

**Graduate Handbook**

**Department of English**  
**Michigan State University**

**REVISED AUGUST 2021**

<https://english.msu.edu/>

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# I.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

[The Department of English at Michigan State University](#) (MSU) offers M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in literary, cultural, and film studies. Our programs seek to promote innovative approaches to the study of literature, culture, and film that cut across traditional periods and national and disciplinary boundaries. Comprised of a diverse faculty who publish in literary, cultural, visual, and ethnic studies, the Department of English fosters rigorous intellectual exchange in and out of the classroom, as well as with scholars from other universities through our Speaker Series and annual Critical Institutions Symposium. English graduate studies also allows for productive interaction with a variety of other graduate programs at MSU, including [African and African American Studies](#), [Chicano/Latino Studies](#), and [the Center for Gender in Global Context](#). The Department of English is the editorial home of [CR: The New Centennial Review](#), [Journal of Popular Culture](#), [The American Indian Studies Series](#), and [Contagion](#). The Department of English considers racial and gender diversity central to a vibrant and competitive graduate program.

The graduate program in English at MSU educates students for successful careers in English Studies, particularly as active scholars in institutions of higher learning. The M.A. degree provides advanced general training in English literature, theory, and criticism. The Ph.D. enables students to cultivate areas of expertise, culminating in the doctoral dissertation. Doctoral education in English trains scholars for the breadth of knowledge necessary to the pedagogical and programmatic needs of most English departments, as well as the expertise necessary to make a significant scholarly contribution. To prepare students for the diversity of the discipline we provide them with

- A critical understanding of the various methods and theoretical approaches to the field, as well as thorough knowledge of literary canons and traditions;
- Opportunities to interpret and analyze texts, genres, and media;
- Training in research and writing for expert audiences;
- Training in the teaching of college literature and critical thinking;
- Training in the Digital Humanities.

The department provides graduate students with opportunities to acquire a wide range of academic experiences in order to prepare themselves for professional careers as scholars and educators in universities and colleges in the U.S. and beyond. In addition to completing the program requirements to receive a Ph.D. in English and gaining classroom experience as teaching assistants, graduate students participate in the professional life of the department by attending lectures, organizing conferences, presenting their work to peers, and attending dissertation defenses. There are a number of opportunities for students to engage in departmental activities; for example, they can serve as graduate student representatives on standing committees, such as the Policy Committee, the Speakers Committee, the Graduate Committee, and the Undergraduate Committee. There is also a graduate student representative on all faculty search committees. Students are encouraged to join graduate student associations inside and outside of the department such as the [Association of English Graduate Students](#)

[\(AEGS\)](#), the [Council of Graduate Students \(COGS\)](#), the [Black Graduate Student Association \(BGSA\)](#), and the [Alliance for Graduate Education & the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#). Through such activities, students experience more fully the professional expectations of an academic career.

This Handbook is designed to provide an overview of the program, explain course and program requirements, provide timetables for meeting of milestones, establish the expectations of the faculty toward the students, explain students' rights regarding the faculty, and facilitate successful degree completion.

For University and college policies, also be sure to consult the following sources:

[Academic Programs](#)

[Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities \(GSRR\)](#)

[MSU/GEU Contract](#)

[Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships](#)

[Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities](#)

These publications and resources will enable you to meet the University's stated expectation that: "It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of and understand University regulations as published."

## II. MASTER'S OF ARTS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

### A. M. A. Program Overview

The M.A. Program gives students a comprehensive grounding in literature, critical theory, and a variety of research methodologies. Designed to develop the skills associated with literary and cultural criticism, the M.A. degree prepares students for doctoral studies, as well as careers in other fields that require highly developed critical, editorial, research, writing, and teaching skills. Master's students may choose Plan A (thesis option) or Plan B (portfolio option). Master's students may apply to continue on to the Ph.D. in the department, applying either during the final year of the program, or at the end of the first year, under the process for accelerated admission. At the end of the course work (see description below), students should be able to participate in professional discourse in the field, define a critical problem within an area or areas of study, and produce a publishable paper. The thesis is a practicum in producing a professional publication under the guidance of a faculty member. The portfolio is designed to help synthesize course work and to show the student's ability to engage a specific critical problem within the field.

Master's candidates in English are expected to

- Know the broader context of English studies;
- Employ and interrogate the theories, philosophies, and assumptions of critical, cultural and textual analysis and interpretation;
- Develop an area of expertise appropriate to their long-term objectives;
- Produce publishable work for an academic journal in the field;
- Practice professional pedagogical methods for teaching at the college level;
- Contribute to the professional life of the department by attending departmental talks.

## B. M. A. Program Components / Plan Options

### Program Components

#### 1. Course Work

Through an intense program of course work, oriented toward the most recent developments in literary, cultural, and film studies, graduate students are expected to attain the fundamental skills to conduct advanced original research in their fields of expertise. Seminars have the goal of helping students both to read critically within a particular genre or theoretical problem and to write an original seminar paper that is of publishable quality. Recognizing that the presentation of work is an important component of academic professionalization, the department expects students to attend departmental talks and professional conferences in order to establish contacts outside of the department and to receive feedback on their work from other perspectives. The department expects graduate students to actively seek forums for presenting and publishing their scholarship even as they complete the formative period of training in literary studies. The Department, College and Graduate School offer financial support for professional presentations

#### 2. M.A. Thesis or Portfolio

In Year 2, M.A. students choose to write a thesis (Plan A) or to construct a Portfolio of course papers, write an integrative essay, and take a Certifying Exam (Plan B).

##### Plan A: Master's Thesis

The purpose of the M.A. thesis is to demonstrate the student's ability to write a scholarly, publishable article (approximately 30 – 40 pages in length).

In consultation with a thesis director, the student will produce either an original thesis or a substantial revision of an earlier paper written for an M.A. course. The goal will be to produce a publishable article that, as part of the thesis writing process, will be submitted to a journal. This exercise will help students to learn to identify audiences for journals, to think about situating their arguments within existing conversations, to produce papers in a required format (MLA or Chicago Style), and to go through the process of submission. In consultation with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, students will choose a faculty member to direct the project. In the semester before the student begins work on the project (typically, the second semester of the student's first year), they must complete a thesis proposal form and have it signed by the thesis director and the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. The thesis must be approved in writing by the thesis director before the degree will be certified.

University requirements: A minimum of four credits in master's thesis research (ENG 899) is required. ENG 899 is offered only on a pass/fail basis. The thesis must be prepared in accordance with the specifications in [Graduate School Formatting Guide](#).

An abstract of the thesis not exceeding 150 words must also be prepared as specified in the Handbook.

After the thesis advisor has reviewed and approved the thesis, the student must incorporate into the thesis any recommended change(s) and corrections before presenting it to the thesis advisor for final review and signature of the bookplate.

By the deadline date indicated in the schedule of courses for the semester in which graduation is expected, the student must electronically submit to the Office of The Graduate School a final copy of the thesis and abstract and other forms required by and available from The Graduate School. Visit the [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions](#) website for complete information on requirements and forms.

In addition to the main body of a thesis or dissertation, the Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest. These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the written approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair.

**The MSU library may accept supplementary materials approved by the thesis/dissertation committee chair per their collection criteria.** The Graduate School does not review these materials for formatting requirements. Questions about submission of these materials to the MSU library should be directed to the Associate Dean for Digital Initiatives, currently Shawn Nicholson ([nicho147@msu.edu](mailto:nicho147@msu.edu)).

A Public Abstract (i.e., written in "layman's" terms) to precede the conventional disciplinary/technical one is strongly recommended. The formatting requirements for this additional abstract are identical to those for the conventional abstract. See the [Graduate School Formatting Guide](#).

### **Plan B: M.A. Certifying Examination**

The purpose of the M.A. certifying examination is to demonstrate the student's ability to reflect on and synthesize their graduate-level course work.

Within the first two weeks of the (fall or spring) semester in which the candidate will submit the certifying portfolio, they must notify the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies in writing of their intent to take the M.A. Certifying Examination. They will do so on a form, which the student can get from the Graduate Secretary; it must be returned by the deadline indicated. The student must be registered for the semester in which the portfolio will be completed. M.A. certifying exams may not be taken during the summer session.

Due date: Portfolios are due no later than the 10th week of the term in which the student intends to graduate.

Format: The basis of the Certifying Examination will be a portfolio collected from the student in their last semester of study. The portfolio must contain five representative papers drawn from course work in the master's program. At least one paper must be from the core masters courses (800 and 802); also, at least one paper must be from a course in pre-1800 literatures and at least one paper must be from a course in post-1800 literatures. The final two may be from any area covered during the program. On the basis of the five papers selected for the portfolio, the student will write an integrative, reflective essay of a minimum of 10 pages. The essay must demonstrate the student's comprehension and synthesis of course work in a range of periods and nationalities and an ability to identify and apply a theoretical argument or perspective. The student should identify a central theoretical problem or a coherent set of issues or questions that run through or help to synthesize the papers they have chosen to include. The essay should talk about ways in which the problem, issues, or questions have been addressed in the student's work to date, about the assumptions the student has relied on in their own attempts to address these issues, about how they might revise their earlier assumptions, and about what kinds of future research might help their to address the issues they have identified. The essay should include a Works Cited page in MLA bibliographic style.

Examination Committee: After consultation with the Graduate Committee, the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies will appoint the Examination Committee. The Examination Committee will consist of three faculty members, drawn from a range of periods and of theoretical and national specializations. At least one faculty member serving on the Examination Committee will serve a two-year term, staggered so as to provide continuity from year to year. No one shall serve successive two-year terms.

Grading: The candidate's reflective essay will be evaluated by the Examination Committee, according to the purposes listed above. The committee will report the results to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and the candidate within three weeks after the portfolio is completed. The grades used are as follows: High Pass, Pass, Fail. A candidate who receives a failing grade may revise and resubmit the essay to the examination committee one time only.

## Options

### [College of Arts and Letters Graduate Certificate in College Teaching](#)

Designed to provide background and training in teaching at the college level, the [Graduate Certificate in College Teaching](#) program includes course work, workshops and seminars that provide basic information on teaching and learning. In addition, the program requires a mentored teaching experience and the development of a teaching portfolio. Part of the purpose of the program is to prepare graduate students to teach in a range of institutions such as community colleges, liberal arts colleges, research-intensive universities, etc. The program is designed to supplement



the student's degree program, and it may be tailored to meet the needs and goals of individual participants. The program provides coherence for the varied teaching experiences TAs gain as part of their careers as graduate students. This certification program offers teaching assistants a way of documenting their developing expertise as teachers. The materials developed in the teaching portfolio, along with the certificate and designation on the student's transcript, may assist graduates seeking employment in an increasingly competitive job market.

### **[College of Arts and Letters Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities](#)**

From the camera to the screen, digital tools and technologies shape how we tell stories, make art, shape experiences, and create interactions. Research has been similarly transformed by the availability of vast quantities of digital media (text, images, audio, and video). Learning how to work effectively in these digital environments is the realm of digital humanists. The **[CAL Graduate Certification in Digital Humanities](#)** is a 9-credit sequence, culminating in a portfolio, that will help graduate students to negotiate digital spaces of creativity and research.

### **[Interdisciplinary Graduate Specialization in Women and Gender](#)**

The **[Graduate Specialization in Women and Gender](#)** is designed for completion by either master's or doctoral students. The graduate specialization in Women and Gender is designed to foster the study of women and gender across disciplines and national borders, provide opportunities for graduate students to obtain a comprehensive, cross-/interdisciplinary academic experience in women and gender, and to foster the growth of interdisciplinary research and teaching on women and gender. Emphasis is given to understanding the diversity of women's lives nationally and globally. The graduate specialization is open to graduate students with adequate undergraduate preparation in women and gender. The specialization should complement advanced, discipline-based degrees by providing an interdisciplinary, feminist component. All students are encouraged to develop competence in the foreign language most relevant to their field of work and area of interest.

**[View requirements for this specialization \(MSU Registrar's Office\)](#)**. Please email the GenCen with any questions/concerns at: **[gencen@msu.edu](mailto:gencen@msu.edu)**

### **[Graduate Specialization in Animal Studies Social Science and Humanities Perspectives](#)**

The **[Graduate Specialization in Animal Studies: Social Science and Humanities Perspectives](#)**, which is administered by the Department of Sociology, provides graduate students with basic knowledge of relationships between humans and other animals and how they are linked together in a fragile biosphere. The graduate specialization is available as an elective for students who are enrolled in master's or doctoral degree programs at Michigan State University. With the approval of the department and

college that administers the student's degree program, the courses that are used to satisfy the specialization may also be used to satisfy the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree. Students who plan to complete the requirements for the graduate specialization should consult the graduate advisor for the specialization in the Department of Sociology.

### **Graduate Certificate in Chican@/Latinx Studies**

The **Graduate Certificate in Chican@/Latinx Studies** exposes students to methodologies specific to Chicano/Latino Studies, and to debates in the field that reflect larger transformations in United States culture and society. Students interested in research related to Chicanos and Latinos in the United States will find this certificate program of interest.

## C. M. A. Degree Requirements

Requirements for the master's degree are designed to be completed within two years. The time limit for the completion of requirements for the master's degree is six calendar years from the date of enrollment in the first course included for degree certification. Should the degree requirements not be completed within the six-year period, the course work must be recertified. In addition to meeting the requirements of the University and the College of Arts & Letters, students must meet the Department requirements specified below. The Associate Chair of Graduate Studies acts as primary advisor to M.A. students.

**1. Core Courses:** For students enrolling in Fall 2021 or later, complete ENG 800: Race, Gender and the Human and ENG 802: Literary Criticism and Theory. These courses in criticism, theory, and method are designed to introduce students to historical and theoretical understandings of the human and to questions of value, equity, and social justice as well as the stakes and practices of current literary and cultural scholarship. Any substitution for these requirements must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

**2. Proseminars:** In your first year, attend a series of 4 – 6 workshops programmed by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and led by members of the Graduate Committee. These proseminars may require reading or other preparation. They will introduce students to the profession, research methodologies, and practical strategies for succeeding in graduate school.

**3. Course work:** Complete an additional 21 credits of graduate course work in English or related fields with attention to issues of criticism and theory, literary and cultural history, and multi-national or global literary traditions. No more than six credits of course work outside the department (excluding cross-listed courses, which count simply as ENG courses) may count towards the degree. Of these courses, students must complete one course that covers literature before 1800. Not more than four credits of ENG 890 Independent Study may be counted toward the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Literature in English. ENG 890 may not be substituted for any required course.

**3. Foreign-Language Requirement:** Demonstrate second-year proficiency at the college level in a language other than English within the first year of enrollment in the program. This may be done by completing course work through the 200 level (transcriptable courses passed in the student's undergraduate years shall count), passing an examination of reading comprehension, or completing a 400-level reading course for graduate students in a language other than English.

**4. Thesis or Portfolio:** Complete requirements for **Plan A** (thesis and four credits of English 899 Master's Thesis Research for a total of 31 required credits) or **Plan B** (one additional graduate course and final certifying examination in the form of a portfolio

for a total of 30 required credits), as described in the previous section (“M.A. Program Components / Plan Options”).

Plan A: Master's Thesis: The purpose of the M.A. thesis is to demonstrate the student’s ability to produce a publishable article that, as part of the thesis writing process, will be submitted to a journal. In consultation with a thesis director, the student will produce either an original thesis or a substantial revision of an earlier paper written for an M.A. course, approximately 30 – 40 pages in length. See previous section (“M.A. Program Components / Plan Options”) for more information.

Plan B: M.A. Certifying Examination: The purpose of the M.A. certifying examination is to demonstrate the student’s ability to reflect on and synthesize their graduate-level course work. The basis of the Certifying Examination will be a portfolio collected from the student in their last semester of study. The portfolio must contain five representative papers drawn from course work in the master’s program. On the basis of the five papers selected for the portfolio, the student will write an integrative, reflective essay of a minimum of 10 pages. See previous section (“M.A. Program Components / Plan Options”) for more information.

### **University Policy About Dissemination of Graduate Students’ Research**

In keeping with MSU’s public mission, the University requires that theses, dissertations and abstracts will become public after the conferral of the degree; embargoes can only be pursued for a limited period (see [1] below). Results that are subject to restrictions for dissemination by funding agencies (see [2] below) cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.

