

TCU DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

GRADUATE PROGRAM POLICIES

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Overview

TCU is a secular, highly selective teaching and research university with a dedication to academic freedom. Our tradition of excellence in graduate studies combines intellectual development with practical training and professional mentoring. The Department of English trains students to be versatile, talented teachers and informed, committed researchers. We offer specialized course work in American and British literature as well as rhetoric and composition, producing distinctive graduates: rhetoricians sensitive to literature and literary scholars enthusiastic about teaching writing. We are committed to an ideal of a small, nurturing environment that provides individualized instruction. A degree from the Department of English is exceptional not just in terms of the excellence of our work but in the unique experiences fostered by the exploration of literature, rhetoric, and writing from diverse perspectives.

TCU Graduate Catalog

Most matters of department policy are established by the rules, regulations, and procedures outlined by the University's [Graduate Catalog](#), which contains information about Admissions, Financial Aid, Policy, Academic Services, and Academic Conduct (detailed in the [Code of Student Conduct](#)). The [AddRan College Section](#) of the catalog contains details about curriculum and requirements for both the MA and PhD degrees. Any matters of policy and procedure not outlined in the TCU Catalog are detailed here; forms and other files are referenced here through embedded links or available through the program's TCU Online (D2L) site.

Frequently Used Acronyms

DGS: Director of Graduate Studies

GPC: Graduate Program Committee

Accelerated MA in English Degree Option for TCU Undergraduates

The policies for the MA in English degree outlined in the remainder of this document apply only to those graduate students accepted into the MA program with a completed undergraduate degree, not to TCU undergraduates beginning graduate-level coursework during their senior year through the [Accelerated MA in English degree option](#) (hereafter "Accelerated MA program"). The following exceptions apply to students in the Accelerated MA program because they have to manage both undergraduate and graduate program requirements:

Accelerated MA: APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION (see 1.1., page 3)

Requirements. Candidates for the Accelerated MA program will follow the same procedures as all other applicants with the following two exceptions:

1. To be eligible to apply to the Accelerated MA program a student must be an English or Writing major and have completed 60 hours of credit overall and 18 hours in the English or Writing major. In addition a student should maintain a GPA of 3.5 overall as well as in the major.
2. At least 2 of the letters of reference the student submits must be from current English or Writing faculty using the internal faculty recommendation form for the Accelerated MA program.

Full-Time Status. Full-time status for students enrolled in the Accelerated MA program will be defined by TCU undergraduate policies as outlined in the TCU Catalog. Students in the program will typically complete up to 12 hours of graduate coursework in their first year.

Accelerated MA: TIME LIMITS (see 1.4, page 4)

For Financial Aid. Students enrolled in the Accelerated MA program must consult with the English department DGS and the TCU Office of Financial Aid to work with timetables and deadlines regarding aid for undergraduate and graduate credit hours.

Accelerated MA: SUPPORT (see 2.0, page 5)

Students enrolled in the Accelerated MA program must consult with the DGS and the TCU Office of Financial Aid to work with timetables and deadlines regarding aid for undergraduate and graduate credit hours. Students in the Accelerated MA program are normally eligible for assistantships, non-teaching assignments, and other awarded opportunities for professional development *only* after completing the undergraduate degree.

Accelerated MA: GOOD STANDING (see 4.1, page 9)

Students enrolled in the Accelerated MA program must fulfill all requirements for completing the undergraduate degree as outlined in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). The three Good Standing criteria regarding "C" grades, GPA, and Incompletes (see section 4.1) apply *only* to the graduate-level courses taken by students in the Accelerated MA program.

Accelerated MA: FIRST-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF MA STUDENTS

The DGS will meet with each student in the spring of their undergraduate senior year to assess the student's potential for continuing on to full time graduate work culminating with an MA degree. These meetings will take place before midterm reports are due, usually mid-March.

1.0 — APPLYING

1.1 APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Requirements

General Requirement

Admission requires at least a BA degree or equivalent, with credit in English equivalent to the TCU 33 hour English or Writing major and with sophomore-level credit in a foreign language. Applicants with less preparation may be admitted conditionally, but must take such additional courses as are prescribed by AddRan College and DGS.

Specific Requirements

For admission to either the MA or the PhD program, prospective students must present the following materials:

1. Application form with application fee
2. Official transcripts
3. Official GRE General Test scores (have ETS send directly to TCU)
4. Statement of purpose
5. A CV (or resume)
6. Writing sample
7. Three letters of recommendation
8. Official TOEFL scores (if applicable)

Details about completing a Graduate Application are available through the department website at <https://addran.tcu.edu/english/graduate-programs/graduate-admissions.php>. For questions about the application process, email the DGS.

Registration Procedures

All students must meet with the DGS, who serves as advisor for all graduate students. The DGS maintains a record of graduate student progress toward fulfilling course requirements and must be consulted each term

during [schedule advising or enrollment periods](#). At least one week before schedule advising, students will make their appointments with the DGS.

NOTE: Students should not use my.tcu.edu to register, add, or drop courses without prior approval from the DGS.

Full-Time Status

The normal credit load for full-time graduate students is 9 hours per semester. The following expectations apply to various assignments:

University Fellows, Radford Fellows, and Green Fellows

A 9-12 hour credit load per semester is expected for first-year students holding these appointments.

Graduate Instructors (GIs)

Credit loads for GI appointments are determined by the DGS and vary between 6-9 hours per semester, depending on previous teaching experience and progress within the graduate program.

Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Graduate Assistants (GAs)

MA students holding TA, RA, and GA appointments normally take 9 credit hours of coursework each semester of their first year. Students working on a MA thesis typically take 6 credit hours each semester, which should include 3 hours of Thesis (typically 3 hours of ENGL 70980 in the fall and 3 hours of ENGL 70990 in the spring).

After completing coursework requirements, PhD students take 6 credit hours of Dissertation in each of the first two semesters of dissertation work (6 hours of ENGL 90980 followed by 6 hours of ENGL 90990). Subsequent to those 12 hours, students take 1 hour of ENGL 90990 per semester. PhD students admitted to candidacy (i.e., after passing exams), engaged in writing a dissertation, and enrolled accordingly are considered full-time; students who do not enroll for dissertation hours cannot be considered full-time, even if they are actively engaged in research and writing. Doctoral students who do not maintain full-time enrollment status cannot expect full access to TCU faculty or to library resources.

NOTE: anyone needing documentation to verify full-time status while a student at TCU may obtain a letter to this effect from the Associate Dean of AddRan College. Contact the DGS for details.

