies, textual criticism, ecocriticism, 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., contemporary fiction, nineteenth century American literature or medieval 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. In the case of literature exams, lists should include a judicious and comprehensive sampling of primary and secondary sources.

#### **Written Qualifying Examination**

The written qualifying exam precedes the oral examination and is spread over two days. The first day involves an eight-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. The distribution of questions and the collection of exam materials may be done through email or in hard copy, at the discretion of the chair of the committee.

The emphasis of the written exam is on the student's ability to display historical knowledge of a range of texts and to demonstrate the requisite analytic skills. In practice, this means that students also need to master the critical, scholarly, or theoretical methodologies relevant to their course of study. The exam 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 sections once. Such permission is at the discretion of the Committee; 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 committee. While the second and third readers normally contribute questions, the primary responsibility for the exam falls to the chair.

### **Oral Qualifying Examination**

A student must pass both sections of the written exam before taking the Oral Qualifying Examination. In terms of scheduling, that means 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, their mastery of their field, and their ability to think on their feet. 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**

You are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with members of your 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 in hearing you discuss. Arriving for either the written or oral exam without working in close concert with your examiners is ill advised. Remember also that faculty members are not obligated to accept committee assignments. Be sure to thank them for their feedback and for agreeing to serve.

Once a student has passed both the written and oral comprehensive exams, that student must file copies of the reading lists, exam questions and responses, and the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Form (see sample in the Appendix) with the English Graduate Office. You will need to pick up the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination form from the Graduate Office on the day you take your exam. Be sure to let the Graduate Administrative Assistant know ahead of time that you have scheduled exams, so that he or she can have the form ready for you. Bring the form to the Orals and have your committee members sign it there. Once you return it to the Graduate Office, the Graduate Administrative Assistant will submit the Qualifying Examinations Results Form to the Toulouse Graduate School online.

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### *Ph.D. Prospectus*

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After passing exams, you must file a prospectus with the Graduate Office. Prospectuses are normally 10-20 pp. A successful prospectus in literature previews the argument, highlights the originality of the contribution, describes the methodology, lays out a blueprint for the dissertation, and includes a bibliography. A successful prospectus in creative writing describes the project, includes a literature review of the student's field, and contextualizes the student's work within the field. We have several model prospectuses on file in the Graduate Office and will be happy to share them with you.

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

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### *What is a Dissertation or Thesis, and How Do I Go about Writing One?*

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Whether you are pursuing a degree in creative writing or literature, the thesis or dissertation is an extended work that 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. The theses for the M.A. in Creative Writing range from 20-30 pages for poetry to 60-90 pages for fiction and non-fiction. Theses for the M.A. in English typically run 60 to 80 pages. In contrast, Ph.D. dissertations are intended to be the first complete draft of a book-length study. Poetry dissertations are normally 65-125 pages, fiction and nonfiction dissertations are about 150-200 pages, and literature dissertations are about 180-230 pages. Usually, in the world of literary studies, first books are (heavily edited and modified) versions of dissertations. The literature dissertation or thesis is invariably divided into chapters. Three chapters for theses and four for dissertations is a typical (though not mandatory) framework, plus an introduction, conclusion, and bibliography. These guidelines don't apply to M.A. or Ph.D. students in creative writing, who instead write a complete work in their chosen genre, with a critical preface.

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). Writing a dissertation is *supposed* to be difficult—it represents a major achievement, which endows the Ph.D. with 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. Set a writing schedule for yourself. Block off time, every day ideally, every week for sure, to write. If the big ideas aren't flowing, work on local revisions. Make writing a habit—that's the only way to get book-length projects done.
3. Break down the project into manageable pieces and set workable goals for yourself. If you write a page a day for 180 days, you will have a dissertation-length draft. Remember that you need not write the chapters, poems or stories in the order you will present them. To get things going, start by writing the piece you're most excited about.
4. With your chair, develop a plan, including a *realistic* timetable, for completing the project, keeping in mind the Satisfactory Progress Charts below. An M.A. thesis can be completed in a semester, no more than two, and a dissertation can and should be written, revised, and defended in two years. Submit polished drafts of individual chapters to your chair for comments while drafting the next installment.
5. Meet often with your chair, several times a term if an M.A. student and at least once a semester if a doctoral candidate. It is your responsibility to set up these meetings. Do not wait for your chair to contact you.
6. 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 Ph.D. student or assistant professor. Figuring out how to achieve a balance now will only ease the transition later.