#### **[1] Hold/embargo on publication of documents submitted to ProQuest:**

Students submitting a thesis/dissertation to ProQuest now can request a hold/embargo of publication by ProQuest by contacting the Graduate School at [msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu](mailto:msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu). In response to the request, the Graduate School will send directly to the student a form that needs to be completed and turned to the Graduate School prior to submission of the document to ProQuest. The form needs to be signed by the student’s major professor and by the Associate Dean of the student’s college. The request for the hold/embargo may be for six months, one year or two years. Requests for a period longer than six months must include a written justification for the length of the hold/embargo.

#### **[2] Graduate students' participating in University Research Organization (URO; <https://uro.egr.msu.edu/>):**

Graduate students involved in a URO project will receive both written documentation and a verbal explanation of any limitations or implications to their current or future academic progress prior to participating on the project. Students engaging in work for a URO project undergo a 2-step approval process before hiring: a consultation with a representative of the URO’s office to explain the restrictions on the project, and an interview with the Graduate School Dean or Dean’s designee to discuss the relationship, if any, between their work as graduate students and their participation in the project. Students must be informed that results that are subject to restrictions for

dissemination cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation. As part of their degree program, all graduate students must have research options to ensure the generation of appropriate results to fulfill the degree requirements, and to have data for professional development activities that are integral to their graduate education (e.g., presentations at conferences and research seminars).

### **Independent Study (IS)**

A student in course work may have a compelling reason to take an IS with a faculty person. Provided that the student has a strong rationale and that the faculty person in question is willing to conduct an IS, the student should fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Graduate Secretary, who will pass it on to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. As stated above, students may count up to four credits of ENG 890 Independent Study toward the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Literature in English. English 890 may not be substituted for any required course.

### **Annual Progress Reports**

University: Written evaluations shall be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year and a copy of such evaluations shall be placed in the graduate student's file.

Department: [Annual Progress Reports for Plan A Master's Students](#) and [Annual Progress Reports for Plan B Master's Students](#) will be completed by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. In Spring of every year, M.A. students should download the form, fill out their section, and schedule a meeting with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. During this meeting, the Associate Chair will fill out their part and discuss it with the student. Both student and advisor will sign the form. The student should keep a copy, give a copy to the advisor, and give a copy to the Graduate Secretary to place in the student's file before the year ends.

### **English Language Testing: MSU Policy Affecting International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)**

MSU candidates for TA appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. Those ITAs who received a waiver of the TOEFL or of other accepted tests of English proficiency for admission, must also meet the requirement of proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned to teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. To meet this requirement, those ITAs may use any of three options listed below:

- Presenting a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 27 or higher.
- Receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [MSU Speaking Test](#)
- Taking [AAE 451 or AAE 452](#) (ITA language support courses) and receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [ITA Oral Interaction Test \(ITAOI\)](#).

Individual exceptions from these requirements (on a case-by-case basis in rare circumstances) will be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with the ELC upon the request of the department and with the endorsement of the Associate Dean of the College

## **Residency**

University: Master's Programs: A minimum of six credits in the degree program must be earned in residence on campus.

## **Graduation and Final Certification of the Degree**

Students must be registered in the term in which they plan to graduate. **Applications for graduation** can be obtained at the Office of the Registrar. See list of important dates for the deadline for application to graduate; generally, this falls on the first week of the term. Students who have not met the language requirement will not be certified for the degree. The thesis (**Plan A**) or examination (**Plan B**) must be completed no later than the term in which the student plans to graduate.

### **Sample M.A. Schedule**

Plan A = 27 credits of course work + 4 credits of research = 31 total credits

- Year 1: Attend the proseminars and take ENG 800, ENG 802, and three other graduate seminars (three credits each) for a total of 15 credits of course work. At end of Spring Semester, request Master's Thesis Proposal Form from Graduate Secretary. Meet with and select M.A. Thesis Advisor.
- Year 2: At start of Fall Semester, turn in Master's Thesis Proposal Form. Each semester, take two graduate seminars (three credits each) and two credits of ENG 899 (Master's Thesis Research) for a total of 12 credits of course work and four credits of ENG 899.

Plan B = 30 credits of course work

- Year 1: Attend the proseminars and take ENG 800, ENG 802, and three other graduate seminars (three credits each) for a total of 15 credits of course work.
- Year 2: Take five graduate seminars (three credits each) over Fall and Spring for a total of 15 credits of course work. In first week of Spring Semester, request Portfolio option form (this may be a modified version of Master's Thesis Proposal Form) from Graduate Secretary and turn it in, notifying the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies that you intend to submit Portfolio and take Certifying Exam. Turn in Portfolio no later than 10<sup>th</sup> week of Spring Semester.

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

A student who feels ready to begin doctoral work at the end of their second full semester of course work in the master's program may wish to apply for accelerated admission. Before the application is made, the student should discuss this decision with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

Students applying for accelerated admission into the Ph.D. program (admission after one year of M.A. course work instead of two) must have,

- Completed a minimum of five courses, including the required core courses and two seminars in literature from different periods;
- Completed the course work with a minimum of a 3.8 GPA.

Students must apply for accelerated admission no later than the last week of classes in their second full term of course work. The application, to be submitted to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, will include,

- A statement of purpose of 750-1000 words describing the student's specific area of interest(s) and desired area(s) of emphasis;
- Two letters from faculty in the Department of English who support the student's application for accelerated admission.

The Graduate Committee will review requests for accelerated admission by the first week after the completion of spring term (when grades for the spring term are available). Students will be notified shortly thereafter whether they have received accelerated admission. Students who are denied accelerated admission can apply for regular admission after completion of the M.A. program. Courses completed during the first year of the M.A. cannot be used to satisfy the 24 credits of required doctoral course work. However, students do not have to repeat 800 or 802 as Ph.D. students, nor are they required to repeat the pre-1800 course requirement.

## **Extensions of the Program**

Degrees awarded by the College of Art and Letters must reflect the current state of scholarship and achievement in its various fields. Thus, extensions to time limits for completing degrees are granted only if currency can be ensured (that is, course work and exams reflect the current state of a field).

Extensions are usually granted only once, so those recommending them must be convinced that the student can complete the degree by the new deadline requested. According to the Graduate School, students may technically apply for as many extensions as they want, but the chances of that extension being granted go down with each application. The chances are very good for a first extension, not great for a second extension, worse for a third extension (and more than likely won't be granted), and almost zero for a fourth and beyond.

For a degree extension, the first step is for the student to meet with the chair of their graduate advisory committee to agree on a plan for completion that meets the students needs and that garners the approval of the faculty on the committee.

After this meeting has occurred, CAL requires the following:

1. A letter from the student that includes their PID, requesting the extension. The letter should clarify the reason(s) for the extension and propose a request for a new degree completion date.
2. An endorsement from the Chair of the student's graduate advisory committee, affirming the viability of the plan proposed by the student. Please include any other relevant details or explanations that may be helpful such as changes in the makeup of the committee, etc.
3. An endorsement from the Graduate Program Director, expressing confidence in the proposed plan.

The latter two items can come in the form of an email from the Program Director, with the Advisor copied and the student letter attached.

The request must then be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Letters and the Dean of the Graduate School. Extension requests are frequently denied at one of these levels.

### **Recertification**

All required courses taken more than six before the new completion date of the MA must be recertified or removed from the final degree certification form. Recertification requires demonstration that the student's knowledge/achievement as represented by the completion of courses is current, is not out-of-date or obsolete.

### **International Travel**

Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the International Travelers Database (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency.

[http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers\\_database.htm](http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers_database.htm)

### **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Plans**

M.A. students must complete online and discussion-based training in RCR in order to graduate. See Appendix C for details.



**Explanation of M.A. Forms and Deadlines (available on [department website](#)):**

**1. Independent Study Form [pdf]:** If a student wishes to take an independent study, the form must be filled out completely and signed by the student, Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, and the instructor with whom the student wishes to work. The student will then be enrolled for the amount of credits listed on the form.

**2. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Completion Form [pdf]:** Used to help student track their completion of university requirements for RCR. Student should fill out and give a hard copy to the Graduate Secretary every year. The Graduate Secretary will record the student's completion of "Initial" and "Annual" training in GradPlan. Department form.

**3. [Annual Progress Reports for Master's Plan A, Master's Plan B, and Doctoral Students](#):** Used to track and evaluate progress. Student should schedule an annual meeting with their advisor (for M.A. students, this is the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies; for PhD students, this is the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and then, once selected, their Guidance Committee Chair) every year. Students should fill out their section and bring the form for their advisor to fill out the rest. Students should keep a copy of the final version, give one copy to the advisor, and give one copy to the Graduate Secretary to keep in their student file. University form.

**4. Master's Application to Accelerate [pdf]:** Used to accelerate from the M.A. to the Ph.D. program. Does not guarantee admission to the Ph.D. program. Must be submitted no later than the last week of classes in the student's 2<sup>nd</sup> semester as an M.A. student. Department form only.

**5. Master's Thesis Proposal Form [pdf]:** Used to describe thesis, provide a tentative schedule for completion, and finalize thesis advisor. Must be submitted at the beginning of the student's 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the M.A. program. Student must have two semesters of two credits of ENG 899 or one semester of four credits of ENG 899. Student must enroll themselves or request enrollment from the Graduate Secretary if enrollment is not possible. Department form only.

### III. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

#### A. Ph. D. Program Overview

The Ph.D. program offers advanced study of English, Anglophone, and some comparative literature at the doctoral level in a range of theoretical orientations and interdisciplinary, cross-field areas of study in combination with the historical periods that have generally defined the study of national literatures. Students may work in or across periods, including Medieval, Early Modern, Eighteenth-Century American or British Literature, Nineteenth-Century American or British Literature, Modernism, and Twentieth-Century and Contemporary Literature. Students may also work comparatively, or globally, concentrating on the study of world literatures in translation, their circulation, and dissemination. Students may also orient their studies generically (novel, drama, poem, essay, and the modern popular genres: romance, detective, science fiction, fantasy, horror), or theoretically (narrative, textual, semiotic, digital, social, cognitive, historical, archival, critical).

The advanced degree programs in the Department of English also offer students the opportunity to work in a choice of interdisciplinary fields and sub-fields that allow students to keep pace with the dynamic developments going on within the professional study of literature and to forge their own research projects accordingly. As students work in and across fields and periods they are required to develop a critical problem that engages with the innovative changes taking place in the discipline at large and to devise a research agenda in conversation with contemporary methodological and theoretical developments.

Working closely with faculty advisors and guidance committees, students are encouraged to create specialized interdisciplinary fields tailored to their own interest that bridge subjects or carve out new areas of research or fields of study.

Doctoral work in English prepares students to engage as scholars and teachers in the professional environment of universities and colleges and as contributors to on-going debates surrounding textual representation, discursive fields, interpretative approaches, cultural practices and histories, and pedagogies. Faculty expect Ph.D. candidates in English to

- Develop knowledge of their areas of expertise, as well as of the broader contexts of English studies;
- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of the theories, philosophies, and assumptions of critical, cultural and textual analysis and interpretation;
- Contribute to literary, cultural, and film studies through research and publication;
- Write at a professional level;
- Teach at a professional level;

- Contribute to the professional life of the department by attending lectures, organizing conferences, presenting their work to peers in the department and at conferences, and attending dissertation defenses.

## **B.**

### **Ph.D. Program Components / Plan Options**

#### **Program Components**

##### **1. Course Work**

Through an intense program of course work, oriented toward the most recent developments in literary, cultural, and film studies, graduate students are expected to attain the fundamental skills to conduct advanced original research in their fields of expertise. Seminars have the goal of both helping students to read critically within a particular genre or theoretical problem and to write an original seminar paper that is of publishable quality. Recognizing that the presentation of work is an important component of academic professionalization, the department expects students to attend departmental talks, as well as professional conferences, in order to establish contacts outside of the department and to receive feedback on their work from other perspectives. The department expects graduate students to actively seek forums for presenting and publishing their scholarship even as they complete the formative period of training in literary studies. The Department of English, College of Arts and Letters, and Graduate School offer financial support for professional presentations (see “Travel and Research Travel Awards”).

As Ph.D. students move through the program, they are expected not only to become experts in their fields of study, but also to be able to describe in a concise and clear manner their research methodologies and objectives. Learning to write proposals and abstracts is crucial to students’ professional training. To this end, course work often includes writing abstracts and proposals.

##### **2. Doctoral Comprehensive Exams**

Doctoral education in the humanities belongs to a long tradition of demonstrating the acquisition of knowledge and skills through comprehensive examinations and the writing and defense of dissertations. This process, as defined and practiced in the Department of English, is designed to qualify doctoral candidates as experts in their field and to prepare them to write original research.

The process of the comprehensive examination occurs in two parts. The first part sets students the task of forming a guidance committee; defining, formulating and defending a field of study and a critical problem; and generating reading lists around this field and problem. The resulting proposal and lists are read by both the student’s guidance committee and, after guidance committee approval, the department’s Graduate Committee. The second part is the performance of expertise in both written and oral examinations based on the materials defined in the proposal. The oral component prepares students to discuss and defend their work with faculty in a manner similar to that of an MLA job interview.

This examination process reveals,

- The extent of the student's knowledge of their field;
- The student's ability to synthesize materials, employ theories, and perform critical and interpretive tasks;
- The student's facility in forging and writing compelling arguments;
- The student's readiness to engage in critical conversations as an expert.

The guidance committee evaluates the examination on a pass/fail basis.

Students are expected to complete their comprehensive exams in approximately two semesters.

### **3. The Dissertation**

The dissertation is a written exercise engaging all of the skills required in the professional practices of research, argumentation, interpretation, and writing. Like the comprehensive exams, the process of the dissertation occurs in two parts. The first part is the production of a dissertation proposal that sets out a hypothesis, background, and method for an original research project, as well as a statement of its potential significance in the field. At a pre-dissertation examination that consists of an oral presentation based on a written proposal of the dissertation, students must show a mature knowledge of their project's historical parameters, theoretical investments, and critical contributions. The ability to summarize arguments orally with confidence, explain their intellectual significance, and defend their claims is fundamental to the successful preparation of all students. The dissertation proposal and pre-dissertation examination are reviewed by the student's guidance committee.

The second part is the research, writing, revision, and oral defense of the dissertation. The project demonstrates the ability to forge an original argument and perform expertly the tasks of writer and critic. An outstanding dissertation will be a thoroughly researched, convincingly argued, and carefully written manuscript that makes an original and authoritative intervention in a specialized field of literary, cultural, and/or film studies. Success in the dissertation is tested both in the dissertation itself and in the student's oral defense of the project. The dissertation defense is a public occasion, open to the department. The student's guidance committee evaluates the dissertation and the defense. The successful completion and defense of the dissertation marks the passage of graduate students into the profession.

### **4. Teaching**

As part of their broader professional training, our students teach in a wide array of courses in literature, writing, film, and culture. Typically students will apprentice as assistants with faculty before leading their own sections. In all configurations, graduate students receive annual assessments of their teaching from a faculty member based on classroom observation. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in student-led pedagogical workshops dealing with classroom issues on an ongoing basis during the academic year. Students will also have opportunities to work in the **Digital**

**Humanities and Literary Cognition Lab.** In these ways, students are encouraged to reflect on and improve the effectiveness of their teaching methods. That most students teach and take course work simultaneously means that they must develop a balance between these demands in graduate school just as they will as professors. Students have the opportunity to complete a **Certification for College Teaching**, which helps them to pull together their various teaching materials into a coherent reflection on their teaching experiences in preparation for the job market. Students who develop strong interests in pedagogy will have opportunities to lead pedagogy workshops.

## 5. The Job Market

The department runs job market workshops in the fall and spring to help candidates who are on the job market prepare cover letters, curriculum vitae, dissertation abstracts, teaching philosophy statements, and supporting materials. The department will also run mock interviews to prepare for job interviews at the Modern Language Association (MLA) annual meeting. In addition, the department holds other informal seminars on preparing for the job market, including workshops on writing for publication, interpreting job advertisements, creating teaching portfolios, and preparing for the MLA interview. Students on or approaching being on the job market are also asked to present a practice job talk to the department in preparation for a campus visit. The department has both an on-line and a hard copy subscription to the **MLA job list**. It is useful to look at the list well before you intend to go on the market, so that you have a good sense of how jobs are defined.