1.2 COMPLETION OF PRIOR MASTER'S DEGREE

In special cases, a student may be granted provisional admission to the PhD program if the student has not yet completed his or her master's program. Such students will, however, lose any Fellowship, GI, or TA/RA/GA appointment if they have not completed the master's degree before the beginning of the second year in the TCU doctoral program.

1.3 ADMISSION TO PHD FROM MASTER'S PROGRAM

Students admitted only to the MA program at TCU must reapply for admission to the PhD program. An applicant's record is subject to review by the department's graduate admissions committee: admission is not automatic.

1.4 TIME LIMITS

For the Degree

The MA must be completed within five years from initial matriculation (and no more than five years from the date of the earliest credit to be counted on the degree). For the PhD, the minimum time for completion is three

years; the PhD dissertation must be completed within six years after admission to candidacy.

For Financial Aid

For students in the MA program, awards normally renew annually for a total of 2 years of support (stipend and/or tuition waiver). For students entering the doctoral program with only a BA, awards normally renew annually for a total of 5 years of support; for students entering with an MA, awards normally renew annually for a total of 4 years.

Students who fail to make satisfactory progress toward the degree may have their request for renewed aid denied (see section 1.2 and 4.1).

2.0 — SUPPORT

2.1 FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

New applicants must apply for aid by January 10 (along with other program application materials); returning students must declare their interest each fall semester, following a notice from the DGS, typically in December. The GPC then makes financial awards for new and returning students.

Applications and forms should be submitted as outlined on the department website: [Graduate Application for Programs in English](#). All financial aid awards are for nine months. See the [Graduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Studies](#) for additional information. The department may not fill every position and will reassign duties as needed.

Graduate student professional activities and community building are essential parts of our graduate program. Therefore to receive full graduate aid (i.e., tuition and a stipend), the recipient must be in residence at the university for at least one semester (either fall or spring) in an academic year.

The department provides the following types of financial awards each year.

Available only to New Applicants

The Ida M. Green Doctoral Fellowship

This appointment provides a stipend and full tuition waiver for up to 24 hours for students who specialize in English Studies. No assigned duties.

Rupert and Lillian Radford Fellowships

Two Radford Fellowships provide a stipend and up to 24 hours of tuition waiver for students who specialize in Rhetoric and Composition. No assigned duties.

University Fellowship

University Fellows provide a stipend and up to 24 hours of tuition waiver. No assigned duties.

Currently, these stipends provide up to \$21,000 in funding; including the funding equivalent in tuition award (\$35,910), these fellowships carry a total value of up to \$56,910 for the year.

Available to all Students

In order to expand opportunities for professional development and experience to the largest number of graduate students possible, any non-teaching assignment (e.g., Assistant to Director of Composition, Research Associate to the Sherley Chair) will be limited to a one year appointment only.

Graduate Instructor (GI)

A GI teaches sections of ENGL 10803 or 20803 Written Communication courses (or, for some advanced students, other lower-division courses). Determined foremost by departmental needs, scheduling is influenced by the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom (or if granted to a new student, previous academic work); at least 18 earned credit hours of graduate work in the discipline; and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS, Director of Composition, and Director of Undergraduate Studies. GIs receive a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend. Maximum teaching assignment for a GI is one writing intensive course each semester, with a work load of no more than 20 hours per week.

Assistant Director of Composition (ADC)

The ADC assists the Director of Composition, who assigns all duties. The application process includes a personal interview by the Director, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS. The Assistant receives a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend in exchange for 20 clock hours of research work each week of the semester.

Assistant Director, Center for Digital Expression (CDEx)

Assists the Director of the Center for Digital Expression, who assigns all duties, and learns in greater detail how active research careers are managed. The application process includes a personal interview by the Director, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS and Director. The Assistant receives a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend in exchange for 20 clock hours of research work each week of the semester.

Research Associate to the Addie Levy Professor of Literature

Provides research support (e.g., library research, indexing, copy-editing, co-authoring) for the Addie Levy Professor, who assigns all duties, and learns in greater detail how active research careers are managed. The application process includes a personal interview with the Addie Levy Professor, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS. The Associate receives a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend in exchange for 20 clock hours of research work each week of the semester.

Research Associate to the Lillian Radford Chair of Rhetoric and Composition

Provides research support (e.g., library research, indexing, copy-editing, co-authoring) for the Radford Chair, who assigns all duties, and learns in greater detail how active research careers are managed. The application process includes a personal interview with the Radford Chair, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS. The Associate receives a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend in exchange for 20 clock hours of research work each week of the semester.

Research Associate to the Lorraine Sherley Professor of Literature

Provides research support (e.g., library research, indexing, copy-editing, co-authoring) for the Lorraine Sherley Professor, who assigns all duties, and learns in greater detail how active research careers are managed. The application process includes a personal interview with the Sherley Professor, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS. The Associate receives a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) and a stipend in exchange for 20 clock hours of research work each week of the semester.

Doctoral Teaching Lecturers

Available to advanced doctoral students. Doctoral Teaching Lecturers are non-renewable teaching positions requiring two courses each semester. The primary responsibilities are in teaching lower-division Core Curriculum courses, particularly composition, typically with opportunity to teach in specialty areas related to dissertation research. Required: at least 18 hours of graduate level coursework in English; previous experience teaching university level composition; advanced to candidacy (ABD) in the doctoral program without a completed PhD. Although all ABD students are eligible, preference is given to candidates from the TCU Department of English who are within a year of completion of the PhD. Applicants submit a letter of application, CV, one-page teaching philosophy, and one sample composition syllabus with assignments.

NOTE: The positions below are not always available, due to departmental needs.

Writing Center Assistant

Assists the Director of Writing Center, who assigns all duties. The application process includes a personal interview by the Director, who considers the following criteria for appointment: past performance in the department and in the classroom, and approval of the Chair in consultation with the DGS.

Teaching Assistants (TAs), Research Assistants (RAs), and Graduate Assistants (GAs)

TAs, RAs, and GAs receive only tuition-remission grants; unfortunately, no stipends are available for these positions (see section 2.2 for additional information).

2.2 GRADUATE, TEACHING, AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

TAs, RAs, and GAs are awarded tuition remission grants, with no stipend. In consultation with the GPC and the Chair, the DGS assigns these appointments to admitted students who have been awarded tuition hours.