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### *Defending your Dissertation/Thesis*

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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 obtain their preliminary approval and to agree upon a date and time for the defense. Once the defense date is set, you or the chair should notify the Graduate English Office, and ask the Graduate Administrative Assistant to reserve 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. At the time agreed upon by your committee, usually about three weeks before you hope to defend, 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. 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, which the Graduate School sends to the chair and the Graduate Office, 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. Remember: a defense is not a graduation. Even when every effort is made to avoid surprises, defenses can and do go wrong. Plan accordingly. Do not encourage friends or family members to begin their celebrations by congregating outside the defense room.

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 the Graduate School's 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 return the signed defense form to the Graduate Office immediately after the defense.**

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### *Applying to Graduate*

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For specific dates and guides to the graduation process, including the application deadline in a given semester, consult the Toulouse Graduate School website (see <https://tgs.unt.edu/new-current-students/graduation-information#grad-deadlines>). Should you miss the deadlines, you will not graduate until the following term. At the time of this writing, graduation applications are made through the MyUNT student portal. You can find all the necessary instructions on the Toulouse Graduate School's website, under the "Graduation Information" tab.

Please note that a copy of a signed, updated degree plan must be filed with the graduation application. For that reason, it is important that you keep the Graduate Office Administrator and the Graduate Advisor informed about your plans.

### **Formatting and Filing the Dissertation/Thesis**

We strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the contents of the Graduate School's Thesis Manual (<https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual>) and schedule a meeting with the graduate reader prior to beginning your final formatting.

Your thesis or dissertation, along with all associated forms and materials, must be submitted electronically, via a submission tool called Vireo (instructions are on the Thesis Manual Page, <https://tgs.unt.edu/thesis-manual>). There is a mandatory \$20 “archive” fee for submitting theses and dissertations. As part of UNT’s commitment to openness, you will be urged to make your dissertation or thesis available on-line without imposing any restrictions. This may not always be the best option for writers or literature scholars, however, so please discuss this important matter with your major professor, who will in any case be asked to approve the availability option that you have selected.

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.

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### *Job Market Preparation*

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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. Students should plan to attend departmental meetings about the job market a year in advance of “going on the market” themselves. At these meetings, the Job Placement Office will offer guidance concerning the preparation of job letters, curriculum vitae, teaching letters, and writing samples. Students should also consult with their major professors on all aspects of the job search. 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, traditionally applications are due in October or November, and initial interviews occur in January. In recent years, however, more jobs have been advertised later in the year, and our students have received offers as late as May or June for positions starting in the Fall.

Given the competitiveness of the job market, it is never too early to start thinking realistically about what kind of job you might aim for. Do you want to be a teacher primarily? Or do you have ambitions to be a researcher, too? What can you do at this stage in your career to shape your *curriculum vitae* accordingly? If you are interested in being a scholar, for example, you might begin attending conferences and get a start on publishing articles, preferably in peer-reviewed journals. Always check with your director whether or not a conference or a publication opportunity is worth pursuing before pursuing it. Be equally proactive about obtaining other professional credentials, like grants and awards. Our department offers a number of competitive scholarship and awards for continuing students (<http://english.unt.edu/graduate/graduate-scholarships-continuing-students>), as does the College (<https://class.unt.edu/scholarships>) and the Graduate School (<http://tgs.unt.edu/future-students/funding-your-graduate-education/awards>).

Some of you may qualify for external grants or fellowships as well, which are considered more prestigious. Apply for every grant or scholarship for which you qualify.

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*Satisfactory Progress Policy for Ph.D. Students in English*

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### **Periodic Evaluations**

The Department of English will periodically (at least once a year, usually over the summer) 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 will perform this evaluation with input from the Graduate Advisor and the student's major professor. The Graduate Advisor will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of any students deemed to be making 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 all relevant UNT policies and demonstrate professional and collegiate behavior toward faculty, peers, and students, as outlined in the UNT Student Code of Conduct (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>) and the Teaching Excellence Handbook (<https://teachingcommons.unt.edu/teaching-handbook>)
- 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 Graduate School dictates that all work towards a doctoral degree be “completed within a period of 8 years from the date doctoral credit is first earned.” But the department expects students entering the program with a B.A. to complete the dissertation in 6 years and those entering with an M.A./M.F.A to complete the dissertation in 5 years. Students who take longer may be issued notices of unsatisfactory progress, and will no longer qualify for funding by the department, for travel support, or for competitive scholarships.
- For whatever reason, any student not completing all degree requirements by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> 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 Ph.D. program with a B.A.