## Options

### [College of Arts and Letters Graduate Certificate in College Teaching](#)

Designed to provide background and training in teaching at the college level, the **Graduate Certificate in College Teaching** program includes course work, workshops and seminars that provide basic information on teaching and learning. In addition, the program requires a mentored teaching experience and the development of a teaching portfolio. Part of the purpose of the program is to prepare graduate students to teach in a range of institutions such as community colleges, liberal arts colleges, research-intensive universities, etc. The program is designed to supplement the student's degree program, and it may be tailored to meet the needs and goals of individual participants. The program provides coherence for the varied teaching experiences TAs gain as part of their careers as graduate students. This certification program offers teaching assistants a way of documenting their developing expertise as teachers. The materials developed in the teaching portfolio, along with the certificate and designation on the student's transcript, may assist graduates seeking employment in an increasingly competitive job market.

### [College of Arts and Letters Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities](#)

From the camera to the screen, digital tools and technologies shape how we tell stories, make art, shape experiences, and create interactions. Research has been similarly transformed by the availability of vast quantities of digital media (text, images, audio, and video). Learning how to work effectively in these digital environments is realm of digital humanists. The [CAL Graduate Certification in Digital Humanities](#) is a 9-credit sequence and experience that will help graduate students to negotiate the new digital spaces of creativity and research.

### [Interdisciplinary Graduate Specialization in Women's and Gender Studies](#)

The [Graduate Specialization in Women's and Gender Studies](#) is designed for completion by either master's or doctoral students. The WGS Graduate Specialization is designed to foster the study of women, gender, sexuality, and feminist theory across disciplines and national borders, provide professionalization opportunities for graduate students focusing on women, gender, and/or feminist studies, and to foster the growth of interdisciplinary research and teaching on women, gender, and sexualities. Emphasis is given to understanding the diversity of gender and sexuality—cross-culturally and globally. The specialization is open to graduate students with adequate undergraduate preparation in gender studies and currently enrolled in a graduate degree program at MSU. The specialization should complement advanced, discipline-based degrees by providing an interdisciplinary, feminist component. Students are encouraged to develop competence in the foreign language most relevant to their field of work and area of interest.

[View requirements for this specialization \(MSU Registrar's Office\)](#). Please email the GenCen with any questions / concerns at: [gencen@msu.edu](mailto:gencen@msu.edu)

### [Graduate Specialization in Animal Studies Social Science and Humanities Perspectives](#)

The [Graduate Specialization in Animal Studies: Social Science and Humanities Perspectives](#), which is administered by the Department of Sociology, provides graduate students with basic knowledge of relationships between humans and other animals and how they are linked together in a fragile biosphere. The graduate specialization is available as an elective for students who are enrolled in master's or doctoral degree programs at Michigan State University. With the approval of the department and college that administers the student's degree program, the courses that are used to satisfy the specialization may also be used to satisfy the requirements for a master's or doctoral degree. Students who plan to complete the requirements for the graduate specialization should consult the graduate advisor for the specialization in the Department of Sociology. [This program is now transitioning to an online graduate certificate in animal studies.]

## Graduate Certificate in Chicano/Latino Studies

The Graduate Certificate in Chicano/Latino Studies exposes students to methodologies specific to Chicano/Latino Studies, and to debates in the field that reflect larger transformations in United States culture and society. Students interested in research related to Chicanos and Latinos in the United States will find this certificate program of interest.



## C. Ph.D. Degree Requirements

In addition to meeting the requirements of the University and the College of Arts and Letters, students must meet the department requirements specified below:

**1. Core Courses:** For students enrolling in Fall 2021 or later, complete ENG 800: Race, Gender and the Human and ENG 802: Literary Criticism and Theory. These courses in criticism, theory, and method are designed to introduce students to historical and theoretical understandings of the human and to questions of value, equity, and social justice as well as the stakes and practices of current literary and cultural scholarship.

**2. Proseminars:** In your first year, attend a series of 4 – 6 workshops programmed by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and led by members of the Graduate Committee. These proseminars may require reading or other preparation. They will introduce students to the profession, research methodologies, and practical strategies for succeeding in graduate school.

**3. Course work:** Complete at least 18 credits of additional course work. Students may count up to nine credits of course work from other departments (excluding cross-listed courses) toward the degree. In order to count towards the degree, courses from other departments must be in related fields and must focus on issues of criticism and theory, literary and cultural history, or multinational or global literary traditions. In order to encourage historical breadth, students are required to complete at least one course that covers literature before 1800 and one course that covers literature after 1800. Courses taken during the M.A. program may count toward either of these requirements. Not more than three credits of independent study may be used to satisfy the course-work requirement. All required course work must be completed before students may enroll in doctoral dissertation research credits (ENG 999); any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. The total grade-point average for all course work must be at least 3.5.

**4. Comprehensive Examination Course:** For students enrolling in Fall 2017 and later, complete ENG 820 (a 1-credit Pass/Fail course) in the spring semester of Year 2. According to university recommendations, Ph.D. students should choose their guidance committee chair in the fall of their 2nd year. Students will choose their chair, who will then become faculty of record for this course. To pass the course, the student must meet regularly with the chair, prepare according to the chair's recommendations (such as reading a reasonable number of texts in the major field or critical problem), choose the rest of the committee, file the Guidance Committee Report on GradPlan and, by the end of Exam Week, submit a substantial draft of the proposal and lists.

**5. Foreign-Language Requirement:** Complete a language requirement at the college level. The language requirement for the Ph.D. is intended to provide students with the tools they need to conduct research in languages other than English. Each student should work in consultation with the guidance committee (or with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies) to determine which language or languages is/are most

appropriate for the student's research topic and which one of the following two options best fulfills this objective, considering the student's chosen area of study:

Option A: Demonstrate advanced reading proficiency at the college level in any language other than English. This may be done by taking course work in the language at the 400 level or above (the student may take the course pass/fail, but in order to pass, must receive a 3.0 or higher) or by passing an advanced reading comprehension and translation exam. Examples include German 400, French 400, Spanish 400, or Russian 410.

Option B: Demonstrate second-year proficiency at the college level in two languages other than English. This may be done by completing course work through the 200 level or by passing an examination of reading comprehension.

**6. Doctoral Dissertation Research Credits:** All doctoral students must register for and successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits and no more than 36 credits of doctoral dissertation research (ENG 999).

**7. Comprehensive Examination:** Pass the Ph.D. comprehensive examination and oral defense.

**8. Pre-Dissertation Examination:** Pass a pre-dissertation examination that consists of an oral presentation based on a written proposal of the dissertation.

**9. Dissertation Defense:** Pass a final oral examination in defense of the dissertation.

**10. Submit Dissertation to Graduate School:** Within one semester of defending, format and submit dissertation to Graduate School. During this time, final revisions, if required by guidance committee, must be completed and approved. Apply for graduation.

Any substitutions for these requirements must be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

### **Independent Study (IS)**

A student in course work may have a compelling reason to take an IS with a faculty person. Provided that the student has a strong rationale and that the faculty person in question is willing to conduct an IS, the student should fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the Graduate Secretary, who will pass it on to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. As stated above, students may count up to three credits of ENG 890 Independent Study toward the requirements for the Ph.D. degree in Literature in English. English 890 may not be substituted for any required course.

### **Expected Time to Degree (Time Limits)**

The department recommends that students pass their Comprehensive Examinations in their third year and complete the Ph.D. program in five years total.

Students must pass their Comprehensive Examinations within five years and all remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within eight years from the date of enrollment in the first course included for degree certification. If a student does not complete the program in eight years, then, the semester before they are ready to graduate, they must apply for an extension (see "Extensions of the Program" below), and, if five years have passed since taking the Comprehensive Examinations, may have to retake their Comprehensive Examinations (see "Recertification" below).

The student must submit the dissertation within one semester of defending. If a student takes longer than one semester to submit their dissertation after defending, they must apply for an extension.

### Extensions of the Program

Degrees awarded by the College of Art and Letters must reflect the current state of scholarship and achievement in its various fields. Thus, extensions to time limits for completing degrees are granted only if currency can be ensured (that is, course work and exams reflect the current state of a field).

Extensions are usually granted only once, so those recommending them must be convinced that the student can complete the degree by the new deadline requested. According to the Graduate School, students may technically apply for as many extensions as they want, but the chances of that extension being granted go down with each application. The chances are very good for a first extension, not great for a second extension, worse for a third extension (and more than likely won't be granted), and almost zero for a fourth and beyond.

For a degree extension, the first step is for the student to meet with the chair of their graduate advisory committee to agree on a plan for completion that meets the students needs and that garners the approval of the faculty on the committee.

After this meeting has occurred, CAL requires the following:

4. A letter from the student that includes their PID, requesting the extension. The letter should clarify the reason(s) for the extension and propose a request for a new degree completion date.
5. An endorsement from the Chair of the student's graduate advisory committee, affirming the viability of the plan proposed by the student. Please include any other relevant details or explanations that may be helpful such as changes in the makeup of the committee, etc.
6. An endorsement from the Graduate Program Director, expressing confidence in the proposed plan.

The latter two items can come in the form of an email from the Program Director, with the Advisor copied and the student letter attached.

The request must then be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Letters and the Dean of the Graduate School. Extension requests are frequently denied at one of these levels.

The student must submit the revised dissertation within one semester of defending. In the event that a student takes more than one semester to submit their dissertation to the Graduate School, he must fill out the form requesting an [Extension Due to Delay in Submitting Final MA Thesis or Doctoral Document to the Graduate School](#). The form is sent to the College Dean and the Graduate School.

## Grading

MSU uses a numerical system consisting of the following scale: 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, 0.0. In some instances and under special circumstances, the grade of I-Incomplete or DF-Deferred may be given to graduate students who are doing satisfactory work but who cannot complete it because of reasons acceptable to the instructor. The decision of whether or not to grant an incomplete or deferred grade and the conditions by which that grade is to be made up rests with the course instructor. By University regulations, the work must be completed and a grade reported within the first six weeks of the next semester (including summer) for an incomplete, within two calendar years for a deferred. An excessive number of incomplete or deferred grades indicates an inability to complete course work and hence may become grounds for judging that a student is not making satisfactory progress towards the completion of their degree program.

## GradPlan/SIS

GradPlan was developed for Ph.D. students to design their Ph.D. program of study, record faculty approval, and make notes on all the degree requirements as they are completed. **GradPlan will be the only way final degree certification/degree audit will be conducted beginning in Spring 2017.** GradPlan replaces the Report of the Guidance Committee, Record of Comprehensive Exam, and the Dissertation Final Defense form and the final certification form.

You will now access GradPlan through the Student Information System (SIS). Instructions on using GradPlan via SIS are available here:  
[https://sis.msu.edu/\\_assets/documents/graduate/GR-GradPlanOverview-Student.pdf](https://sis.msu.edu/_assets/documents/graduate/GR-GradPlanOverview-Student.pdf)

Ph.D. students should begin entering information about their graduate committee on GradPlan in their 2<sup>nd</sup>-year of their program. Once the student has selected a chair and the rest of the committee, schedule the Guidance Committee Meeting. On GradPlan, click on "Committees" and then "Manage Committee." Once the entire committee is identified and a Committee Chair or Co-chairs selected, click **Submit Committee for**

**Approval** to initiate the workflow approval process. The request will be routed to various program and college approvers, including to each committee member to confirm their willingness to serve, before being added to the student record.

### **English Language Testing: MSU Policy Affecting International Teaching Assistants (ITAs)**

MSU candidates for TA appointments who were required to demonstrate English proficiency as a condition for regular admission to Michigan State University must also demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of proficiency in spoken English before they can be assigned teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. Those ITAs who received a waiver of the TOEFL or of other accepted tests of English proficiency for admission, must also meet the requirement of proficiency in spoken English before they are assigned to teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. To meet this requirement, those ITAs may use any of three options listed below:

- Presenting a TOEFL iBT speaking section score of 27 or higher.
- Receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [MSU Speaking Test](#)
- Taking [AAE 451 or AAE 452](#) (ITA language support courses) and receiving a score of 50 or higher on the [ITA Oral Interaction Test \(ITAOI\)](#).

Individual exceptions from these requirements (on a case-by-case basis in rare circumstances) will be considered by the Graduate School in consultation with the ELC upon the request of the department and with the endorsement of the Associate Dean of the College.

### **Residency**

University: One year of residence on campus after first enrollment for doctoral degree credit is required to permit the student to work with and under the direction of the faculty, and to engage in independent and cooperative research utilizing university facilities. A year of residence will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of credits at the level of full-time status of graduate work each semester.

### **Dual Doctoral Degrees**

All dual major doctoral degrees must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A request for the dual major degree must be submitted within one semester following its development and within the first two years of the student's enrollment at Michigan State University. A copy of the guidance committee report must be attached. See Academic Programs

<https://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Text.aspx?Section=111#s407> for details.

### **Degree Stages**

The doctoral degree involves several stages: completing course work and language requirements, forming a guidance committee, taking comprehensive exams, designing a dissertation project, and refining it through a pre-dissertation examination, and

completing and defending the dissertation. At some point in the writing of the dissertation, you will start the job search process. Because each stage of the degree is related to the next, you will need to be thinking ahead, and considering how your course work, comprehensive exams, and dissertation will relate to your ultimate career path. From the beginning of your course work, you should be talking with advisors about job possibilities. The department holds some workshops that will help you in thinking through these issues, but nothing can replace one-on-one conversations with those who have been through the process.

The stages of the degree break down roughly as follows (detailed information can be found in later sections):

### Overview of Degree Stages

#### *Years 1 and 2: Course Work, Foreign Language Requirement, and Formation of Guidance Committee*

- Complete course work.
- In Year 1, decide whether you will fulfill language requirement by pursuing one language or two.
- By Year 2, fulfill language requirement.
- In Fall of Year 2, consult with Associate Chair of Graduate Studies about composition of your committee. At this stage, have a general idea of your dissertation topic. Consult [MLA Job Information List](#) to get a good sense of how jobs are defined.
- By end of Fall of Year 2, choose your chair and other members of your guidance committee.
- In Spring of Year 2, hold a meeting of your guidance committee (done under auspices of ENG 820). After that meeting, through GradPlan (via SIS) request electronic approval of your Guidance Committee Report Form from your committee.
- After filing Guidance Committee Report, begin working in consultation with your guidance committee on the Comprehensive Examination Proposal and Reading Lists.

#### *Year 3: Comprehensive Examination and Oral Defense*

- By early Fall of Year 3, have your Comprehensive Examination Proposal and Reading Lists approved by your guidance committee.
- By November of Year 3, submit the Proposal and Lists to the Graduate Committee for approval.
- After the Proposal and Lists are approved by the Graduate Committee and the Associate Chairperson for Graduate Study, schedule an examination date with the Graduate Secretary. At this time, schedule oral component of examination for a date two weeks after written examination. Exams may not be scheduled during the last two weeks of the semester or during the summer, except under extenuating circumstances and with the agreement of the guidance committee and the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

- By end of Year 3, take written comprehensive examination followed by oral examination.

#### *Year 3 to 4: Dissertation Proposal*

- After passing Comprehensive Examination and Oral Defense, immediately begin work on dissertation proposal.

#### *Years 4 and 5: Pre-Dissertation Examination, Dissertation, Defense, and Job Market*

- At beginning of Year 4, take pre-dissertation examination.
- Aim to write a chapter each semester. (For example, a chapter per semester over the next two years.)
- In Year 4, attend job market workshops.
- In the Summer between Years 4 and 5, begin drafting job market materials. Inform your committee of your intentions to go on the job market. Request letters of recommendation before the Fall semester begins to ensure that you are giving your committee adequate time. Polish a chapter from your dissertation into an article and submit to a top journal in your field.
- In Spring of Year 5, defend. All members of your committee should receive a copy of the final draft of your dissertation at least two weeks before the defense. You should apply for graduation at the beginning of the term in which you expect to defend. You must be enrolled during the semester in which you defend, but you do not have to be enrolled during the semester in which you submit your dissertation (in the case of major revisions) or graduate.
- Check deadlines for submitting dissertation to Graduate School. Visit the [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions](#) website. For additional information on requirements for graduation, pick up a completion checklist from Graduate Secretary.
- Job search.