Teaching Assistants (TAs)

Teaching Assistants work 10 clock hours a week in addition to 10 hours for reading or class preparation (weekly distribution of hours may vary, but weekly total may not exceed 20 hours). Their duties may include attending class, taking attendance, calculating averages, screening films, grading exams and short response papers, monitoring online discussions, conducting exam study sessions, or giving occasional lectures in the class.

According to University policy (in compliance with federal labor laws), TAs perform work that directly relates to teaching and enhances their profile as classroom instructors. TAs may not be used for work that could be performed by a work-study student or an RA (e.g., library research, indexing, or copy-editing for a professor's scholarly work). To establish full-time enrollment status, a TA takes 9 hours.

Research Assistants (RAs)

Doctoral candidates who no longer have funding may pay for 1 credit hour of Dissertation (ENGL 90990) by working 20 clock hours per semester assisting a faculty member with research or creative activity. Priority for these positions is given to candidates with an approved prospectus who are making progress toward completing the dissertation.

According to University policy (in compliance with federal labor laws), RAs may not perform teaching duties such as grading, lecturing or otherwise conducting class. Approved duties include library, online, or field research; proofreading, copyediting, or indexing a manuscript; managing correspondence for academic interest groups; or creative writing programming.

Graduate Assistants (GAs)

Graduate Assistants receive a tuition remission (up to 18 hours per academic year) in exchange for 20 clock hours of program work for the department each week of the semester. Awards for GAs are made after all Fellowship, DA, and GI appointments have been funded; priority is normally given to MA candidates in good standing. To establish full-time enrollment status, a GA takes 9 hours of coursework.

GAs are categorized as Research Assistants with a focus on departmental leadership and programming. According to University policy (in compliance with federal labor laws), GAs are like RAs in that they may not be used for teaching duties such as grading, lecturing, or otherwise conducting class. Approved duties include library, online, or field research; data collection or compilation; composing, proofreading, or copyediting written materials; managing correspondence; or assisting with programming efforts.

2.3 HOURS ASSIGNED AND WEEKLY LIMITS

In exchange for service (teaching, research, or administrative support), students with TA/RA/GA assignments, including program assistants and Research Associates, are provided stipends and/or tuition. Fellowship Awards are made without the expectation of service.

Service assignments are based on a work week of 20 hours. Students who want to supplement their stipends with extra work through TCU are limited to 7 hours/week and must request permission with the DGS at the beginning of each funding year (or whenever the new work begins) and with any change in the unit providing the work. The total of all concurrent assistantship appointments for one non-international student is not to exceed 27 hours of duties per week. International students and other visa holders are governed by the appropriate immigration regulations limiting the number of hours they may hold assistantship duties while in the United States to no more than 20 hours per week.

3.0 — COURSEWORK AND CREDIT

3.1 TRANSFERABLE* CREDIT

Doctoral students who have completed a Master's degree in English (or an equivalent) at another appropriately accredited university within the last six years may receive credit for as much as 6 courses or 18 hours. Upon arrival in the program, students with an MA will make an advising appointment with the DGS, who will assess official transcripts and make a final determination concerning such courses. Course work that is incomplete, in a disciplinary field other than English (or an equivalent), or completed more than 6 years previously is ineligible for transfer credit. Transfer credit is unavailable to MA program applicants.

(* The department does not "transfer" credit, but instead certifies to the university that appropriate graduate coursework has been completed elsewhere; TCU requires that all doctoral students complete at least 36 hours of course work at TCU, not including dissertation guidance.)

3.2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Doctoral students are required to complete *the equivalent of a second year of college level language study* with the grade of B- or better; this requirement may be satisfied by *accredited* coursework. For students who have not satisfied the foreign language requirement prior to entering the doctoral program, several options are available:

- At their own expense, students may enroll in foreign language courses while pursuing doctoral studies. Since TCU does not offer these courses at the Graduate level, TCU tuition hour awards cannot be used for this coursework. Students may "transfer" in coursework from other institutions, or enroll in undergraduate courses at TCU.
- Following the procedures outlined in the *Graduate Catalog*, a faculty member designated by the DGS may administer a translation exam in French, Spanish, German, or Latin. The translation exam is a one-page selection of prose fiction or literary theory that the student will translate within one hour, with the aid of a dictionary in the appropriate language. The selection will be determined by the DGS in consultation with designated faculty member.

- When English is a student's second language, the department will normally consider the foreign language requirement to have been met.

3.3 DIRECTED STUDIES COURSES

Two types of Directed Studies courses are available; students may count toward their 54-hour degree no more than 6 hours of Tutorial Emphasis and no more than 3 hours of Pedagogy Emphasis. *Directed study courses must be approved by both the DGS and Chair* through a two-part process: before planning a directed study, the student should [1] approach the DGS and the supervising professor regarding the feasibility of the course; then [2] complete with the supervising professor the “Contract for Non-Traditional Course” and submit it to the DGS.

Directed Study: Tutorial Emphasis

For a Tutorial Directed Study, a student takes ENGL 50973 to pursue readings on a specific topic, as arranged by a supervising professor, and with the approval of the DGS and Chair. Students may apply no more than 6 hours of this Directed Study emphasis toward fulfillment of degree requirements. (Only in the rarest cases will the DGS grant exceptions to the 6-hour limit or approve a Tutorial as a substitute for any of the doctoral program's core courses.)

Directed Study: Pedagogy Emphasis

For a Pedagogy Directed Study, a student takes ENGL 50973 to work closely with a supervising professor in the teaching of an undergraduate class. The student will not only study the topic of the class, but also serve as an apprentice teacher, assisting the professor in a variety of tasks—including course-related research, planning, and assessment. Students may apply no more than 3 hours of this Directed Study emphasis toward fulfillment of degree requirements. (NOTE: no more than 2 graduate students may work with a single undergraduate class.)

NOTE: The department occasionally offers new courses or undergraduate cross-listings as ENGL 50973, not as one of the Directed Studies detailed above; such courses do not count against a student's allotted 6 hours of Tutorial emphasis or 3 hours of Pedagogy emphasis.

3.4 INCOMPLETES

Students who experience unusual difficulty completing a course's requirements may request from their professor a grade of Incomplete. Faculty members are free to grant or deny such requests at their discretion. [University policy](#) calls for all incomplete work to be finished within the first 60 days of the regular semester immediately following or it is changed to an “F.” Requests to extend the university deadline can be granted only at the discretion of the professor, and only *before* the deadline.