| Year        | What you should have completed  |
|-------------|---|
| First Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 consecutive hours (thereby fulfilling the Residence Requirement)</li> <li>• A signed degree plan filed with the Graduate Office and Graduate School</li> </ul>  |
| Second Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 hours of coursework</li> <li>• Foreign language requirement</li> </ul>  |
| Third Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 hours of coursework (all requirements met)</li> </ul>   |
| Fourth Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 6 hours of directed research in the Fall semester</li> <li>• Ph.D. comprehensive exams in the Fall semester (students who take longer than one academic year after the completion of coursework to pass exams will be found in violation of satisfactory progress policy)</li> <li>• at least 6 hours of directed research in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Dissertation Prospectus approved in the Spring semester</li> </ul> |
| Fifth Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 3 dissertation hours in the Fall semester</li> <li>• at least 3 dissertation hours in the Spring semester</li> </ul> <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>  |
| Sixth Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least three dissertation hours in the Fall semester</li> <li>• at least three dissertation hours in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Dissertation defense in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Graduation application with the Graduate School</li> </ul> <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>  |

(B) Students who enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. or an M.F.A.

| Year        | What you should have completed  |
|-------------|---|
| First Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 consecutive hours (thereby fulfilling the Residence Requirement)</li> <li>• A signed degree plan filed with the Graduate Office and Graduate School</li> </ul>  |
| Second Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 hours of coursework (all requirements met)</li> <li>• Foreign language requirement</li> </ul>   |
| Third Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 6 hours of directed research in the Fall semester</li> <li>• PhD comprehensive exams in the Fall semester (students who take longer than one academic year after the completion of coursework to pass exams will be found in violation of satisfactory progress policy)</li> <li>• at least 6 hours of directed research in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Dissertation Prospectus approved in the Spring semester</li> </ul> |
| Fourth Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 3 dissertation hours in the Fall semester</li> <li>• at least 3 dissertation hours in the Spring semester</li> </ul> <p><i>*Students must maintain continuous enrollment in dissertation hours in order to graduate.</i></p>  |
| Fifth Year  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least three dissertation hours in the Fall semester</li> <li>• at least three dissertation hours in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Dissertation defense in the Spring semester</li> <li>• Graduation application with the Graduate School</li> </ul> <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 at the request of the Director of Graduate Studies. The major professor will review the student's progress through the various stages of the dissertation process: passing exams, the writing of the prospectus, the timely submission of dissertation chapters, and the scheduling of the dissertation defense. The major professor's evaluation provides an important measure of satisfactory progress (**Form A**).

A student found by his or her major professor 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 or her program. Likewise two unsatisfactory evaluations may result in a student being placed on probation. The Director of Graduate Studies will notify the student of his or 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 or 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**

The department has the right to dismiss doctoral students for the following reasons:

- 1) the student receives a second grade of "C" or below, or a third grade of "W", or has three concurrent Incompletes
- 2) the student fails to take Qualifying Examinations within a year of having completed coursework
- 3) the student fails a portion of the Qualifying Examinations and his or her committee will not permit a retake.
- 4) The student fails a portion of the qualifying exams twice.
- 5) The student has received three or more reports of unsatisfactory progress.
- 6) The student has failed to maintain a Satisfactory Academic Record (described above)
- 7) The student has engaged in unprofessional conduct or unethical behavior around other students, faculty, or staff.

The Director of Graduate Studies in English will notify the student of his or 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 the parties named above.

### **Appeal of Removal**

A student may appeal his or 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 or she should not be removed from the program.

Any documents that support the claims made in the letter should be attached.

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

- forward the student's letter of appeal and any supporting documents 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 or 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. Instructions for appealing to the Dean 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 or 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,

the student must fill out and submit a Leave of Absence Approval (<https://tgs.unt.edu/sites/default/files/Leave%20of%20Absence%20Form.pdf>). Leaves of absence are *not* factored into the eight-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 ensure 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 1<sup>st</sup> Doctoral Course: xxx

Date of 1<sup>st</sup> Dissertation Hours: 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 student passed exams on \_\_\_\_\_ and has not yet completed a prospectus
- 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.

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
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: 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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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.