### **Snapshot of Degree Stages**

<u>Years 1 and 2:</u>	Course work; foreign-language requirement; formation of guidance committee and approval of Guidance Committee Report.
<u>Year 3:</u>	Comprehensive examinations and oral defense; between years 3 and 4, dissertation proposal.
<u>Years 4 and 5:</u>	Dissertation proposal, pre-dissertation examination, dissertation, defense, publication from dissertation, and job search.

### **Registering for ENG 999 Credits**

To graduate, you must have at least 24 doctoral research credits (ENG 999), but no more than 36. While you have a tuition waiver, work with your Ph.D. advisory committee on a plan to meet the 999 requirements. Please note: once you have completed the

Comprehensive Examinations and are working on the dissertation, you only need 1 credit to be considered "full time" for financial aid and other purposes.

### **Annual Progress Reports**

University: Written evaluations shall be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year and a copy of such evaluations shall be placed in the graduate student's file.

Department: Until you select a chairperson, **Annual Progress Reports** for Ph.D students will be completed by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. Once you have selected a chairperson, they will complete it. In Spring of every year, students should download the form, fill out their section, and schedule a meeting with their chair. During this meeting, the chair will fill out their part and discuss it with the student. Both student and chair will sign the form. The student should keep a copy, give a copy to the chair, and give a copy to the Graduate Secretary to place in the student's file before the year ends.

### **Taking a Leave of Absence or Withdrawing from the Program**

If a student wishes to take a leave of absence or withdraw from the program, they should first consult with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and their Guidance Committee Chair, if they have chosen one. Upon deciding to take leave or withdraw, the student must send an official letter to both stating that they are doing so. If the student is taking a leave of absence, they should also indicate the intended date of return.

Per university policy, graduate students whose enrollment at Michigan State University is interrupted for any reason so that they have not been enrolled for three consecutive semesters, including the summer sessions, must apply for readmission via the web at [www.reg.msu.edu](http://www.reg.msu.edu) at least two months prior to the first day of registration for the semester in which the student expects to resume graduate studies. Faculty will evaluate the application to determine admission.

The department only keeps open files of students for five years. If a student plans to return after five years, they should inform the department to maintain their file. If the student is withdrawing or taking a leave of absence in a semester in which they have a Graduate or Research Assistantship, the student must also notify the Graduate School in writing.

See Academic Programs:

<https://reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.aspx?Section=112#s498>.

### **Failure to Progress**

Ph.D. students are expected to progress through the program according to the Degree Stages outlined earlier. If a student can not meet the milestones in the program in a



timely manner, then the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and the Guidance Committee Chair, if the student has already chosen one, will write an official letter of progress reminding the student of the timeline and establishing a reasonable deadline for the student to fulfill the required next stage. If the student does not sign and return the letter, indicating their agreement to the terms, or if the student does not satisfy the criteria laid out in the letter in the given time frame, the department will consider that student to have withdrawn from the program and will act accordingly.

### **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Plans**

Ph.D. students must complete online and discussion-based training in RCR in order to graduate. See Appendix C for details.

**Explanation of Ph.D. Forms and Deadlines (available on the [department website](#)):**

**1. Independent Study Form [pdf]:** If a student wishes to take an independent study, the form must be filled out completely and signed by the student, Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, and the instructor with whom the student wishes to work. The student will then be enrolled for the amount of credits listed on the form.

**2. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Training Completion Form [pdf]:** For students enrolling in Fall 2016 or later. Used to help students track their completion of university requirements for RCR. Student should fill out and give a hard copy to the Graduate Secretary every year. The Graduate Secretary will record the student's completion of "Initial" and "Annual" training in GradPlan. Department form.

**3. [Annual Progress Reports for Master's Plan A, Master's Plan B, and Doctoral Students](#):** Used to track and evaluate progress. Students should schedule an annual meeting with their advisor (for MA students, this is the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies; for PhD students, this is the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and then, once selected, their Guidance Committee Chair) every year. Students should fill out their section and bring the form for their advisor to fill out the rest. Students should keep a copy of the final version, give one copy to the advisor, and give one copy to the Graduate Secretary to keep in their student file. University form.

**4. [Request Extension \(Due to Delay in Submitting Final MA Thesis or Doctoral Document to the Graduate School\)](#):** If a student has taken more than 1 semester to submit their thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School, they must sign this form. The form is sent to the College Dean and the Graduate School.

**5. Guidance Committee Report [pdf]:** Used to formalize the student's guidance committee. Must include courses that the student has taken and must be signed by the student's committee. Student must submit the guidance committee report no later than the last semester of their 2nd year. Students planning to graduate in Spring 2017 or later must use GradPlan to submit this report.

**6. [Change in Guidance Committee Report Form](#):** Used to change guidance committee members, committee chair, changes in course requirements, languages, comp areas, dissertation field, etc. There is no due date and can be used at any time of the student's time in the program, but all changes must be made and filed before the student defends. Sent to College Dean's office, guidance committee, student and a copy remains in the department.

**7. Comprehensive Exam Proposal and Reading Lists Approval Form [pdf]:** Used to state major field, critical problem area and show approval of the student's guidance committee before being submitted to the graduate committee for review and approval. Student must submit the form before the end of their 3rd year. Department form only.

**8. Record of Written Comprehensive Exam [pdf]:** Signed by the student's committee to acknowledge successful completion of the student's written comprehensive exam. Form is signed at the student's oral examination, 2 weeks after their written examination. If

the student has not passed their written comprehensive exam, the guidance committee must convey that to the student and the form will not be signed until successful completion. Comprehensive exams must be completed by the end of the student's 4th year. Department form only.

**9. Record of Oral Defense of Written Comprehensive Examination [pdf]:** Signed by the student's committee to acknowledge successful completion of the student's oral comprehensive examination. Form is signed at the student's oral examination which must be given 2 weeks after the student's written examination. If the student does not pass their oral examination, the guidance committee must convey that to the student and the form will be marked as "failed" and placed in the student's file. The student has one additional opportunity to pass the oral examination. A copy of the questions that served as the basis for the oral examination must be attached. Comprehensive exams must be completed by the end of the student's 4th year. Department form only.

**10. Record of Pre-Dissertation Examination [pdf]:** Signed by the student's committee to acknowledge successful completion of the student's pre-dissertation examination. The examination is determined by the student's committee either as an informal meeting or an actual defense. Pre-dissertation exam must be taken by the beginning of the student's 2nd semester as a 5th year. Department form only.

**11. [Record of Dissertation and Oral Examination Requirements for Doctoral Degree Candidate](#):** Signed by the student's committee to acknowledge successful defense of the student's dissertation. The dissertation defense should be before the student's 8th year. If there are any major revisions, the form is retained in the office until the revisions are approved by the committee chair. If there are no major revisions, the form is sent to the College Dean, the guidance committee, the student, and a copy remains in the department. Student must apply for graduation.

## **D.**

### **Ph.D. Selection of the Guidance Committee Chairperson**

The Associate Chair of Graduate Studies serves as the principal advisor for students in the first year of the program. The University requires that each graduate student admitted to a doctoral program has the responsibility to form a guidance committee with the approval and the assistance of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. When you start the program, you should begin thinking about which faculty person best suits the work you have done and would like to do and consult with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies to help you select your committee chair.

#### **Deadline**

The guidance committee chairperson should be selected and the guidance committee formed in the third semester of doctoral study (typically the fall of Year 2 in the Ph.D. program), but no later than the fourth semester (the spring of Year 2). From the time that the chairperson is chosen and the committee is formed, they shall have the principal responsibility for advising and evaluating the student's progress.

#### **Requirements for Guidance Committee Chairperson**

The guidance committee chairperson must be someone within the English Department and must have an earned doctoral degree, preferably of the same type that the student is seeking.

#### **Chairperson's Duties**

The guidance committee chairperson acts as the major professor or faculty advisor of the student. They chairperson is involved in the initial stages of the Comprehensive Examination Proposal and Lists and consults with the other members of the guidance committee, who also have significant input on the composition of the proposal and lists. The chairperson shall be faculty of record for ENG 820 (for students enrolling in Fall 2017 or later).

The guidance committee chairperson typically leads the oral examination component of the comprehensive examination and the dissertation defense. They also typically read the first versions of materials—such as the comprehensive examination proposal and lists, the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation chapters—providing comments and guidance that the student incorporates before passing the materials on to the rest of the guidance committee.

The guidance committee chairperson advises the student on the choice of field, critical problem, dissertation topic, and the job market. They participate in the professionalization of the student by advising them on how to apply for jobs.

Once a year, usually the Spring semester, the student will complete an [Annual Progress Report](#), attach the appropriate materials, and send it to their chairperson. The chairperson will then fill out the appropriate section, meet with the student to discuss it, and put a copy in the student's file.

For more information, visit [Guidelines for Graduate Student Advising and Mentoring Relationships](#).

### **Special Circumstances**

If your guidance committee chair leaves MSU before you complete your degree, then you should inform all committee members of the situation and consult with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. You should also determine if the faculty person is willing to continue on in their role after leaving MSU. If so, this decision is subject to the approval of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair. The possibility to continue to work with a chair once they have left MSU holds only for students who have already had their dissertation proposal approved and pre-dissertation exam passed. If a student has not yet satisfied these requirements, then the student should choose a new chair from within the department.

If you and/or your chair can no longer work together, consult with the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and, if need be, the Department Chair. The Associate Chair will gather as much information as possible and, first, attempt to resolve the issue. If the Associate Chair of Graduate deems it appropriate to choose another committee chair, they will determine whether there are other suitable faculty members with whom you might work. If that faculty person agrees, fill out a Change in Guidance Committee Form. For students planning to graduate in Spring 2017 or later, initiate this process through GradPlan (via SIS).

## **E.**

### **Ph.D. Formation of the Guidance Committee**

Each Ph.D. graduate student has the responsibility to form a guidance committee with the approval and the assistance of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. When forming a guidance committee, you should seek the advice of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies and you should engage in substantive discussions with students and faculty who share your research interests. Your guidance committee must be in place, and the Guidance Committee Report filed on GradPlan, before you begin planning and preparing for your comprehensive exams.

#### **Deadline**

The guidance committee should be formed in the third semester of doctoral study (typically the fall of Year 2 in the Ph.D. program), but no later than the fourth semester (the spring of Year 2).

#### **Requirements for Ph.D. Guidance Committee**

The guidance committee will consist of at least four Michigan State University regular faculty, at least three of whom, including the committee chairperson, possess an earned doctoral degree, preferably of the same type that the student is seeking (for example, Ph.D.).

An exception may be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School to allow a non-tenure stream faculty member or an Academic Specialist to serve on a doctoral student's guidance committee as one of the four required faculty members or as the chairperson of a doctoral student's guidance committee. With the approval of the chairperson or the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, an exception may be granted to allow an Emeritus faculty member to serve as one of the four required faculty members on a doctoral student's guidance committee; in addition, an Emeritus faculty member may continue to serve as the chairperson of a guidance committee. More than four persons may be members of the guidance committee. Persons who are not Michigan State University regular faculty who can contribute to the student's program may serve as members of the guidance committee and assist in the work of the committee. University policy stipulates that the number of such persons may not exceed the number of regular faculty on the committee. However, the department strongly encourages the guidance committee to keep the number of non-MSU members to one. To make this request, follow the procedures at <https://grad.msu.edu/non-regular-faculty-committees>.

#### **Ph. D. Guidance Committee Duties**

In consultation with the student, the guidance committee plans the entire program, including examinations, and thereafter supervises it, making modifications as needed until the degree is completed.

The guidance committee will assist the student in the fulfillment of the following requirements:

- Completing a language requirement;
- Choosing further course work if deemed necessary;
- Preparing Comprehensive Examination Reading Lists and Proposal and taking the comprehensive examination;
- Choosing a dissertation topic;
- Passing a pre-dissertation examination covering the subject of the dissertation;
- Successfully defending the completed dissertation at an oral examination administered by the student's guidance committee.

Once designated, the guidance committee has the responsibility to meet periodically to oversee the graduate student's progress for as long as the graduate student continues in good standing. Any desired or required changes in the membership of the guidance committee may be made by the graduate student with the concurrence of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies in accordance with University, College and unit policy. A change of committee form must be filed with the department, with the requisite signatures, in order for the change to be considered official. For those students graduating in Spring 2017 or later, initiate this process through GradPlan.

The membership of the guidance committee, with the concurrence of the graduate student, may be changed as appropriate to the dissertation topic. Guidance committee chairpersons on leave shall provide for the necessary guidance of their advisees during their absence.

It is the responsibility of the guidance committee to provide regular feedback to the student on their performance and progress in the program (including constructive criticism if the student's progress does not meet expectations).

It is the responsibility of the student to keep the guidance committee chair and the guidance committee apprised on a regular basis of their progress toward completion of the degree.

For additional information about the guidance committee, refer to ["Planning a Doctoral Program and Appointment of a Guidance Committee"](#) in Academic Programs.

### **Ph.D. Guidance Committee Report on GradPlan**

Toward the end of Year 2, hold a meeting of your guidance committee. At this meeting, you and your committee will discuss the draft of your exam lists and proposal, whether you need to complete additional course work based on your project or special area, and whether you have completed the language requirement. After this meeting, you will also fill enter the information concerning your committee members under "Committees" on GradPlan and seek electronic approval of it from your committee.

**This report must be filed on GradPlan before the Graduate Committee will consider a student's reading lists and proposal for the comprehensive examination.**



## F. Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Students should take their comprehensive examination in their third year and are required to take it within five years of the date of enrollment in the first course included for degree certification. The purpose of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination is to demonstrate mastery of a field of study and analytical acumen by approaching that field through the lens of a critical problem. The examination lists and the examination itself are intended to give the student the grounding and expertise necessary to produce new knowledge in their field of inquiry.

The Ph.D. examination consists of

- 1) A written examination based on two reading lists that have been generated by the student in consultation with their guidance committee. The lists, as defined below, will provide both breadth and depth, field expertise and critical focus. The rationale for the lists will be provided by the student through an examination proposal.
- 2) An oral defense of the written examination.

### The Process

1. Within six months of completing doctoral course work (if completed in the Spring Semester of the second year, then in November of the following fall semester), submit to the Graduate Committee (1) two reading lists and (2) an examination proposal that have been developed in consultation with and approved in writing by your guidance committee.
2. Once your reading lists and examination proposal have been approved by the Graduate Committee, you may schedule your comprehensive examination with the Graduate Secretary. At this time, schedule the oral component of the examination for a date two weeks after the written examination. Exams may not be scheduled during the last two weeks of the semester (including exam week) or during the summer, except under extenuating circumstances and with the agreement of the guidance committee and the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. If the Graduate Committee does not approve the lists and/or proposal, the student will have no more than one month's extension to revise the proposal and/or lists and resubmit them. Students may not schedule the examination date until after the proposal and lists have been approved by the Graduate Committee.
3. Within one calendar year of completing doctoral course work (typically the end of Year 3), the student takes a written examination in which they respond in essay form to three out of five questions devised by the guidance committee on the basis of the lists and proposal.
4. Within two weeks of having taken and passed the written examination, the student will take an oral examination based on the written examination, the proposal, and the

lists.

5. Students who fail the written examination will not take the oral portion until after they have retaken and passed the written examination. They may retake the written examination only once.

6. Students who fail the oral examination may retake it only once. Students can petition the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies to retake the examination after a second failure, but given the structure of the examination process, these petitions should be infrequently granted.