The only exception to this set of university deadlines concerns students enrolled in Thesis (ENGL 70990) or Dissertation (ENGL 90990). Until a student successfully completes and defends a manuscript, incomplete grades are recorded each semester for thesis and dissertation guidance and “roll over” automatically; when a thesis or dissertation director submits the final [Thesis/Dissertation Grade Report Form](#) to AddRan College, incompletes are replaced by the appropriate grade.

4.0 — ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

4.1 GOOD STANDING

A graduate student taking coursework is considered in good standing in the program as long as the student [1] accumulates no more than two course grades of “C” or lower; [2] maintains at least a 3.25 GPA; and [3] carries no more than two incompletes at any time.

A “doctoral student” becomes a “doctoral candidate” after passing qualifying exams.

After admission to candidacy, good standing is maintained if the student [1] submits a prospectus to

dissertation committee members within six months of passing the qualifying exam; [2] successfully completes a prospectus review; [3] remains in contact with the committee; and [4] continues to draft and submit chapters as evidence of progress. If no dissertation has been filed within six calendar years after passing the exam, the student's credits expire.

Students who do not maintain good standing are placed on probation, and will be so notified by the DGS at the end of the semester. The department will not renew financial awards for students on probation.

4.2 GUIDELINES FOR MA THESIS

Each MA student must complete an MA thesis. The MA thesis can take one of two forms: a traditional thesis or the "exam-to-thesis" option.

Traditional Thesis

The thesis committee is typically composed of three faculty members from the Department of English. When appropriate, a member from outside the department may be appointed. (Master's thesis committees generally follow the guidelines and procedures outlined in section 4.5 concerning dissertation advisory committees.)

After completing at least 12 hours of course work, the student first invites a faculty member to become the thesis director. The director and the student agree upon options for the remaining members of the committee, and the student then invites their participation. The thesis director then asks the Dean of AddRan College to appoint the committee formally.

While much shorter and less substantial than a dissertation, a thesis is similar in many ways. The responsibilities of the student, director, and committee parallel the procedures and obligations outlined for dissertations, including a final public "defense" of the thesis (see section 4.9); the only notable exception in policy is that, unlike dissertations, MA theses receive letter grades.

Exam-to-Thesis Option

Typically in the spring semester, the student will choose two fields in which he or she wishes to be examined. The student may choose theoretically, geographically, or generically disparate fields; however, students are encouraged to identify fields that intersect in some meaningful way to make the thesis more coherent and engaging. The student will select a primary thesis adviser in one field and (in consultation with that adviser) select an adviser for the second field. The two advisers will then select a third reader whose role is confined to reading the finished thesis and participating in the defense (and, if necessary, breaking a tie in the grading of the exam).

Working with each adviser, the student will develop two separate reading lists, one in each of the two fields. Each list should include approximately 30 titles, with a mix of primary/secondary sources, articles and books. Once each adviser accepts his or her reading lists, the student will then produce an annotated bibliography of each reading list. Once each adviser has accepted the annotated bibliography for his or her list, the student will take a timed written examination in each of the two fields. The exam will typically take place by the end of the fall semester.

The adviser for each exam will provide three essay prompts relating to the exam list. The student will have 48 hours to produce a 12-15 page (not including notes or works cited) essay addressing one of the topics. Each essay should include the selected prompt in full at the top of the essay and a works cited page for cited material, which should include a representative range from the reading list. Both advisers will grade both exams with either a pass or fail and provide the student with written feedback. In the event of a grading tie on one or both of the exams, the third adviser will provide a tie break. If the student fails one or both exams, the student must retake the exam or exams normally within a month. If the student fails one or both exams a second time, the student is dismissed from the graduate program.

If the student passes both exams, the student will draw on feedback provided by the two advisers to revise and expand the exams into two formal essays of approximately 15 pages each. These revisions will take place with

the guidance of both advisers. Once both advisers have accepted the final, revised essays the student will write a 5-10 page introduction that attempts to bridge or make connections between the two essays. The introduction, the two revised essays, and the annotated bibliography shall constitute the master's thesis. With the approval of the two exam advisers the student will deliver the completed thesis to the third reader and schedule a public thesis defense date.

At the thesis defense the student will present a brief overview of his or her work and answer questions from all three readers. Questions can address any aspect of the written thesis and exam lists including titles appearing on a list but not mentioned in exam essays. The three readers will then confer and determine a letter grade for the thesis.

Creative Thesis Format and Content Requirements

Approval by Thesis Director

The prospective Creative Writing Thesis Director will assess Master of Arts in English students' readiness to undertake a Creative Writing Thesis (i.e., competency and/or credit hours). Students wishing to submit a Creative Writing Thesis must obtain approval from a thesis adviser and submit a project plan. Students are encouraged to submit projects that have undergone a rigorous process of discussion with their Creative Writing Thesis advisor. *Note:* If a student assembles an interdisciplinary committee, the thesis itself must still adhere to MA in English Creative Writing Thesis Guidelines.

Thesis Format

The Creative Writing Thesis must include an introductory chapter, of a minimum 12 pages but no more than 25 pages, giving the reader a scholarly overview of the literary traditions in which the student's creative work participates; thus, it must do the following:

- Analyze relevant genres, using critical sources
- Situate the writer in relation to predominant craft-related challenges
- Explain recurrent themes, the revision process, and/or influential authors/texts

The thesis must include a thorough bibliography for readers eager to conduct additional studies on the creative work and its tradition(s).

Genres

Thesis Length

The Creative Writing Thesis itself, not including the introduction, generally should range from 60 to 80 pages, plus bibliography. Appropriate manuscript length will be determined in consultation with specialists in each genre.

Thesis Format

The final result is an original manuscript. The format of the introductory chapter and bibliography must follow formal guidelines established by the Master of Arts in English program at TCU. These guidelines are published in the following manuals:

- *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, latest edition
- [AddRan Manual for Preparation of Theses or Dissertations](#)

4.3 FIRST-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The major means of assessing graduate students at all levels are the admissions process, course grades, and qualifying examinations. However, the review of students during their first year in the program is designed to help them adjust as quickly as possible and make the most productive use of their time in the program. The goal of first-year assessment is professional advising. No later than 15 April each year, the entire graduate faculty convenes to discuss the progress of each first-year doctoral student, followed by a professional advising session for each student. The DGS will appoint 2 faculty members to meet with each student (and may appoint a third faculty member to join the advising session if the specific circumstances of the student warrant additional input).