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Director of Graduate Studies                      Date

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





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*Satisfactory Progress Policy for M.A. Students in English*

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**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 or 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:

- forward a copy of the student's letter of appeal and any supporting documents 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. Instructions for appealing to the dean 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 or 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 (<https://tgs.unt.edu/sites/default/files/Leave%20of%20Absence%20Form.pdf>). 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 ensure 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 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.

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Director of Graduate Studies                      Date

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

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*Grade Appeal Procedures for the Department of English*

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### **When should a student appeal?**

As per university policy, a student can appeal a grade only if he or she believes “that the grade was awarded in an inequitable, arbitrary, or erroneous manner” (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-040>). It is the student’s responsibility to review university policy on grade appeals and to keep to all relevant deadlines.

1. If you wish to appeal, the first step is to consult with the instructor as soon as possible and no later than 10 calendar days after the start of the following academic term. The purpose of this meeting is to resolve the issue.
2. If your discussion with the instructor fails to resolve your concerns, you can initiate a formal appeal within 5 weeks (35 calendar days) of the date the grade was officially posted in the university system

### **How does a student initiate a formal appeal?**

The university policy requires that all grade appeals be adjudicated by departmental chairs. Because the English Department is such a large one, the first step in filing a formal appeal is writing a letter addressed to the Associate Chair of the Department of English **before the 35<sup>th</sup> day after the grade was posted**. 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. According to university policy, appropriate grounds for appeal include “inequitable treatment that is the result of departure from the instructor’s stated standards, and course policies” and “a decision based on an error in fact.”

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 Associate Chair, he or she will begin the department’s part of the procedure. Here is what happens next:

1. The Associate Chair will meet with you and with the instructor to gather information. He or she will also ask the instructor to write a letter explaining the reasons for the grade and to submit relevant documentation.
2. The Associate Chair forwards all documents to the Chair and makes a recommendation for a resolution.
3. The Chair reviews the case and proposes a resolution. If the student and the instructor agree with the Chair's proposal, the appeal ends here.
4. If the student or instructor do not agree to the proposed resolution, the chair appoints an ad hoc grade appeal committee of three members (one selected by the student, one selected by the faculty member, and a third selected by the chair in agreement with the other two faculty members). This committee will issue a written report and recommendation to the chair.
5. The chair notifies the instructor and the student in writing of the final resolution to change or not to change the grade.

**Who can change a student's grade?**

The instructor has the authority to change your grade. The Chair of the Department also has the authority to issue an administrative change of grade.

**What if I disagree with the Department Chair's recommendation or the final decision?**

If you disagree with the Department Chair's recommendation or the final decision, you may appeal to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The UNT policy states that the "only further basis for appeal" to the Dean is "on procedural grounds." The Dean will review the department's handling of the appeal to determine if there were any irregularities in the process.

## **Appendix**

**The forms below are included as examples. Please ask the Graduate Administrative Assistant for up-to-date copies of these forms.**

**Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Form**

**Ph.D. Prospectus Approval Form**

**Ph.D. Committee Establishment Form**

**Consent of Department Form for Graduate Creative Writing Workshops**

**PhD Qualifying 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.***

**PhD Committee Establishment Form**

Department of English  
University of North Texas

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UNT ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Dissertation Committee \_\_\_\_\_

**[name of chair]**

Second Reader \_\_\_\_\_

**[name of committee member]**

Third Reader \_\_\_\_\_

**[name of committee member] \_\_\_\_\_**

*The student must obtain signatures for this form (digitized signatures are okay) and return a physical copy to the Graduate English Office.*

Department of English

Graduate Studies

**Consent of Department Form for Graduate Creative Writing Workshops**

Students who have not been admitted to the M.A. in creative writing or the Ph.D. in English with a major in creative writing and who wish to enroll in graduate-level creative writing workshops (ENGL 5162, ENGL 5420, or ENGL 5820) must obtain permission from the instructor of the course, the director of creative writing, and the director of graduate studies.

To receive permission for a creative writing workshop:

- 1) Fill out this form
- 2) Sign the form
- 3) Have your instructor, the director of creative writing, and the graduate director sign the form
- 4) File your completed form with the Graduate Advisor in Auditorium 116. The Advisor will issue the permission code upon receipt.

Name: Student identification #:

Email address: Phone Number:

Instructor's Name:

Semester: Course Number:

Student Signature

Instructor Signature

Director of Creative Writing Signature

Director of Graduate Studies Signature