## **Examination Lists and Proposals**

### Examination Reading Lists

The two lists will include a comprehensive selection of texts relating to,

*Category I.* An historical period (e.g. Victorian Literature), genre (e.g. drama), or other field recognizable in the discipline (e.g. Literary Theory) (approximately 75 items)

*Category II.* A critical problem—a specific area of theoretical and methodological inquiry that focuses the larger area of inquiry represented by list I (e.g. Representations of History in the Victorian Novel; City Comedy and Early Modern Cosmopolitanism; Feminist Theory as an Anti-Globalist Enterprise), and which will lead, at a later stage, to the framing of the dissertation project (app. 50 items)

By separating the examination list into two distinct but mutually engaged categories, we hope to structure into the process a productive dialogue between coverage and specific expertise, so that the student's critical focus takes place against the backdrop of a broad familiarity with their field. In constructing their lists in consultation with the examination committee and chair, candidates should minimize overlap as much as possible. The stated numerical requirements for the breadth of each category represents an approximate number of book-length items; clearly if the student's list includes a number of articles or book chapters, the number of titles would rise significantly.

On both lists, all primary texts should include the earliest publication date; all secondary texts should include full bibliographical information following MLA format.

### *Category I. Historical Period, Genre, or Field (75 items)*

Students may choose to be examined in any field or historical period recognized in the discipline. The period or field need not be limited to one national tradition (British or American, for example), and students may be examined in work coming from more than one historical period. The majority of texts chosen for this category should be primary texts.

Because the majority of academic jobs are still articulated according to field, genre and/or historical period, the purpose of Category I is to ensure that students understand individual works within a larger social, intellectual, political, theoretical, or artistic context; that students develop mastery of their field; and that students consider their dissertation projects in light of, though not in subservience to, traditionally defined areas in the professional study of English. This list should be varied in emphasis: if historically defined, it should not limit itself to a single genre, literary form, or cultural text. If defined as a genre, it should not limit itself to a specific historical period.

### *Category II. Critical Problem (50 items)*

List II includes a selection of items that establish the basis for developing a specific critical problem and which unite and illuminate the field/genre/period-related focus defined by the texts in Category I. The critical problem, in an ideal scenario, is the germinal form of the ideas/interventions that might form the basis of a dissertation. The critical problem list indicates an area and mode of inquiry rather than a formulated thesis; in a sense it remains an open question for the student to explore while preparing for the examination.

The purpose of Category II, and of the examination proposal, is to require students to begin the process of synthesizing and concentrating their field of study as quickly as possible following the completion of their course work. Taken together, Category II and the examination proposal will guide and direct the process of studying for the qualifying exams, and should not in any way restrict or inhibit it. Both the written and oral examinations will provide the student with an opportunity to sharpen, confirm, or complicate their critical problem and thus prepare the student to write a focused dissertation proposal. Again, the goal of this category is to put the student's general study of their field and the specific nature of their interests into dialogue as early and forcefully as possible.

### Examination Proposal (8 – 12 pages)

Articulating the critical problem and its stakes is the primary burden of the examination proposal. The examination proposal will also clarify the parameters, as well as articulate the rationale and organizing principles, of the student's two reading lists.

Working in close consultation with their guidance committee, the student will develop an examination proposal, which will be submitted for their guidance committee's approval within three months of the student's completion of course work. This document, 8 – 12 pages in length, must include: (1) a broad rationale for the contents and parameters of the lists, as well as their particular conjunction; and (2) a specific argument which explains the critical problem, locates its significance with respect to Category I, sets forth the questions this problem seeks to address, and characterizes the critical debates for which this problem will provide an intervention. Unlike a dissertation proposal, the examination proposal doesn't argue a formal thesis. The proposal serves as a guide to further research, not a report of conclusions. Thus, the examination proposal should explain the basis and selection of the reading lists,

articulate the student's direction and the method of inquiry that will be enabled by the reading lists, and situate this direction and method within existing scholarly work in the field.

## **The Examination**

### Written Examination

Drawing from the examination proposal and the lists, the guidance committee will formulate questions for the written portion of the examination. The written examination will typically give the student five questions and ask for essay-length (8-12 page) responses to three. Students may also be encouraged to formulate a few questions beforehand, with the understanding that the final form of the questions will ultimately be determined by the chair and the committee. The written examination questions should cover each of the two list categories in some fashion, and include at least one "synthetic" question that asks students to put material from Category II (critical problem) into dialogue with material from Category I.

The examination will be administered according to a take-home format. Students will have five full days to complete the exam once they have received the exam questions from the Graduate Secretary. Upon completion of the exam, students will submit their responses to the Graduate Secretary, who will circulate the essays to the guidance committee. The student's guidance committee will grade the written examination pass/fail by evaluating whether or not the student effectively demonstrates mastery of the field and a nuanced comprehension of the critical problem; only if a majority assigns a grade of pass will the examination proceed to the oral component. Readers should report their grade to the chair of the committee and the chair of the committee should inform the student of the committee's decision no later than four days after receiving the examination. There should be a one to two week delay between the written and oral portions of the examination. If the committee gives the examination a failing grade, the readers will explain their reasons for doing so in a memo to the chair of the guidance committee, and the chair will convey this information, with appropriate commentary, to the student, as well as to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.

A student who fails the written portion must retake the examination within six months, and must pass it the second time in order to remain in the program. Once a student has passed the written examination, they will not have to retake it in the event that they fail the oral examination, provided the oral examination is retaken and passed within six months.

### Oral Examination

The student should discuss the nature of the oral examination with their chair after passing the written examination. Discussion about the oral examination should be kept to a minimum and may address perceived weaknesses in the written examination that

may form a significant portion of the oral examination. In no way should any discussion between student and chair function as a means of preparation for the oral.

At the beginning of the oral examination, the student will be asked to present an opening statement that may elaborate on the nature of their research interests and/or address the nature of their written responses (10-15 minutes). The student should address the significance of their work, the evolution of the critical problem over the course of examination preparation, and the current state of their thinking about the problem. Subsequent questions may follow up on this presentation or return to the written examination, but in general the oral examination should be focused on the implications of the students critical problem and related issues. The examination should take no more than two hours.

The grade on the oral examination should be reported to the student promptly, ideally within an hour after the examination. Typically, the student will be excused from the room following the examination, and the committee will deliberate over their performance.

The oral examination may be retaken only once. Students can petition the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies to retake the examination after a second failure, but given the structure of the examination process, these petitions should be infrequently granted.

## G. Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal and Pre-Dissertation Examination

### Dissertation Proposal

This is an important stage in the dissertation writing process, but remember that it is not the dissertation itself, so don't spend an inordinate amount of time completing it. The dissertation proposal may consist of an abstract, introduction, proposal, or sample chapter, a chapter outline, and a bibliography. Work out the form of your proposal with the chair of your guidance committee.

### Pre-Dissertation Examination

Schedule: Students can take the examination at a time agreed upon with their guidance committee; it is expected that the pre-Dissertation examination will be scheduled no later than one year after the completion of the Ph.D. comprehensive examination. Ideally, it will be scheduled early in Year 4 of the Ph.D., allowing the student to write the dissertation in Years 4 and 5.

Purpose: To assess the student's readiness to proceed with the outlined direction of the dissertation. Here, you will receive feedback from all members of your guidance committee about your project. You and your committee will decide together what you need to do to complete your project, what changes you might need to make in your direction, how your topic will relate to your area of specialization on the job market. You should also come to an agreement about the dissertation writing process. Will all of your committee members read each chapter as you write? Will they look at larger portions of the project, after they have been revised in consultation with your director?

Format: Candidates will give an oral presentation based on a written proposal of their dissertation, which will minimally include an abstract, introduction, proposal, or sample chapter, a chapter outline, and a bibliography. The guidance committee members will ask questions based on the written materials.

Examination Committee: Same as student's guidance committee.

Grading: The guidance committee will evaluate the pre-dissertation examination and confer upon it a grade of pass/fail. They will register their grade on the "Record of Pre-Dissertation Examination" form. The pre-dissertation examination may be retaken only once.

## Guidelines for Digital Humanities Dissertations

Students who wish to produce a dissertation, or a portion of a dissertation, in a digital format should consult with their guidance committee and the Director of the Digital Humanities Program for the College of Arts and Letters. Their Guidance Committee must give final approval of the project before students may begin. Candidates and committees should be in active communication about the project's specific requirements and milestones throughout the process.

Requirements:

- Compose a written rationale and description, which can resemble a dissertation chapter or take a different shape. The project rationale and description should address the following issues: the feasibility of the project in retaining rights and permissions for any materials that will be digitized; the scope of the project with respect to the field of digital scholarship; theoretical framework for the project; methodology; rationale for making the project in its particular medium; argument for the need of this project in all relevant fields; and a discussion of how it contributes to and/or intervenes in current developments in all relevant fields. Remember that dissertations must contribute new knowledge or be a new synthesis of knowledge. A digital project must meet this requirement, so students should take this into account as they are formulating their rationales.
- Create a plan for preservation of the artifact they produce. In considering how their dissertation project can be preserved for future viewings, interactions or uses, students may want to create a written preservation rationale.

## H. Ph.D. Dissertation and Final Oral Examination

A doctoral dissertation is an original scholarly project based on original research, which makes a significant contribution to knowledge.

The dissertation will be directed by the chair of the student's guidance committee with the assistance of the whole committee, to be chosen by the student and approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. All doctoral students must register for and successfully complete a minimum of 24 credits and no more than 36 credits of doctoral dissertation research (ENG 999).

Make sure that you are in frequent communication with your committee chairperson as you write. You should also make sure that members of your committee have seen a full draft of the dissertation before you schedule a defense. It often helps to make deadlines for finishing chapters and also for receiving feedback. Take advantage of dissertation writing groups and seminars.

After the guidance committee chairperson and other members of the guidance committee indicate that the dissertation is acceptable for examination and no later than two weeks before the examination, the student must submit copies of the dissertation and abstract for distribution to the guidance committee chairperson, other guidance committee members and, if necessary, to any appointed examiner. The dissertation must be in completed form, with finished diagrams, etc. It must not, however, be bound.

### Oral Defense of Dissertation

University: The final oral examination in defense of the dissertation is conducted and evaluated by the guidance committee and, at the discretion of the dean of the college, by one appointed faculty member whose voting status is determined by the college. Other interested faculty members and members of the public may attend the presentation portion of the examination without vote. Only guidance committee members may attend the examination portion of the defense per individual unit guidelines. The dissertation and the student's performance on the final oral examination must be approved by a positive vote by at least three-fourths of the voting examiners and with not more than one dissenting vote from among the Michigan State University regular faculty members of the guidance committee.

Department: Other interested faculty members and members of the public may attend the presentation and discussion portion of the examination without vote. Only guidance committee members may attend the feedback portion of the defense, during which time the candidate is told whether they have passed or failed, receives constructive comments on their dissertation and performance, and receives instructions on what, if anything, should be revised before deposit.



Schedule: The student must submit the dissertation and abstract to the chairperson of the guidance committee, other guidance committee members, and any appointed examiner, at least two weeks before the final oral examination is scheduled. Currently, the department does not stipulate that the dissertation defense must occur at a specific time of the semester. The student must be registered in 1 credit of ENG 999 during the semester in which the final oral examination is taken, but they need not be registered during the semester in which they graduate. (International students should, however, check with OISS to see if they need to be enrolled to maintain their student status.)

## **Submission and Graduation**

You should apply for graduation at the beginning of the term in which you expect to defend. You must be enrolled during the semester in which you defend, but you do not have to be enrolled during the semester in which you submit your dissertation (in the case of major revisions) or graduate.

After the guidance committee and any appointed examiner have reviewed and approved the dissertation and after the student has passed the final oral examination in its defense, the student must incorporate into the dissertation any recommended change(s) and corrections before presenting it to the chairperson of the guidance committee for final review and signature of the bookplate.

By the deadline date indicated in the schedule of courses for the semester in which graduation is expected, the student must electronically submit to the Office of the Graduate School a final copy of the dissertation and abstract and other forms required by and available from the Graduate School. Visit the [Thesis and Dissertation ELECTRONIC Submissions](#) website for complete information on requirements and forms.

Keep in mind: The Graduate School requests at least six weeks to read and make formatting suggestions. While you may be able to defend on the last day of the semester, you may not be able to graduate that semester since you will need time to revise (if needed), submit the dissertation, and wait for their approval.

## **Extension for Submission of Dissertation**

The student must submit the revised dissertation within one semester of defending. In the event that a student takes more than one semester to submit their dissertation to the Graduate School, they must fill out the form requesting an [Extension Due to Delay in Submitting Final MA Thesis or Doctoral Document to the Graduate School](#). The form is sent to the College Dean and the Graduate School.

## **Formatting, Abstract, and Copy for the Department**

The review of formatting of theses and dissertations by the Graduate School no longer uses microfilming as the archival tool for the preservation of the documents; only electronic versions of the documents will be kept by the MSU Library and by ProQuest. This policy change should expedite the review of documents and saves the students the microfilming fee.

In addition to the main body of a thesis or dissertation, **the Graduate School now permits the submission of supplementary materials to ProQuest.** These supplemental materials will not be reviewed by the Graduate School for formatting requirements, but they must be acceptable by ProQuest and comply with ProQuest's criteria and storage limits. All supplementary materials need the written approval of the thesis/dissertation committee chair.

**The MSU library may accept supplementary materials approved by the thesis/dissertation committee chair per their collection criteria.** The Graduate School does not review these materials for formatting requirements. Questions about submission of these materials to the MSU library should be directed to the Associate Dean for Digital Initiatives, currently Shawn Nicholson ([nicho147@msu.edu](mailto:nicho147@msu.edu)).

A Public Abstract (i.e., in "layman's" terms) to precede the conventional disciplinary/technical one is strongly recommended. The formatting requirements for this additional abstract are identical to those for the conventional abstract. See the [Graduate School Formatting Guide](#).

One hard copy should be provided to the English Department.

### **University Policy About Dissemination of Graduate Students' Research.**

In keeping with MSU's public mission, the University requires that theses, dissertations and abstracts will become public after the conferral of the degree; embargoes can only be pursued for a limited period (see [1] below). Results that are subject to restrictions for dissemination by funding agencies (see [2] below) cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School.

#### **[1] Hold/embargo on publication of documents submitted to ProQuest:**

Students submitting a thesis/dissertation to ProQuest now can request a hold/embargo of publication by ProQuest by contacting the Graduate School at [msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu](mailto:msuetds.approval@grd.msu.edu). In response to the request, the Graduate School will send directly to the student a form that needs to be completed and turned to the Graduate School prior to submission of the document to ProQuest. The form needs to be signed by the student's major professor and by the Associate Dean of the student's college. The request for the hold/embargo may be for six months, one year or two years. Requests for a period longer than six months must include a written justification for the length of the hold/embargo.

#### **[2] Graduate students' participating in University Research Organization (URO; <https://uro.egr.msu.edu/>):**

Graduate students involved in a URO project will receive both written documentation and a verbal explanation of any limitations or implications to their current or future academic progress prior to participating on the project. Students engaging in work for a URO project undergo a 2-step approval process before hiring: a consultation with a representative of the URO's office to explain the restrictions on the project, and an interview with the Graduate School Dean or Dean's designee to discuss the relationship, if any, between their work as graduate students and their participation in the project. Students must be informed that results that are subject to restrictions for dissemination cannot be part of any document submitted as a thesis or dissertation. As part of their degree program, all graduate students must have research options to ensure the generation of appropriate results to fulfill the degree requirements, and to have data for professional development activities that are integral to their graduate education (e.g., presentations at conferences and research seminars).

## IV. UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR M.A. AND PH.D. STUDENTS

### A. Academic Performance

College Academic Standards for Graduate Assistants: A graduate assistant in the College of Arts and Letters must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.25 and not accumulate deferred grades in more than 8 credits in courses (excluding courses numbered 899 and 999).

Department: Same as above for Master's degree. A 3.5 cumulative grade point average is required for all courses counted toward the doctoral degree.

Department policy on academic probation and termination: A graduate student in English will be placed on probation for one year when:

- the student's record shows more than two grades of incomplete (I) or deferred (DF) (excluding dissertation credits); or
- the cumulative grade point average falls below 3.25 for a student in the M.A. program, 3.5 for a student in the Ph.D. program

In either case the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies will write the student a memorandum describing the steps to be taken to remove probationary status. A student who fails to meet those steps during the one-year probationary period may be required to withdraw from the program. Probationary status may jeopardize a student's eligibility for financial support, whether by funding through the Department, the College or the University. Any student placed on probation may appeal in writing to the Graduate Committee no later than thirty days after the beginning of the semester following the notice of probation. An appeal of probationary status or termination of program will be granted only in cases of unusual hardship.