4.4 DOCTORAL QUALIFYING EXAMINATIONS

Students may take qualifying exams only **after** they have satisfied the foreign language requirement and completed at least 48 hours of coursework (includes credits approved as “transferable”; see 3.1).

Learning Outcomes

There are five learning outcomes for the examination process:

1. Demonstrate depth of knowledge of major primary texts and major critical texts in one focus area.
2. Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge of major primary texts and major critical texts in one larger field area.
3. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize different strands of scholarly work.
4. Demonstrate the ability to define a professional identity in terms of fields of specialization.
5. Construct an original argument as part of the synthesis being created appropriate to the scope and relevance of each exam as defined by the student and her or his exam committee.

Timeline

Students should plan to use the summer months in their first two years of doctoral work to establish and prepare for qualifying exams. This work should be conducted without the expectation that faculty advisors will be available for consultation during the summer. Students should prepare their qualifying exam lists and identify exam committee members during their last semester of coursework. April 1 is the spring deadline and November 15 the fall deadline for graduate students to have exam lists approved by their committees. The exam process, both written and oral, should be completed by the end of the following semester. An approved April list means the student should complete exams by the last day of classes in the fall semester; a November approved list means a student should complete exams by the last day of classes in the spring semester. A student can always turn in the approved lists—and the exams—before the final deadline for each semester.

The choice of exam options (A, B, C or D), the precise dates, and if applicable, times for the exams should be identified on the Exam List Signature Sheet (available on D2L site). Changes in the exam format or due date must be approved by all committee members and the DGS (in consultation with the GPC).

Reading Lists: Field and Focus

After consultation with her or his exam committee, the student will put together a Field List and a Focus List. Based on these lists, the student will choose written exam format options, described below. The Field list and Focus list provide, respectively, breadth and depth to the exam process: broad knowledge in a primary area of research and deep understanding of a specialty area in preparation for the dissertation and future research.

Field List

The Field List will be [1] composed of the equivalent of 40-50 book-length texts and [2] broad enough to encompass a subject-area category used in the MLA job list (e.g., Rhetoric and Composition or 18th Century British Literature). Students should have a primary area of interest that shapes their research and teaching profile, and the Field List should demonstrate general knowledge of the subject area in which students primarily define themselves. This list should contain central texts that experts in the field will be expected to know, including critical and methodological texts. Each student will consult with committee members to identify the Field and create the list.

Focus List

The Focus List will be [1] composed of the equivalent of 30-40 book-length texts and [2] based on a student's specialized interest area, including primary, critical, and methodological texts (e.g., New Media Studies or Irish Women Writers).

Committee

A student will choose an exam coordinator and, in consultation with this coordinator, one other exam committee member. The exam committee often forms part of the dissertation committee, but students are not required to include exam committee members. The exam coordinator will supervise the student in developing his or her Field and Focus lists in consultation with the other committee member. Both committee members must approve both lists.

The student is responsible for submitting copies of both reading lists to the DGS and exam committee members (a text-readable digital file must be submitted for archival and assessment purposes; printed copies must be submitted upon request). Once the Field and Focus lists have been approved, the exam committee will work together to develop questions for the written exams, which will be completed and submitted to the department's Office Manager two weeks before the scheduled exam date. (No question preparation is required for portfolio options.) For each timed exam, the student will receive six prompts and will respond to two prompts.

The exam coordinator will oversee logistics for the exam process, but it is the student's responsibility to meet deadlines for submitting exam materials. *The oral exam cannot be conducted until the student has passed both portions of the written exam.*

Format

The examination has two-parts: a Written Exam, followed by an Oral Exam.

Written Exam

In consultation with his or her exam committee, a student will chose two of the following four written exam options described below. Only a timed exam option (A or B) can be chosen twice (e.g., a student can take two 8-hour exams or two 48-hour exams). In other words, a student can choose one of the following combinations:

- Two timed exams
- One timed exam and an Essay Portfolio
- One timed exam and a Pedagogy Portfolio
- An Essay Portfolio and a Pedagogy Portfolio

A. Timed Exam (8 hour)

The student writes two timed essays that respond to specific questions. Within an 8-hour period, the student writes her or his response to two questions out of a choice of six prompts. The student can use notes and texts. Normally students write about 8-10 double spaced pages per question (3600-4000 words).

B. Timed Exam (48 hour)

The student writes two timed essays that respond to specific questions. Within a 48-hour period, the student writes his or her response to two questions out of a choice of six prompts. The student can use notes and texts. Normally students write about 12 double spaced pages per question (3600-4000 words).

C. Essay Portfolio

The student creates an Essay Portfolio based on her or his approved reading list, in consultation with committee members. Students should meet initially with members of the exam committee to discuss plans for the portfolio, but students should then work without faculty assistance. The portfolio should be 12,000-15,000 words (40-50 pages or new media equivalent) in length and must include the following:

1. An opening narrative that describes the major ideas, themes, and issues represented in the portfolio

and gives an overview of its contents (including, perhaps, a discussion of how the portfolio essays could be revised for submission after the qualifying exam). [1250-1750 words]

2. *Essay option*: a 20-page scholarly essay that advances an original argument, bringing together major texts from the reading list, both critical and primary; this essay should be completely and accurately cited, designed for a particular scholarly audience. [8,000 word, or 6000 words + notes/works cited]

OR

New Media option: a scholarly new media project (using digital technology such as image/sound/film editors, website editors, and/or print production editors) that advances an original argument, bringing together major texts from the reading list, both critical and primary; the project should be completely and accurately cited, designed for a particular scholarly audience.

3. *Professional writing* that is informed by material on the reading list but that has not been used to satisfy course requirements (this might include conference papers; published, accepted, or circulating articles or creative writing; grant proposals, and other materials demonstrating a knowledge of the area). [1250-1750 words]

OR

Research Agenda: a narrative describing research goals and an agenda for submissions to conferences and journals (this should include research on, and discussion of, journals in the selected field).

4. An annotated bibliography of all items on the reading list not covered by the essay or new media project. [2,000-2500 words]

D. Pedagogy Portfolio

The student creates the Pedagogy Portfolio based on her or his approved reading list, in consultation with committee members. Students should meet initially with members of the exam committee to discuss plans for the essay, but students should then work without faculty assistance. The portfolio should be 40-50 pages (or new media equivalent) in length and must include the following:

1. An opening narrative that not only describes the major ideas, themes, and issues represented in the portfolio and giving an overview of its contents, but also explains how the teaching materials are connected to the student's scholarly work and research agenda. [1250-1750 words]
2. Two syllabi, one for a lower-division and one for an upper-division or graduate course, including all the key components of a modern syllabus: course description, learning outcomes, reading list, required detailed reading and writing assignments, grading scale, and course calendar (based on 15-week term). Both courses should include a new media component and a sample lecture. These syllabi should not duplicate assignments submitted for credit in coursework. [8,000 word total, not including (optional) boilerplate]
3. A rationale for each syllabus, including differences in the kinds of required texts and assignments for each level. Each rationale should explain the following: course scope and structure; choice of readings; goals for the writing assignments and classroom activities; secondary and critical material informing the conceptualization of the course; and plans for using technology (e.g., creating a course blog or wiki, requiring new media presentations, etc.). [1,500-2000 words]
4. An annotated bibliography of all items on the reading list not covered by the syllabi or rationales. [2,000-2500 words]

Note on Portfolio Exams: During the process of composing the portfolio, students may seek feedback, up to

three times only, from each examining committee member. All consultations must be limited to oral discussion: students should not submit written drafts to the committee, nor should committee members respond in writing. This is to ensure that there are limitations on the student's reliance on the committee to pre-approve actual written content of doctoral exam portfolios before formal submission and assessment.

Oral Exam

Normally, faculty will assess the timed written exams within one week of receipt and portfolio exams within two weeks of receipt. Both areas of the written exam must be passed before the student may take the oral exam. In the case of a split decision between the committee members on the exams, a third reader will be brought in to help with the assessment. Students failing one or both parts of the written exam must retake those parts after a probationary period of at least three months.

A two-hour oral exam will take place no later than one week following the committee's determination that the student has passed both written exams. The oral exam will be divided equally among the two study areas (Field and Focus). A student failing the oral exam, as determined by either of the committee members, must retake it after a waiting period of at least one month; a third faculty member, chosen in consultation with the DGS, GPC, and Chair, will be brought in to help with the assessment of the retake exam. Following successful completion of the oral exam, the committee members will sign a PhD Qualifying Exam Assessment Form (see [D2L site](#)) and submit it to the DGS.

Assessment

Having fulfilled all other requirements for candidacy, a student with a Pass for the qualifying examination will be admitted to candidacy. A student whose performance (as assessed by a unanimous committee vote) is ranked in the top 10% of TCU students taking such exams will be awarded a Pass with Distinction. A student with a marginal performance will be awarded a Low Pass: a warning that his or her performance needs to improve on the dissertation project.

A student who fails the same section of the exam twice will be dismissed from the PhD program. A student who fails a section of the exam on her or his first attempt may elect, with the unanimous consent of the committee, to modify or substitute any areas before a second—and final—attempt. Having previously failed a section of the exam, a student who elects to change topics will have only one remaining opportunity to pass the exam.

4.5 DISSERTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Within four months of admission to candidacy, a student must assemble a dissertation advisory committee and submit a prospectus (see section 4.6) for committee review. Failure to submit the prospectus and take part in a review within this timeline may result in loss of good standing and departmental funding. Students whose progress could fall outside of this timeline may petition the DGS for an extension.

The dissertation advisory committee must be composed of at least four members of the graduate faculty at TCU. When appropriate, a scholar from another department may be invited to join the committee (see below). All committees are appointed through AddRan College at the recommendation of the DGS and Chair.

Appointment of Chair, Second, and Third Readers

Because the qualifying exam committee may differ from the dissertation advisory committee, the latter will not be appointed until the student has been admitted to candidacy. To assemble the committee, the candidate first invites a graduate faculty member to become the dissertation director. The director and the candidate then work together to identify and invite the second and third readers. The specialization of the first three members should align with the dissertation topic.

Fourth and External Readers

The function of the fourth reader is to provide a perspective external to the field of specialization. Fourth

readers may be members of the English department with expertise in fields that differ from the subject of the dissertation (e.g., a scholar with a specialty in literature may be the fourth reader for a dissertation on composition pedagogy). Fourth readers may choose to read only the penultimate and final drafts of the dissertation.

A student wishing to include a fourth reader external to the department will, in consultation with the director, identify an appropriate scholar and secure his or her consent. An external reader from the TCU faculty may serve on a dissertation advisory committee. An external reader from another institution may be appointed to a dissertation committee when he or she possesses special expertise. Usually no more than one external reader is authorized for a committee.

With approval from the director, the candidate is responsible for identifying an external reader, documenting his or her consent, and proposing the appointment to the DGS. The reader must meet all criteria for appointment to the TCU Graduate Faculty; therefore, he or she must submit a statement of intent and a detailed, professional CV to the Chair for consideration. An external reader approved by the Chair and DGS will be nominated for Adjunct Graduate Faculty status, which must be approved by the AddRan Dean before the reader can serve on the committee.

Once committee members are identified, the director then asks the Dean of AddRan College to appoint the committee formally by submitting a signed [Doctoral Committee Form](#) to the DGS. Once appointed, the committee may be modified, but it may not be changed during the semester of the candidate's graduation (unless the committee director gives compelling cause in a formal petition to the DGS, Chair, and AddRan Dean for approval). Before circulating drafts, candidates should confirm—with all committee members—the reading process that the committee will follow.

4.6 DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

Within four regular semester months of successful completion of exams and admission to candidacy, students must prepare a dissertation prospectus to define clearly the dissertation project and to provide direction for research and writing. Typically, the proposal should include a brief review of the scholarly literature and a brief statement of the scope and significance of the topic. The prospectus should also include a timeline for completing the project.

The purpose of the prospectus is to forecast, to the extent possible, the major research questions and potential conclusions of the intended project, which should be a significant contribution to a field of study. The prospectus should be generative, provisional, considered, and scholarly. It is not necessarily meant to become part of the dissertation, only to propose the project. It is a working document, intended to provide a roadmap to the dissertation.

The prospectus varies depending on field, subject matter, writer, and committee preferences, but it should follow a basic outline (see below) as a foundation for the dissertation. Candidates doing [Human Subjects Research](#) must seek Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in tandem with approval of the prospectus, but before beginning their formal research.