As stipulated by *Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities*:

**2.4.8.1** When determination is made that a graduate student's progress or performance is unsatisfactory, the student shall be notified in writing in a timely matter, and a copy of the notice shall be placed in the student's academic file.

**2.4.8.2** When a graduate student's status in a program has been determined to be in jeopardy, the graduate student shall be informed in writing in a timely matter, and a copy of the notice shall be placed in the student's academic file.

Comprehensive Examination: Students who fail the written examination will not take the oral portion until after they have retaken and passed the written examination. They may retake the written examination only once. The oral examination may also be retaken only once. Students can petition the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies to retake the oral examination after a second failure, but given the structure of the examination process, these petitions should be infrequently granted. Failure to pass the written exam or the oral exam on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

Pre-Dissertation Examination: The guidance committee will evaluate the pre-dissertation examination and confer upon it a grade of PASS or FAIL. They will register their grade on the "Record of Pre-Dissertation Examination" form. The pre-dissertation examination may be retaken only once. Failure to pass the pre-dissertation exam on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Annual Progress Reports**

University: Written evaluations shall be communicated to the graduate student at least once a year and a copy of such evaluations shall be placed in the graduate student's file.

Department: [Annual Progress Reports](#) for Ph.D students will be completed by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies until you select a chairperson. Once you have selected a chairperson, they will be responsible for filling out the form. The process: In Spring of every year, download the form, fill out your section, and submit it to the appropriate faculty person. You should plan to meet to discuss it before the year ends.

### **Credit Minimums and Maximums**

University: Graduate students may carry up to 16 credits each semester; a student load above 16 credits requires approval by the student's dean. All students using University services (faculty consultation included) for graduate work must be registered each semester. Minimum registration consists of one course, one credit of Master's thesis research (899) or one credit of doctoral dissertation research (999). In order to be considered full time for academic purposes, students must carry the following minimum number of credits per semester: Master's level: nine credits; Doctoral level: six credits. Doctoral students who have successfully passed their comprehensive exams, and have the exams listed as post-comp status in SIS, may enroll for one credit of 999 during the semesters following the comps exam and will be counted as full time.

### **Enrollment**

University: Delayed enrollment: If a person who previously attended MSU files an application for admission to a graduate program for a specific semester and is accepted but does not enroll for that semester, that person must file an application for readmission if they subsequently wishes to enroll. If a person who did not previously attend MSU files an application for admission to a graduate program for a specific semester and is accepted but does not enroll for that semester, that person may renew their application within a period of one year by notifying the Office of Admissions and

Scholarships.

Department: Pre-Enrollment: Graduate students are asked to pre-enroll each semester. It is imperative that the department know well in advance whether or not a course will have to be canceled for lack of sufficient enrollment.

### **Extensions of the Program**

Degrees awarded by the College of Art and Letters must reflect the current state of scholarship and achievement in its various fields. Thus, extensions to time limits for completing degrees are granted only if currency can be ensured (that is, course work and exams reflect the current state of a field). In addition, extensions are usually granted only once, so those recommending them must be convinced that the student can complete the degree by the new deadline requested. Extensions must be approved first by the guidance committee chair, whose responsibility it is to submit, in consultation with the student, a detailed plan for completion of the degree and for recertification of course work and comprehensive examinations. The request must then be approved by the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies, the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Letters, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Extension requests are frequently denied at one of these levels. For more information on the paperwork required for an extension, see the [Request for an Extension](#) form in the College of Arts and Letters.

### **Grading**

MSU uses a numerical system consisting of the following scale: 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0, 1.5, 1.0, 0.0. In some instances and under special circumstances, the grade of I-Incomplete or DF-Deferred may be given to graduate students who are doing satisfactory work but who cannot complete it because of reasons acceptable to the instructor. The decision of whether or not to grant an incomplete or deferred grade and the conditions by which that grade is to be made up rests with the course instructor. By University regulations, the work must be completed and a grade reported within the first six weeks of the next semester (including summer) for an incomplete, within two calendar years for a deferred. An excessive number of incomplete or deferred grades indicates an inability to complete course work and hence may become grounds for judging that a student is not making satisfactory progress towards the completion of their/their degree program.

### **Re-entry after absence from the program**

University: All students (including Lifelong) who have not been recessed or dismissed and have not completed their program may re-enter the University in any of the three terms (Fall, Spring, Summer) in the twelve months immediately following their last registered term without having to file a readmission application. Longer absences require a readmission application, which must be approved by the Graduate Director and the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

## **Residency**

University: Master's Programs: A minimum of six credits in the degree program must be earned in residence on campus. Doctoral Programs: One year of residence on the campus after first enrollment for doctoral degree credit is required. A year of residence will be made up of two consecutive semesters, involving the completion of at least six credits of graduate work each semester.

## **Transfer Credits**

University: As many as 9 semester credits of graduate course work (excluding research and thesis credits) may be transferred into a 30 credit Master's degree program, upon approval of the Department Chair or Associate Chair of Graduate Studies. For the doctoral degree program, graduate credits may be transferred if they are appropriate to a student's program and provided they were completed within the time limits approved for the earning of the degree desired at MSU. Only courses in which at least a 3.0 grade or its equivalent was received will be considered for transfer. Department: With the approval of the Associate Chairperson of Graduate Studies, students admitted to one of the Master's programs may transfer up to 10 credits from the Lifelong Education Program.

## **International Travel**

Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the [MSU Global Travel Registry](#) (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency.

## B. ACADEMIC AWARDS

### University Awards

#### **Excellence-in-Teaching Citation**

Each year in the early spring, the department puts out a call to faculty for nominations for the [Excellence-in-Teaching Citation](#). The Graduate Committee will select department nominees, whose files will be forwarded to the College Screening Committee in early fall of the following academic year. (These files are quite extensive and are usually prepared over the summer by nominees with department assistance.) A maximum of two nominations are usually forwarded by the College for consideration in this all-university competition. This award is designed to recognize demonstrated teaching excellence.

### College Awards

#### **Varg-Sullivan Awards to Outstanding Graduate Students**

The College of Arts and Letters offers two [Varg-Sullivan Awards](#): one for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts and one for Outstanding Achievement in the Letters. Paul Varg and Richard Sullivan are former deans in the College of Arts and Letters who dedicated their professional lives to excellence in the College. This award endowment has been established in their name. Graduate students in the College of Arts and Letters are eligible to be nominated for the award by their major unit. Recipients are selected based on best performance/exhibition at a national or international event in the Arts and best presentation at a national or international event or best published article in the Letters. The English Department puts out a call for applications for the Varg-Sullivan early in the Spring semester. Nominees selected by the department Graduate Committee will have their applications forwarded to the college.

### Graduate School Awards

#### **The Graduate School Dissertation Completion Fellowship (DCF)**

The English Department puts out a call for applications for the [Dissertation Completion Fellowship](#) in the early fall. Nominees are selected to be sent forward to the college by the department Graduate Committee.

#### **University Fellowships (incoming students)**

The Graduate School offers [Recruitment Fellowships](#) as a means to recruit promising new students into M.A. and Ph.D. programs. Two kinds of fellowship awards are available, each of which carries the same stipend, benefits, and period of award: University Distinguished Fellowships (UDF), recognizing academic achievement, research goals, demonstrated leadership potential, and contribution to a diverse educational community, and University Enrichment Fellowships (UEF), recognizing



academic achievement, research goals, contribution to a diverse educational community, and a record of overcoming obstacles.

## **Department Awards**

### **John A. Yunck Endowed Scholarship**

Named after a former faculty member in the English Department, this award recognizes outstanding graduate students who “have demonstrated the capacity to achieve educational and professional goals, and the initiative to seek opportunities to further their progress.” Preference is given to doctoral candidates. The English Department puts out a call to faculty to nominate students only during spring semester. Nominees go through two rounds of selection. First, the Graduate Committee selects who among the nominees shall go forward. The Associate Chair of Graduate Studies then asks those who make it through the first round to submit a CV and two letters of support from MSU English Department faculty within exactly one week. The Graduate Committee then reviews these submissions and announces the award recipient usually by early April.

### **Diana Cavett Award for Graduate Student Teaching Excellence**

This award recognizes teaching excellence by graduate students within the Department of English and serves to underscore the vital work our graduate students do in the classroom. All students with at least two semesters of teaching at MSU are eligible to apply, though preference is given to students with experience teaching stand-alone classes. Submissions are vetted by the Graduate Committee. Only one award is given. To apply, students submit a one-page statement of teaching philosophy, an updated CV, one recent syllabus and one example of a classroom activity or assignment from that same class, a recent set of SIRS forms, and the name of one faculty reference, preferably one that has observed the student’s teaching. Applicants are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Demonstrable commitment to inclusive pedagogies
- Evidence of teaching innovations
- Commitment to student success (strategies for formative feedback; opportunities for revision; experiential learning opportunities and assignments; promotion of active learning pedagogy)
- A record of co-curricular activities, grants, or professional development opportunities connected to improving your teaching (e.g., research workshops; participation in departmental pedagogy workshops; CAL inclusive pedagogy grants; conference activity or publications on pedagogy in your field)

## C. TRAVEL, RESEARCH, AND STUDY AWARDS

### Graduate School Awards

#### Travel Funding

Funds from the Graduate School are available for graduate students to travel to present their research at professional conferences. These funds are not available to support thesis/dissertation research projects or course work. This funding is only for graduate students pursuing a degree program. Requests for funding to travel to international meetings will be considered jointly by the Graduate School and the Office of International Studies and Programs. You need to submit only one form to the Graduate School for consideration by both offices. Criteria for applying for travel funding and the application are located at: <https://grad.msu.edu/travel>

### College Awards

#### **Special College Research Abroad Moneys (SCRAM)**

The College of Arts and Letters is offering fellowships up to \$3,000 each intended for students in the latter stages of degree completion whose research requires significant use of facilities, sources, or resources abroad. The English Department Graduate Committee selects and forwards nominees to the college screening committee. More information may be found at <https://cal.msu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/graduate-resources/>

#### Support for Conference and Research Travel

The College of Arts and Letters provides up to \$300 per graduate student per year toward expenses of travel to conferences: [Travel Funding Guidelines](https://cal.msu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/graduate-resources/). Visit <https://cal.msu.edu/current-students/graduate-students/graduate-resources/>

### Department Awards

#### **Travel for Conference Presentations and Research.**

Money is available in the Department of English for travel to conferences at which the student is presenting a paper and for travel to do research within the U.S (international research is covered by the College SCRAM). There are two travel fund cycles. Dates and procedures for applying will be announced at the beginning of each term. Application materials must be submitted to the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies well in advance of the event. Awards will be decided by the Graduate Committee.

### External Study Awards Traveling Scholar Program

Since 1963, the Traveling Scholar Program has allowed Big Ten Academic Alliance doctoral students to spend up to a full academic year pursuing specialized courses of study, researching unique library collections, and working in advanced laboratories and facilities at other Big Ten Academic Alliance institutions —with no change in registration procedures from their home university or additional tuition.

Doctoral-level students interested in the Traveling Scholar Program must first consult their advisor who will determine whether the off-campus opportunity is likely to enhance the student's course of study and ascertain that it is not, in fact, available on the home campus. The instructor/advisor at the host campus must also approve before a student completes the online application.

For more information, visit <https://www.btaa.org/resources-for/students/traveling-scholar-program/introduction>

## D. Integrity and Safety in Research and Creative Activities

### Plagiarism

Definition of plagiarism: Presenting, as one's own, the words, work or opinions of someone else.

You commit plagiarism if you submit as your own work,

- a) Part or all of a written or spoken assignment copied from another person's manuscript or notes;
- b) Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a source, such as a book, magazine, or pamphlet;
- c) The sequence of ideas, arrangement of material and /or pattern of thought of someone else, even though you express them in your own words.

Plagiarism occurs when such a sequence of ideas is transferred from a source to a paper without the process of digestion, integration and reorganization in the writer's mind and without acknowledgment in the paper.

You are an accomplice in plagiarism and equally guilty if you

- a) Allow your paper, in outline or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another;
- b) Prepare a written assignment for another student and allow it to be submitted as their or their work;
- c) Keep or contribute to a file of papers or speeches with the clear intent that these papers or speeches be copied and submitted as the work of anyone other than the author. The student who knows that their or their paper is being copied is presumed to consent to its being copied.

University: Please see **Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities** [<https://ombud.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/Mentoring-Graduate-Students-Guidelines.pdf>] and "[Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/student-group-regulations-administrative-rulings-all-university-policies-and-selected-ordinances/integrity-of-scholarship-and-grades)" in *Spartan Life* [<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/student-group-regulations-administrative-rulings-all-university-policies-and-selected-ordinances/integrity-of-scholarship-and-grades>]

Department: The English Department defines plagiarism in a morally educative and not merely a legalistic fashion on the assumption that the function of a university is not only to impart knowledge but also to form character. The department believes that

plagiarism is not only legally but morally wrong. The English Department assumes the honor and integrity of its students. If some should abuse this confidence, it will take action in accordance with the following university guidelines:

1. The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles and in so doing protect the validity of University grades. This means that all academic work will be done by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. (See [General Student Regulation 1.00, Scholarship and Grades](#), for specific regulations.) Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in the planning and supervision of academic work, so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.
2. If any instance of academic dishonesty is discovered by an instructor, it is their responsibility to take appropriate action. Depending on their judgment of the particular case, they may give a failing grade to the student on the assignment or for the course.
3. In instances where a failing grade in a course is given only for academic dishonesty, the instructor will notify the student's academic dean in writing of the circumstances.
4. The student who receives a failing grade based on a charge of academic dishonesty may appeal a judgment made by a department, school, or a college.
5. When in the judgment of the academic dean, action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade is warranted, the dean will refer the case to the college-level hearing board which shall have original jurisdiction. In cases of ambiguous jurisdiction, the appropriate judiciary will be randomly selected by the assistant provost from one of the three core colleges. Appeals from the judgment may be made to the All-University Academic Integrity Review Board. In instances of academic dishonesty where the instructor feels that action other than, or in addition to, a failing grade in the course is warranted, the instructor will report the case to their departmental or school chairperson and to the student's academic dean. The dean will then refer the case to the college-level hearing board, which shall have original jurisdiction.

## **Research Involving Human Subjects**

The Michigan State University (MSU) Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) (<http://hrpp.msu.edu>) includes the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Human Research Liaison (HRL) offices. The MSU HRPP primary mission is the protection of individuals who are the subjects of research. MSU is committed to follow the ethical standards described in the Belmont Report, and all applicable federal, state and local regulations and university policies and procedures. The HRPP at MSU sets forth the structure, policies, and procedures to implement this mission and commitment. The processes of education, review, and monitoring described in the HRPP serve to ensure the safe and ethical conduct of research that will protect human subjects in an atmosphere of mutual trust and integrity in the pursuit of knowledge and human benefit. MSU HRPP Manual [Section 3-1, MSU HRPP](#). Please contact the [HRPP staff](#) if you have any questions.

## E. Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution

### Grievance Procedures

The Department's Bylaws state,

#### 6.3.1

The graduate student grievance procedure shall accord with the procedures detailed in the document entitled "Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities."

The Department's procedures for graduate student grievances, which are in accord with the GSSR, are delineated in Appendix B of this handbook.

The Department of English hopes that issues arising between students and the department and between students and individual faculty members can be resolved short of formal judicial proceedings and in a spirit of good will and understanding. Within the Department, the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies is your first source for advice and assistance.

Students may request a hearing to resolve a dispute with an instructor, but only after trying to settle the matter in conversations with the instructor, the department chair, and, in some cases, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Letters. The student also may consult with the [University Ombudsperson](#) at any stage of the dispute.

### Office of the University Ombudsperson

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University - that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.

Contact the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about university policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict.