The prospectus should forecast the nature of the project in a proposal of 10-15 typed, double-spaced pages (3,500–6,000 words, exclusive of bibliography) with each of the following required sections:

1. An overview of the proposed dissertation project, which might typically include these elements, in an order determined through consultation with the director:
 - A. summary of the project's main research questions and anticipated contribution(s)
 - B. explanation of the theoretical framework
 - C. description, explanation, and defense of the methodological approach (including plans for IRB approval, data collection procedures, and any other related considerations)
 - D. review of relevant literature
 - E. comparison of the proposed research to other work in relevant areas of study
 - F. specific statements about how the project differs from, and contributes to, any work already

published

G. explanation of any interdisciplinary connections the project might have

H. explanation of the unique contribution that it might be expected to make

2. Table of contents and detailed annotations (350 words max.) that describe each chapter and its relationship not only to the other chapters but also to the overall argument of the dissertation.
3. Logistical plans for completing research and preparing the manuscript, including overall timeline (and delivery dates) and estimated length.
4. Working bibliography.

Note: The content of a provisional bibliography depends on many variables, and while it should be selective, it should also indicate the range of significant scholarly materials, both primary and secondary, appropriate to the discipline.

Reviewing the prospectus to ensure that it has met expectations, the dissertation committee may require the candidate to revise the document for any of the following:

1. The prospectus is too vague or unfinished.
2. It does not outline potential contributions of new knowledge (i.e., does not clarify how the project represents original research).
3. The methodology is unlikely to generate data, or inform conclusions, that are valid and valued by the field.
4. The timeline, scope, or plans for securing IRB approval are not practical or responsible.

4.7 PROSPECTUS REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE

Within three months of completing the exam and after consulting with the dissertation director, the candidate will circulate a draft prospectus to the TCU-based members of his or her committee (excluding any members of the committee from other institutions). The TCU based members of the committee will meet with the candidate for a one-hour conversation about the project and the candidate's goals for completing it. The candidate will then have one additional month to make any necessary revisions suggested by the committee members. Before the four month deadline expires, the student shall circulate a final copy of the prospectus to all members of the committee (including any committee members not based at TCU) and secure their approval. All members of the committee must sign the approved Prospectus Form (available on [D2L site](#)). No second meeting is required for approval of the prospectus.

The prospectus review is similar to the first-year review of PhD students, rather than the dissertation defense or qualifying oral exam. In the review, committee members will identify areas in the research plan for expansion or additional research, as well as potential difficulties to be addressed (e.g., challenges in the methodology, limitations of the bibliographic scope, adjustments to the interpretive framework).

After the review, the director will provide, in writing, details regarding the major points of the discussion. While not graded, the review enables participants to brainstorm about the practical, intellectual, and theoretical challenges of the project; to verify committee procedures and individual member responsibilities; and to launch the candidate into the substantial work of completing the project.

4.8 DISSERTATION PROCEDURES

The dissertation director is responsible for working with the candidate to establish clearly defined procedures and for making timely and detailed responses to the candidate's work. For example, the director normally reads and comments on all first drafts, then recommends revised chapters for circulation to the second and third readers. The fourth reader typically reads only the penultimate draft (six weeks before the defense),

though the reader may choose to review earlier chapter drafts. These procedures are necessary for committee members to have sufficient time to read drafts—and for the candidate to have sufficient time to revise.

No matter what procedures the committee adopts, a candidate must maintain communication with the full committee and the DGS, providing progress reports and projections for completion of forthcoming drafts.

Following the [Fall/Spring Graduation Deadlines](#) published by AddRan College, the candidate must register the dissertation defense (a lecture/oral exam; see below) through the Dean's office at least 2 weeks before it may occur (see [Graduate Forms and Documents](#)). A defense will not be scheduled until the full committee has approved the penultimate draft, prepared in accordance with the [AddRan Manual for Preparation of Theses or Dissertations](#). Because the defense depends on the approval of the entire dissertation, the complete manuscript must be submitted to the committee **six** weeks before the defense (and submitted for approval by the AddRan Dean at least two days before the defense). Final approval comes from the unanimous consent of the dissertation advisory committee: a candidate's failure to respond to committee members' recommendations may result in the refusal of a committee member to approve ("sign off" on) the dissertation.

4.9 DISSERTATION DEFENSE

A dissertation defense (or [oral examination](#)) is a candidate's final step in the PhD program. After the committee has approved the penultimate draft of the dissertation, the candidate and the director schedule the public defense, which all faculty and graduate students in the department may attend. Because the defense is an academic event, the candidate will consult with the full committee before inviting family or friends.

During the defense, the candidate typically begins with a 20-30 minute overview of the dissertation; the committee and the candidate discuss the project for another 60-90 minutes. Beyond serving as the final evaluation of a candidate's performance, the defense is designed to share research results with TCU's scholarly community and to prepare students for other professional presentations and scholarly discussions.

Once the dissertation is successfully defended, the candidate becomes a Doctor of Philosophy, and for any interested party the DGS will write a letter attesting to that fact. Following the defense, the dissertation director submits the [Thesis/Dissertation Grade Report Form](#) to AddRan College; students must then complete all remaining paper work, pay fees, and submit final copies of the dissertation to the university (as outlined in [Graduation Deadlines](#)). Students will also want to review the process for [Submitting an Electronic Dissertation, along with options for bound copies and copyright protection](#). Only after formally completing the degree may the new PhD participate in Commencement.

Dissertation Grade

Dissertations are evaluated as No Credit, Pass, or Pass with Distinction. As determined only by a unanimous vote of the dissertation committee, a student whose performance is ranked in the top 10% of TCU students completing the dissertation will be given Departmental Honors status (listed on the CV, beside the date of graduation, as "PhD with distinction").

4.10 GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY ON RETURNING DISSERTATION OR THESIS DRAFTS TO STUDENTS

To ensure timely progress toward degree, faculty are expected to return student drafts in a timely manner. Members of a PhD dissertation committee are expected to return drafts of dissertation chapters within four regular semester weeks. It is the expectation of the department that dissertation directors will return work more quickly than four weeks. Members of an MA thesis committee are expected to return drafts of thesis chapters within two regular semester weeks.

5.0 — THE PROFESSION

5.1 GRADUATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION ON SEARCH COMMITTEES

Participating in a search for new faculty is one of the most important service tasks within a department. The faculty will be selecting a new colleague who can augment strengths and provide new directions for the program; graduate students have the opportunity to learn about the hiring-end of searches, shape the future of the department, and further prepare themselves for the job market along the way.

A graduate student who serves on the search committee should expect to invest as much time and energy as its faculty members. A committee member should expect to spend considerable time reading application materials (10-40 hours, depending on the number of applicants). During the initial round of submissions, the committee reviews CVs and letters from each candidate. In the second round, the committee reviews writing samples, recommendation letters, transcripts, and other dossier materials. Members also spend additional time (5-10 hours) in deliberations with the committee. Search committee chairs will designate specific procedures for each committee.

After the department has voted on a search area, the Chair appoints a search committee chair and remaining committee members (including a faculty member from another AddRan department). Through a vote, graduate students may nominate a representative to serve on the committee. The nomination is forwarded to the Chair, who must approve the committee appointment. Because of their experience, third- or fourth-year students will have the most to contribute and gain, but they may wish to withdraw from consideration to focus on dissertation work or their own job search.

Search committee members are responsible for protecting confidentiality and respecting professional ethics. Committee members openly discuss—among themselves—the qualifications of applicants, needs of the program, and definitions of merit, but dossier materials must be respected as private documents that contain confidential material protected by law. For example, applicant names or quotations from recommendation letters cannot be shared with anyone outside of the search committee, at any time during or after the search. Search committee discussions and deliberations must also be guarded as confidential exchanges, particularly after campus visits are scheduled.

Individual committee members have frequent contact with candidates during the interview process—and perhaps in the years that follow. Regardless of the outcome of the search, no information about the applicants, application materials, or committee deliberations can be shared. Any search committee member—or graduate student—with questions or concerns about the ethics of committee service is encouraged to approach the search committee chair, DGS, or Chair.

5.2 GRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Providing oversight for the department's graduate programs, the GPC is composed of 4-6 graduate faculty members appointed by the Chair. Supervised by the DGS, the GPC oversees matters including admission, semester schedules, approval of new courses, catalog updates, recruitment, financial aid, and other awards. Further, the committee adjudicates petitions from graduate students and recommends policies, such as program requirements, for departmental review.

5.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence from the graduate program will be granted for good cause. A student seeking such a leave should consult with the DGS at the earliest possible date; the DGS will then present the student's case to the Chair and AddRan Dean, who will make a final determination.

Students requesting a leave of absence should be aware that no financial awards—no tuition waiver, no stipend, or no residue of a stipend—will be credited or paid during the period of the leave, and all time limits remain in effect. A person who receives a leave of absence may return to the program without submitting a new application for admission; however, if new or reinstated financial aid is requested, a new application must be filed, in accordance with the deadlines and conditions negotiated at the time the leave of absence was granted.

5.4 SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Typically the department offers no graduate courses, directed readings, or supervision of theses or dissertations

in the summer; nor does the department offer financial aid during the summer months. See sections 4.4 and 4.6 regarding student work and graduate faculty availability in the summer. Depending on program needs and enrollment demands, doctoral students may be scheduled to teach summer courses at TCU, but summer teaching is neither guaranteed nor predictable.

Few students take the summer “off”: students who have passed their qualifying examinations work on their dissertations; those not admitted to candidacy explore reading list options or study for exams; and others use the summer months to revise papers for conference presentations or publication (which is how most faculty use the summer months).

5.5 PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND BEST PRACTICES

Graduate students are expected to abide by a generally agreed-upon set of professional expectations. All students should become familiar with statements on professional ethics endorsed by professional organizations (e.g., MLA, ADE, CCCC, CWPA, and AAUP) and TCU (i.e., [Code of Student Conduct](#) and [Faculty/Staff Handbook](#)). Both TCU handbooks outline [standards for professional behavior](#), including these expectations:

- Careful and accurate use of others' intellectual property, including proper attribution of their ideas and words. (See especially [Academic Conduct](#) in the *TCU Graduate Catalog*.)
- Respect for difference. Every student should not only follow the University's [statement on non-discrimination](#) but also respect the difference borne of methodologies and conclusions that conflict with one's own intellectual position. While vigorous debate is never unwelcome, such debate ought never to dissolve into personal acrimony.
- Maintain confidentiality when appropriate. In their work as GIs, TAs, RAs, GAs and through other activities, graduate students at times have access to confidential information about other individuals on campus, especially undergraduates (GIs should read the appropriate sections in the *Handbook for Faculty and Staff* on FERPA protection).

Typically, confidentiality concerns are related to course grades and classroom performance, but also include private conversations, student writing, email/online exchanges, and various other personal and professional interactions. In any matter where confidentiality may be an issue, immediately consult the DGS or the Chair.

Cultivate a rhetorically sensitive pattern of self-presentation in all media and when interacting with student colleagues and faculty. Pay particular attention to the need for extending customary professional courtesy in all your communications (including email and all social media).

- Guidelines for Time to Response from Faculty. Please remember that student colleagues and faculty members are, like you, working with multiple demands and deadlines. It is your responsibility to provide adequate time for the completion of such tasks as reading chapters, writing letters of recommendation and scheduling meetings for graduate work. For example, the department recommends two weeks of notice for requesting meetings outside of office hours with faculty, a month's advance notice with all necessary materials for requesting job recommendation letters or grant recommendation letters, and providing committee members up to four weeks to respond to chapter drafts.
- Cultivate a professional mode of communication. Pay attention to customary courtesy in written communication with students, colleagues, faculty and administrators. Using the proper forms of address, tone and tact in all communications, including email and social media, is part of creating a professional identity. Respond in time to all queries and follow protocol when communicating with faculty and university officials.

5.6 APPEALS PROCEDURE

Grade appeals should follow the procedures outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#) and the [Faculty/Staff Handbook](#). Other appeals specifically related to the department or its policies—such as decisions about “transferable” credit, faculty committee selection, appointments and awards—should begin with a petition to

the DGS, followed by an appeal to the GPC; matters not satisfactorily resolved by the DGS and GPC may be adjudicated by the Chair.

5.7 INTEREST GROUPS

Interest Groups. The graduate program recognizes the need for conversation and community beyond coursework, promoting inquiry within and across subject areas. Graduate students who wish to establish a standing interest group may do so by having a faculty sponsor request, in writing, recognition as such to the DGS/GPC and Chair for approval. The following groups are currently recognized by the department:

- American Rhetoric and Culture Interest Group
- British Studies Reading Group
- Digital Humanities Interest Group
- Race, Ethnicity, and Culture Collective
- Rhetoric & Composition Reading Group
- Winifred Bryan Horner Rhetoric Society

When departmental support is available, faculty sponsors for recognized groups may apply for funding, reimbursable to the sponsor, for expenses related to meetings and related activities (food, resources, speakers, etc.). One page (maximum) proposals should be sent to the Chair, outlining the plans, an itemized budget, and how the group's work will benefit the department through a panel, public talk, presentation, a shareable resource, or some other deliverable.