Contact information:

Office of the University Ombudsperson  
129 N. Kedzie Hall  
(517) 353-8830  
ombud@msu.edu  
<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>

Consult [\*Procedures Concerning Allegations of Misconduct in Research and Creative Activities\*](#) and [\*The Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities\*](#).

See Appendix B for more details.

## F. Work-Related Policies

### Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships are available through the department and a variety of other venues in the College of Arts and Letters. Eligibility for assistantships within the College of Arts and Letters is defined as two years at the M.A. level and five years beyond the M.A. level. Extensions of eligibility are generally granted to students actively working on degree completion. To be considered for an assistantship, your name must be on the Department's eligibility list. In December you will be asked to complete a form indicating your desire to be included on that list. A graduate assistant in the English Department must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 and not accumulate deferred grades in more than eight credits of course work (excluding courses numbered 899 and 999).

Most students in the program have held appointments in two or more units in the College by the time they finish their degree; many have found that this is a definite advantage when they go on the job market. Teaching in different units allows students to gain experience in a number of subject areas, classroom formats, and skill levels. Assistantships are generally offered either as quarter time (10 hours per week) or half time (20 hours per week). Master's students with quarter-time and half-time graduate assistants must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits a semester (including courses numbered 899 or 999), but no more than 12 credits (excluding 899 or 999). Doctoral students with quarter-time or half-time assistantships who have not yet taken their Comps must be enrolled for at least 3 credits, with a maximum of 15. After passing their Comps, doctoral students with quarter-time or half-time assistantships should register for one credit to receive full-time status. **During summer session, a 3-credit minimum enrollment is allowed for all types of assistantships.**

### Graduate Assistantship Policies

University Policies regarding procedures, prerequisites, minimum and maximum credit load, illness/injury/pregnancy leave policy, appointments and responsibilities, stipends, additional benefits, and other information, see <https://grad.msu.edu/assistantships>

Policies governing union Graduate Assistantship appointments can be found in the [Graduate Employees Union Contract](#). Policies governing non-union GA appointments can be found in "[Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)" 4.2.1-4.2.8.

### Student Health Insurance

Graduate assistants (domestic and international) are automatically enrolled in a GA health insurance plan, the premium of which is paid by the University. The plan provides the following coverage:



1. Fall appointment only: coverage from August 15 to February 14 of the following year.
2. Fall and Spring appointments—coverage from August 15 to August 14 of the following year.
3. Spring appointment only—coverage from January 1 to August 14.
4. Summer appointment only—coverage from May 12 to August 14.

Enrolled students may also insure their eligible spouse and/or dependent children (residing with the insured). MSU will contribute a total of \$2,500 (annually) toward the cost of covering a spouse or child, and a total of \$2,700 (annually) toward the cost of covering a spouse and/or multiple dependents.

For questions regarding coverage under this plan, enrollment or premium payment, contact Blue Care Network:

BCN Customer Service: 800-662-6667

Website/Enrollment: [bcbsm.com/msu](http://bcbsm.com/msu)

For questions concerning waiver processing or general information, contact the MSU Benefits office at 517-353-4434 . The Benefits Office is located at 1407 S. Harrison Road, Suite 140 (Nisbet Building), East Lansing, MI 48823 and on the web at <http://www.hr.msu.edu>.

### **International Graduate Assistants**

All international graduate assistants are required by the University to demonstrate that they meet a minimum standard of fluency in spoken English before they can be assigned to do any teaching work that involves oral communication with undergraduate students. TAs may meet this requirement by: a) getting a score of 50 or higher on the Test of Spoken English (TSE), given by the Educational Testing Service, or b) getting a score of 50 or higher on SPEAK, given by the [English Language Center](#) (ELC) c) getting a score of 50 or higher on the International Teaching Assistant Oral interview (ITAOI), given by the ELC.

All newly appointed TAs who are foreign nationals are also required to participate in an International TA Orientation. In special cases the Dean of the Graduate School may decide to waive a TA's participation in the orientation. This may be possible if a TA: 1) is able to demonstrate excellent spoken English (through the process described above); 2) has been a student in a North American university; or 3) is able to provide proof of excellent teaching performance at a North American university or belongs to a department that has a well developed orientation program offering TAs instruction in teaching.

### **Department of English Assistantships**

1/2 time. Fall/Spring. Assisting in faculty-taught courses in English; assisting in faculty-taught courses in Integrative Arts and Humanities (IAH) as part of MSU's undergraduate general education program; teaching creative writing and literature courses for undergraduate non-majors, the introductory course for English majors and minors, IAH courses, or other course assignments in English based on departmental needs.

Applications are available from the Graduate Secretary in the English Graduate Office. Applications should be submitted to the Graduate Secretary in the English Graduate Office. While students will be informed of the upcoming deadline, they can also consult this academic year's list of important dates to find the deadline for teaching applications.

**Selection Criteria:** All applicants must be enrolled in good standing in a graduate program in the Department of English. The Graduate Committee will rank all applicants, whether new or already enrolled in courses in the English Department, according to the programmatic needs of the department and the criteria delineated below.

For applicants at the M.A. level who have not yet begun their graduate work at MSU, criteria include unusual promise of academic, scholarly, or creative potential; undergraduate GPA; statement of academic and intellectual purpose; letters of recommendation; any evidence of prior teaching experience and/or unusual promise of teaching potential, including letters written by faculty who have observed the student's teaching.

For those who have already enrolled in graduate programs at the M.A. level (either at MSU or at some other graduate institution), the criteria also include, in addition to those above, a letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with the student's graduate work; the GPA in graduate work already completed; timely progress toward degree.

For applicants at the Ph.D. level who have not yet begun their graduate work at MSU, criteria include unusual promise of academic potential; undergraduate and previous graduate GPAs; statement of academic and intellectual purpose; writing sample; letters of recommendation; any evidence of prior teaching experience and/or unusual promise of teaching potential, including letters written by faculty who have observed the student's teaching.

For those who have already enrolled in the Ph.D. program, the criteria also include, in addition to those cited above, a letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with the student's graduate work; the GPA in graduate work already completed (especially in relation to the number and type of classes taken); the strength and potential importance of the dissertation; the scholarly record of the applicant (e.g., publications, papers delivered, awards, honors, etc); timely progress toward degree.

Job Expectations for English courses:

Teaching Assistants in the English Department are expected to meet their classes at the regularly scheduled times, hold office hours, return course work to students in a timely manner, and report course grades on time. If holding a position in which they assist a faculty member, teaching assistants are expected to perform such duties as grading, conducting discussion sessions, and other tasks as are necessary to the conduct and maintenance of the course to which they are assigned.

#### Qualifications and Job Requirements for IAH:

##### Required:

Substantial course work (preferably graduate level) in American history, literature, and culture providing background knowledge in IAH course content

Ability to respond to students' writing, engage students in discussion and critical thinking, and foster active learning.

##### Preferred:

M.A. completed, prior teaching experience, and interdisciplinary background or orientation.

##### Position Expectations:

- Lead and conduct discussion of assigned texts.
- Respond to student writing, monitor discussion groups on D2L.
- Design and lead other learning activities; grade student work.
- Hold office hours.

English Graduate Students may apply for assistantships in other venues across the university, including the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Culture (WRAC) and the Writing Center. Please consult the relevant websites for these units in order to receive current information about position requirements, selection criteria, and application deadlines.

#### **Graduate Assistant Illness/Injury/Pregnancy Leave Policy**

A graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of their appointment because of illness or injury shall notify the administrator of their appointing unit as soon as circumstances permit. Similarly, a graduate assistant unable to fulfill the duties of their appointment

because of pregnancy shall notify the administrator of their major unit as soon as circumstances permit.

During the illness, injury, or pregnancy, the appointing unit shall adjust (reduce, waive, or reschedule) the graduate assistant's duties as those duties and the assistant's physical circumstances reasonably dictate.

If total absence from duties becomes necessary and the graduate assistant is still enrolled, the appointing unit shall maintain the stipend of the appointment, provided for a period of two months or to the end of the appointment period or the semester, whichever occurs first.

The graduate assistant shall have the right to return to the assistantship, within the original terms of the appointment, at such time as they are able to resume their duties.

### **Grief Absence Policy**

The faculty and staff should be sensitive to and accommodate the bereavement process of a student who has lost a family member or who is experiencing emotional distress from a similar tragedy so that the student is not academically disadvantaged in their classes or other academic work (e.g. research). For undergraduate and master's (Plan B) students without research responsibilities, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify the Associate Dean or designee of their college of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the Associate Dean, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the instructor. It is the responsibility of the Associate Dean or designee to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) notify the faculty that the student will be absent, and c) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return. It is the responsibility of the instructor to work with the student to make reasonable accommodations and to include appropriate language describing such accommodations in their course syllabus, so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

For master's (Plan A), master's (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as a RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both

employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the MSU GEU CBU Article 18.

Students in the graduate professional colleges (CHM, COM, CVM, LAW) with their own grief absence policies are excluded from the above and should follow their own policies.

Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

### **Mandatory Training**

All TAs and RAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To Access the training, login to the ORA training website at: <https://ora.msu.edu/train/index.html>. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at 517-884-4600 or [train@ora.msu.edu](mailto:train@ora.msu.edu).

### **Copy Machine**

The department copy machine is available for use only by students who have teaching requirements for the department and should be used for classroom related copying only. The copier is off limits for thesis copying. However, COGS offers services for copying for this purpose (<https://cogs.msu.edu/services/copy-center/>): Copy Center, 316 Student Services Bldg. Open to all members of the MSU community, the COGS copy center features the lowest rates available.

## G. University Resources

### Student Associations

#### A.) [Association of English Graduate Students \(AEGS\)](#)

The Association of English Graduate Students is both the official representative of graduate students in the department and a social organization. The Association works closely with the department faculty and administration on policy matters relating to graduate study and has elected representatives on all standing department committees. All officers are elected by a vote of the body of graduate students in the department. The Association invites all English graduate students to participate actively in the organization. The Association does maintain a LISTSERV to which all graduate students are encouraged to subscribe. Students should contact the current president for information on membership and on subscription to the listserve.

#### B.) [Council of Graduate Students \(COGS\)](#)

COGS is the official graduate student organization at Michigan State University. Officers and departmental representatives (one representative per department for the entire University) are voting members. The primary objective is improvement of the academic, social and economic position of graduate students at MSU. The organization has official delegates to the Graduate Council, the Academic Council and standing committees thereof and several all-university and presidential committees. Through membership in these and other bodies, COGS participates in decisions on such matters as tuition and fees, the grading system, traffic regulations, academic and extracurricular programs of the university, graduate assistant stipends, improvements in, on and off campus, student living conditions, academic freedom and responsibilities, student representation in university government and the selection of principal administrative officers. Meetings are open to all graduate students. For more information, check out their [web page](#).

#### C.) [Black Graduate Student Association \(BGSA\)](#)

BGSA is the primary organization for African American Graduate Students at MSU. It provides academic, professional and social support.

#### D.) [Alliance for Graduate Education & the Professoriate \(AGEP\)](#)

The Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) at Michigan State University (MSU) is a National Science Foundation program that supports recruitment, retention, and graduation of U. S. students in doctoral programs of the natural and social sciences, mathematics, and engineering. The focus of AGEP places special emphasis on a fully inclusive recruitment and development of students from U. S. population groups historically underrepresented in fields of the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); and the social, behavioral, and economic (SBE) sciences.

*If you know of an association that should be added to this page, please contact the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies.*

## Facilities

Computers: There are computers and printers available for graduate student use in the graduate student lounge (Wells C707). Please do not save your own work to the computers, add programs or alter existing programs.. You can find a list of all computer labs at <https://tech.msu.edu/service-catalog/teaching/computer-labs-classrooms/locations-hours/>.

Files: Student files are maintained electronically by the English Department. Files will contain copies of your transcript and annual evaluations. If you wish to review your file, please see the Associate Chairperson of Graduate Studies. The only material that will be withheld is that which the student has clearly waived their or their right to examine (i.e., confidential letters of recommendation).

Mail and Email: Graduate mailboxes are in Wells C612. You should check your mail frequently; important information is communicated through these boxes. All currently enrolled graduate students can obtain e-mail accounts on the MSU e-mail system. You may use other e-mail accounts if you wish (e.g., gmail), but your MSU account is your primary location for announcements about the program (e.g., deadlines, fellowships, exams). You should either check it frequently or have it automatically forwarded to your preferred account.

Websites: Our department site is <https://english.msu.edu/>. Includes course descriptions and announcements of upcoming events in the department.

College of Arts and Letters Graduate Studies site:

<https://cal.msu.edu/academics/graduate/> Includes information on deadlines for applications for assistantships, fellowships and other resources in the college.

Graduate School site: [grad.msu.edu](http://grad.msu.edu). Essential resource for connections to university publications, resources and regulations, workshops and conferences for graduate students, job placement services.

COGS: Legal Aid - COGS and ASMSU have joined together to provide a wide range of legal services to MSU students. This service is free to all graduate-level students.

Student Legal Services is located in 329 Student Services building.

Short-Term Loans - COGS offers short-term loans of \$300 and \$500 (which are administered through ASMSU and the Office of Financial Aid).

Forms and applications: A copy of all forms mentioned here are available from the Graduate Secretary in the English Department. All application materials and forms should be filed with the Graduate Secretary.

MSU Libraries: The Main library is located in the center of the MSU campus. You can access the library collection through the library web pages: <https://lib.msu.edu/>.

Bookstores: Books for courses can be found at Student Book Store (SBS), 421 E. Grand River, 351-4210; MSU Bookstore, International Center, 355-3450;

## Transportation

### Parking on Campus

*Motor Vehicles:* Any motor vehicle students bring on campus is required to be registered through the Police Department (<https://police.msu.edu/>). Registration can be done through the MSU Parking Office. For information on how to obtain a parking permit, visit <https://police.msu.edu/parking-services/permits/>.

*Buses:* All campus bus service is provided by the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA). CATA operates fixed routes serving all University apartments residence halls, commuter lots and the main campus. Additionally CATA provides direct service to off-campus apartments in the Okemos and Haslett areas during Fall and Spring semesters. CATA is also the public transit provider for the 100 square mile greater Lansing area. CATA Customer Information Center can provide personal trip planning assistance and information on using CATA services. Call 517-394-1000 for assistance or visit [www.cata.org](http://www.cata.org).



**V.**  
**Appendices**  
**Appendix A: Department Forms**

**Department of English**  
**Comprehensive Examination**  
**PROPOSAL AND READING LISTS APPROVAL FORM**

1. Name:
2. Major Field:
3. Critical Problem Area:
4. Signatures of Approval of the Guidance Committee Members:

\_\_\_\_\_

*Chairperson*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***A COPY OF THE PROPOSAL AND READING LISTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS FORM FOR REVIEW BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE COMMITTEE.***

5. Graduate Committee Action:

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Returned for revision: \_\_\_\_\_  
(For suggested revisions, see attached sheet)

\_\_\_\_\_

*Associate Chairperson of Graduate Studies*

**Department of English**  
**Comprehensive Examination**  
**RECORD OF WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

**Candidate's Name:**

Title of Major Field:

Title of Critical Problem Area:

Area of Examination: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Satisfactory Completion:

Members of Exam Committee: 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairperson*

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\*Is student enrolled?  Yes No

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Associate Chair of Graduate Studies*

\*Note: *Student must be enrolled.*

**DURING THE REGULAR ACADEMIC YEAR EXAMINATION THIS FORM MUST BE TURNED IN NO LATER THAN TWO WEEKS AFTER THE CANDIDATE HAS COMPLETED THE EXAMINATION. STUDENT SHOULD BE INFORMED OF RESULTS WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF COMMITTEE RECEIVING THE WRITTEN EXAM.**





**Department of English**  
**RECORD OF PRE-DISSERTATION EXAMINATION**

STUDENT NAME:

EXAM DATE:

TITLE OF PROPOSED DISSERTATION:

*(Please attach a copy of the dissertation prospectus, or  
sample chapter, which served as the basis for the examination.)*

**RESULT OF EXAMINATION**

	EXAMINER (s)	PASSED / FAILED
1.	_____	_____
	<i>Chairperson</i>	
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____

---

*Associate Chairperson for Graduate Studies*      *Date*

## **Appendix B.**

### **Graduate Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedures For the Department of English**

Each right of an individual places a reciprocal duty upon others: the duty to permit the individual to exercise the right. The student, as a member of the academic community, has both rights and duties. Within that community, the student's most essential right is the right to learn. The University has a duty to provide for the student those privileges, opportunities, and protections, which best promote the learning process in all its aspects. The student also has duties to other members of the academic community, the most important of which is to refrain from interference with those rights of others which are equally essential to the purposes and processes of the University. (GSRR Article 1.2)

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The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)* and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)* documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the Department of English has established the following Hearing Board procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR Article 5)

#### **I. JURISDICTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH HEARING BOARD:**

A. The Hearing Board serves as the initial Hearing Board for academic grievance hearings involving graduate students who allege violations of academic rights or seek to contest an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records). (See GSRR 2.3 and 5.1.1.)

B. Students may not request an academic grievance hearing based on an allegation of incompetent instruction. (See GSRR 2.2.2)

#### **II. COMPOSITION OF THE HEARING BOARD:**

A. The grievance hearing board for graduate student grievance will be composed of five members: the department chair, two faculty members, and two graduate students. The faculty representatives will be selected by the department chair, in consultation with the Policy Committee, from the members of the Graduate Committee. The graduate student representatives will be the AEGS Graduate Committee representative and the president of AEGS. Should any of the members of the grievance hearing board be challenged by either party in the grievance, alternates will be selected from the Graduate Committee and from the elected officers of AEGS. In the event that all members of the Graduate Committee are removed in challenges, the faculty representatives will be selected from the Policy

Committee. If all officers of AEGS are removed in challenges, the graduate students will be asked to elect alternates. Each member has one vote except for the chair of the board who only votes to break a tie.

B. The Department will train hearing board members about grievance procedures and the applicable sections of the GSRR. (See GSRR 5.1.3.)

### **III. REFERRAL TO THE HEARING BOARD:**

A. After consulting with the instructor and appropriate unit administrator, graduate students who remain dissatisfied with their attempt to resolve an allegation of a violation of student academic rights or an allegation of academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, violations of professional standards or falsifying admission and academic records) may request an academic grievance hearing. When appropriate, the Department Chair, in consultation with the Dean, may waive jurisdiction and refer the request for an initial hearing to the College Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.3.6.2.)

B. At any time in the grievance process, either party may consult with the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.3.2.)

C. Generally, the deadline for submitting the written request for a hearing is the middle of the next semester in which the student is enrolled (exclusive of Summer). In cases in which a student seeks to contest an allegation of academic misconduct and the student's dean has called for an academic disciplinary hearing, the student has **10** class days to request an academic grievance to contest the allegation. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1 and 5.5.2.2.)

D. If either the student (the complainant) or the respondent (usually, the instructor or an administrator) is absent from the university during that semester, or if other appropriate reasons emerge, the Hearing Board may grant an extension of this deadline. If the university no longer employs the respondent before the grievance hearing commences, the hearing may proceed. (See GSRR 5.4.9.)

E. A written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. (See 5.3.6.) Anonymous grievances will not be accepted.

### **IV. PRE-HEARING PROCEDURES**

A. After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.3.)

B. Within **5** class days, the Chair of the Hearing Board will:

1. forward the request for a hearing to the respondent and ask for a written response;

2. send the names of the Hearing Board members to both parties and, to avoid conflicts of interest between the two parties and the Hearing Board members, request written challenges, if any, within 3 class days of this notification. In addition to conflict of interest challenges, either party can challenge two hearing board members without cause (GSRR 5.1.7.c);

3. rule promptly on any challenges, impanel a Hearing Board and send each party the names of the Hearing Board members. If the Chair of the Hearing Board is the subject of a challenge, the challenge shall be filed with the Dean of the College, or designee. Decisions by the Hearing Board chair or the College Dean (or designee) on conflict of interest challenges are final;

4. send the Hearing Board members a copy of the request for a hearing and the respondent's written response, and send all parties a copy of these procedures.

C. Within 5 class days of being established, the Hearing Board shall review the request, and, after considering all requested and submitted information:

1. accept the request, in full or in part, and promptly schedule a hearing.

2. reject the request and provide a written explanation to appropriate parties; e.g., lack of jurisdiction. (The student may appeal this decision.)

3. the GSRR allows the hearing board to invite the two parties to meet with the Hearing Board in an informal session to try to resolve the matter. Such a meeting does not preclude a later hearing. However, by the time a grievance is requested all informal methods of conflict resolution should have been exhausted so this option is rarely used. (See GSRR 5.4.6.)

D. If the Hearing Board calls for a hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly negotiate a hearing date, schedule an additional meeting only for the Hearing Board should additional deliberations on the findings become necessary, and request a written response to the grievance from the respondent.

E. At least 5 class days before the scheduled hearing, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall notify the respondent and the complainant in writing of the (1) time, date, and place of the hearing; (2) the names of the parties to the grievance; (3) a copy of the hearing request and the respondent's reply; and (4) the names of the Hearing Board members after any challenges. (See GSRR 5.4.7.)

F. At least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing, the parties must notify the Chair of the Hearing Board the names of their witnesses and advisor, if any, and request permission for the advisor to have voice at the hearing. The Chair may grant or deny this request. The Chair will promptly forward the names given by the complainant to the respondent and visa versa. (See GSRR 5.4.7.1.)



G. In unusual circumstances and in lieu of a personal appearance, either party may request permission to submit a written statement to the Hearing Board or request permission to participate in the hearing through an electronic communication channel. Written statements must be submitted to the Hearing Board at least 3 class days before the scheduled hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.9c.)

H. Either party to the grievance hearing may request a postponement of the hearing. The Hearing Board may either grant or deny the request. (See GSRR 5.4.8.)

I. At its discretion, the Hearing Board may set a reasonable time limit for each party to present its case, and the Chair of the Hearing Board must inform the parties of such a time limit in the written notification of the hearing.

J. Hearings are closed unless the student requests an open hearing, which would be open to all members of the MSU community. The Hearing Board may close an open hearing to protect the confidentiality of information or to maintain order. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4.)

K. Members of the Hearing Board are expected to respect the confidentiality of the hearing process. (See GSRR 5.4.10.4. and 5.4.11.)

## V. HEARING PROCEDURES:

The Hearing will proceed as follows:

1. Introductory remarks by the Chair of the Hearing Board: The Chair of the Hearing Board introduces hearing panel members, the complainant, the respondent and advisors, if any. The Chair reviews the hearing procedures, including announced time restraints for presentations by each party and the witnesses, and informs the parties if their advisors may have a voice in the hearings (see GSRR 5.4.10.1) and if the proceedings are being recorded. Witnesses shall be excluded from the proceedings except when testifying. The Chair also explains:

- In academic grievance hearings in which a graduate student alleges a violation of academic rights, the student bears the burden of proof.
- In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof.
- All Hearing Board decisions must be reached by a majority of the Hearing Board, based on a "clear and convincing evidence." (See GSRR 8.1.7.)

2. If the complainant fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may either postpone the hearing or dismiss the case for demonstrated cause. (See GSRR 5.4.9a.)

3. If the respondent fails to appear in person or via an electronic channel at a scheduled hearing, the Hearing Board may postpone the hearing or, only in unusual circumstances, hear the case in their absence. (See GSRR 5.4.9-b.)

4. If the respondent is no longer employed by the University before the grievance procedure concludes, the hearing process may still proceed. (See GSRR 5.3.6.1.)

5. To assure orderly questioning, the Chair of the Hearing Board will recognize individuals before they speak. All parties have a right to speak without interruption. Each party has a right to question the other party and to rebut any oral or written statements submitted to the Hearing Board. (See GSRR 5.4.10.2.)

6. Presentation by the Complainant: The Chair recognizes the complainant to present without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the complainant by the Hearing Board, the respondent and the respondent's advisor, if any.

7. Presentation by the Complainant's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the complainant's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, any statement directly relevant to the complainant's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the respondent, and the respondent's advisor, if any.

8. Presentation by the Respondent: The Chair recognizes the respondent to present without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the respondent by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

9. Presentation by the Respondent's Witnesses: The Chair recognizes the respondent's witnesses, if any, to present, without interruption, and statement directly relevant to the respondent's case. The Chair then recognizes questions directed at the witnesses by the Hearing Board, the complainant, and the complainant's advisor, if any.

10. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Complainant: The complainant refutes statements by the respondent, the respondent's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

11. Rebuttal and Closing Statement by Respondent: The respondent refutes statements by the complainant, the complainant's witnesses and advisor, if any, and presents a final summary statement.

12. Final questions by the Hearing Board: The Hearing Board asks questions of any of the participants in the hearing.

## **VI. POST-HEARING PROCEDURES**

A. Deliberation:

After all evidence has been presented, with full opportunity for explanations, questions and rebuttal, the Chair of the Hearing Board shall excuse all parties to the grievance and convene the Hearing Board to determine its findings in executive session. When possible, deliberations should take place directly following the hearing and/or at the previously scheduled follow-up meeting. (See Section IV.D above.)

B. Decision:

1. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which a majority of the Hearing Board finds, based on "clear and convincing evidence," that a violation of the student's academic rights has occurred and that redress is possible, it shall recommend an appropriate remedy to the Department Chair or School Director. Upon receiving the Hearing Board's recommendation, the Department Chair or School Director shall implement an appropriate remedy, in consultation with the Hearing Board, within 3 class days. If the Hearing Board finds that no violation of academic rights has occurred, it shall so inform the Chair or Director. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall promptly forward copies of the final decision to both parties, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the University Ombudsperson. (See GSRR 5.4.11.)

2. In grievance (non-disciplinary) hearings involving graduate students in which the Hearing Board serves as the initial hearing body to adjudicate an allegation of academic dishonesty and, based on "clear and convincing evidence," the Hearing Board finds for the student, the Hearing Board shall recommend to the Department Chair or School Director that the penalty grade be removed, the Academic Dishonesty Report be removed from the student's records and a "good faith judgment" of the student's academic performance in the course take place. If the Hearing Board finds for the instructor, the penalty grade shall stand and the Academic Dishonesty Report regarding the allegation will remain on file, pending an appeal, if any to the College Hearing Board within 5 class days of the Hearing Board's decision. If an academic disciplinary hearing is pending, and the Hearing Board decides for the instructor, the graduate student's disciplinary hearing before either the College Hearing Board or the Dean of The Graduate School would promptly follow, pending an appeal, if any, within 5 class days. (See GSRR 5.4.12.3)

C. Written Report:

The Chair of the Hearing Board shall prepare a written report of the Hearing Board's findings, including recommended redress or sanctions for the complainant, if applicable, and forward a copy of the decision to the appropriate unit administrator within 3 class days of the hearing. The report shall indicate the rationale for the decision and the major elements of evidence, or lack thereof, that support the Hearing Board's decision. The administrator, in consultation with the Hearing Board, shall then implement an appropriate remedy. The report also should inform the parties of the right to appeal within 5 class days following notice of the

decision, or 5 class days if an academic disciplinary hearing is pending. The Chair shall forward copies of the Hearing Board's report and the administrator's redress, if applicable, to the parties involved, the responsible administrators, the University Ombudsperson and the Dean of The Graduate School. All recipients must respect the confidentiality of the report and of the hearing board's deliberations resulting in a decision. (See GSRR 5.4.12)

## **VII. APPEAL OF THE HEARING BOARD DECISION:**

A. Either party may appeal a decision by the Hearing Board to the College Hearing Board for cases involving (1) academic grievances alleging violations of student rights and (2) alleged violations of regulations involving academic misconduct (academic dishonesty, professional standards or falsification of admission and academic records.) (See GSRR 5.4.12.)

B. All appeals must be in writing, signed and submitted to the Chair of the College Hearing Board within 5 class days following notification of the Hearing Board's decision. While under appeal, the original decision of the Hearing Board will be held in abeyance. (See GSRR 5.4.12, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.3.)

C. A request for an appeal of a Hearing Board decision to the College Hearing Board must allege, in sufficient particularity to justify a hearing, that the initial Hearing Board failed to follow applicable procedures for adjudicating the hearing or that findings of the Hearing Board were not supported by "clear and convincing evidence." The request also must include the redress sought. Presentation of new evidence normally will be inappropriate. (See GSRR 5.4.12.1, 5.4.12.2 and 5.4.12.4.)

## **VIII. RECONSIDERATION:**

If new evidence should arise, either party to a hearing may request the appropriate Hearing Board to reconsider the case within 30 days upon receipt of the hearing outcome. The written request for reconsideration is to be sent to the Chair of the Hearing Board, who shall promptly convene the Hearing Board to review the new material and render a decision on a new hearing. (See GSRR 5.4.13.)

## **IX. FILE COPY:**

The Chair of the Department shall file a copy of these procedures with the Office of the Ombudsperson and with the Dean of The Graduate School. (See GSRR 5.4.1.)

Approved by Faculty 8/25/15

## Appendix C. Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Department of English Plan

### MSU Responsible Conduct of Research Plans

Training in the Responsible Conduct of Research is essential in the preparation of future scholars and professionals. An understanding of the issues concerning the conduct of research in an increasingly complex world has become critical in successfully navigating the research landscape. To help prepare Michigan State University graduate students for their future scholarly work, a plan for providing the foundation of responsible conduct has been developed in coordination with the Graduate School, the Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies Office, and college associate deans for graduate education. The plan is predicated on the principles that a basic understanding of issues is necessary through didactic training and a periodic reinforcement of the principles through discussion. It is the belief that this plan will provide a foundation for all graduate students as well as others pursuing a career in research and will offer the basic information to meet most, if not all, federal agency granting requirements.

### English Department Plan for M.A. and Ph.D. Students Enrolling in Fall 2016 and Thereafter:

#### 1) Year 1

All new graduate students will complete the following *four* Collaborate Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) modules online within the first year of enrollment in their program. You can access CITI by going to <https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/> (if link is broken, then search by full name above). Click "Log in," then choose the "Log in through my institution" option. Select Michigan State U from the list of schools. Then select "MSU Graduate School RCR Program." Please create a PDF of the certificate indicating you have completed the modules and submit it to Graduate Secretary with your Annual Report:

- Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research
- Authorship
- Plagiarism
- Research Misconduct

#### 2) Year 2

Within the first two years of enrollment in their program, M.A. and Ph.D. students will complete *three* additional CITI online training modules (same instructions as above). Please create a PDF of the certificate indicating you have completed the modules and submit it to Graduate Secretary with your Annual Report:

- Collaborative Research
- Conflicts of Interest
- Mentoring

### **3) Discussion-Based Training**

All graduate students must complete a minimum of *six* hours of discussion-based training prior to receiving their degrees. M.A. students are required to have *six* hours of this training over the course of Years 1 and 2. Doctoral students are required to have at least *three* hours of this training over the course of Years 1 and 2 and then an additional *three* hours in Year 3 and beyond (see #4 below). These hours can be completed in various ways, such as in a unit of a course, ongoing training requirement (for doctoral students), workshop, in discussions with advisors, RCR Workshop offered by the Graduate School, CAL, or the English Department. The Graduate Secretary will record completion of this requirement.

### **4) Annual Refresher Training for Ph.D. students only**

Starting in Year 3, all doctoral students must complete *three* additional hours of annual refresher training a year for a total of *six*. This can include discussion-based training and online courses beyond the seven required in basic training. The Graduate Secretary will record completion of this requirement.

### **English Department Plan for M.A. and Ph.D. Students Enrolling prior to Fall 2016:**

Students enrolled in the M.A. or Ph.D. programs prior to Fall Semester 2016 are required to complete RCR training. These students must complete the *four* Year-1 CITI modules, and *three* hours of discussion-based training prior to receiving their degree.

### **RCR Training Completion Form**

M.A. and Ph.D. students will use the department's "RCR Training Completion Form" to track their progress. They should bring the form to their Annual Progress Report Meeting to discuss RCR plans for the next year with their advisor, and submit the form with the Annual Report, recording all of your RCR training to date. The Graduate Secretary will keep on file the most current copy and discard previous ones. **The Graduate Secretary will mark the student's completion of "Initial" and "Annual" requirements in GradInfo. If students do not complete the training, they may not be able to graduate.**