

University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
English Department  
MA Handbook

(Revised May 2021)

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the information presented in this handbook, and to know and observe all procedures and policies related to the program the student is pursuing. Students should contact the Graduate Chair with any questions they have related to the information in this handbook. See also information and guidelines set out for all graduate students at UNL in the Graduate Studies Bulletin, located online at the website for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Office of Graduate Studies.

**The MA Program in English**  
**University of Nebraska-Lincoln**  
(Revised May 2021)

The MA in English is generally a two-year degree. Students who complete the MA will be familiar with the growing range of areas of study within English and will have developed some particular expertise within one or more areas.

## **I. Options for the MA**

In structuring their MA program, the student can choose between two options, Option A and Option B. (Students who filed their Memorandum of Courses when Options I, II, and III were offered may keep their original choice or submit a new Memorandum of Courses under Option A or B.) The requirements for each option are outlined below.

- **Option A:**
  - 30-hour degree with a thesis (24 hours of coursework and 6 thesis hours) and an oral examination. (See Sections V and VII for more on creative and scholarly theses.)
  - At least 8 credit hours, excluding the thesis, must be taken in graduate-only courses (900-level classes and 800-level classes with no 400-level counterpart).
  - At least one-half of the credit hours required for the degree, including the thesis, must be taken in the English Department.
  - May include a minor of at least 9 credit hours selected from and approved by the minor department or interdisciplinary area (See Section IV).
  
- **Option B:**
  - 36-hour degree with an oral examination but without a thesis.
  - At least 15 credit hours must be taken in graduate-only courses (900-level classes and 800-level classes with no 400-level counterpart).
  - At least one-half of the credit hours required for the degree must be taken in the English Department.
  - May include a minor of at least 9 credit hours selected from and approved by the minor department or interdisciplinary area (See Section IV).

**Comprehensive Examination Requirement:** As referenced above, MA students will complete an oral examination for the Comprehensive Examination requirement (See Section VIII). Direct admit PhD students have the option of using the "Field" portion of their PhD "Field and Focus" comprehensive examination as the "MA Comprehensive Examination" required by Graduate Studies if they wish to obtain an MA degree on the way to the PhD.

## **II. MA Coursework Requirements**

- A. All MA students must take the one-hour course ENGL 890: Advanced Research Skills during their first year at UNL. Students wishing to be exempted from this course may discuss the matter with their adviser. The adviser may then send a letter to the Graduate Chair requesting exemption, which will be granted upon receipt. If the student does not have an adviser, they may request exemption from the Graduate Chair.

- B.** MA students must take courses from 6 of the 8 areas listed below. (See Section V for course requirements for the Concentration in the Teaching of English.) If the student has significant undergraduate work in one or more of these areas, the Graduate Chair can waive the requirement to take additional coursework in it. Any given course can meet two requirements (e.g., 19th Century Women Writers might meet Gender, Embodiment, & Sexuality as well as Literary Movements, Conceptions, & Periods).
- Community Engagement, Environmental Politics, & Social Justice (*includes our course offerings in Place Studies*)
  - Critical Theory & Cultural Studies
  - Digital Humanities
  - Ethnic Literatures & Ethnic Studies (*includes African American, African, Native American, Latinx, Postcolonial, Asian American*)
  - Gender, Embodiment, & Sexuality
  - Literary Movements, Conceptions, & Periods
  - Pedagogy (*teaching in English Studies*)
  - Writing, Literacy, & Rhetoric (*includes our course offerings in Composition Studies and Creative Writing*)
- C.** The requirements for the MA must be completed within five consecutive years of the student's first term of admission to the graduate program. (Students who started before the semester of Fall 2021 may still finish their master's degree program under the old policy of a 10-year time limit.)
- D.** Graduate courses taken prior to the start of the master's degree program and not counted toward a previously awarded graduate degree may be included on the student's Memorandum of Courses, provided the previous courses were taken within 10 years of the time of degree completion. For residency requirements, see the [Master's Degree Requirements](#) in the Graduate Studies Catalog.
- E.** Graduate students who encounter personal obstacles that require them to pause their academic studies may request an [Academic Leave](#), which can extend their maximum time-to-degree by one or two semesters. An academic leave may be granted for a degree-seeking student who is in good standing and has completed at least one semester of prior graduate enrollment at UNL. An academic leave may be requested for illness or injury, to provide care or assistance for immediate family and/or dependents, to meet military service obligations, or for other personal reasons.
- F.** Students in their final stages of degree completion who need an extra semester may request an extension of their degree program. An extension request must include a plan and timeline for degree completion and is limited to two terms (fall, spring, or summer term). Extension requests must be approved by the student's adviser(s), the Graduate Program Chair, and the Dean for Graduate Studies. The extension request form is available at [Steps to Degree Completion](#).
- G.** The department does not typically arrange independent study courses for MA students. However, if an MA student wishes to complete an independent study for significant *academic and field related reasons*, the student *must* petition the Graduate Committee

in writing, with a letter of support from the student's adviser or the faculty member with whom they wish to work.

Other guidelines include the following: A graduate student cannot take an independent study or internship in an area of coursework in which the English Department already offers courses, the supervising professor must be an expert in the area proposed, the proposed coursework should be crucial to the student's development, and the student's total independent study coursework should not exceed six credits. Once an independent study is approved by the aforementioned faculty, the student must file the Independent Study form ([unl.edu/english/grad/independentstudy.pdf](http://unl.edu/english/grad/independentstudy.pdf)) or Internship form ([unl.edu/english/grad/internship\\_teaching.pdf](http://unl.edu/english/grad/internship_teaching.pdf)) with the Graduate Chair and Graduate Assistant.

### III. Advising for MA and Direct Admit PhD Students

**A. Initial Adviser:** The Graduate Chair is the initial adviser for all MA and direct admit PhD students. They will help new students choose courses and will advise on all other matters related to the MA, including helping students find a permanent adviser.

1. The Graduate Chair can be found in 201C Andrews Hall and can be contacted by email or at 402-472-1885. In addition to serving as a student's initial adviser, the Graduate Chair is available at all times during a student's program to answer questions, help solve problems, and consult on difficult issues. The Graduate Chair also works closely with the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) and graduate students more broadly to address issues of concern and to advocate for students within the department.
2. The Graduate Program Assistant, Anne Nagel, can be found in Andrews 203 and can be contacted by email or at 402-472-3191. Anne assists students with all forms and deadlines relating to the MA. Please note, however, that it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the forms they must file and to turn these in on time. See Section VIII for forms required by the Office of Graduate Studies. See also the [MA Timeline](#) on the English Department site and the [Master's Degree Milestones](#) webpage. Please help Anne by being responsible and professional in the way that you handle forms and deadlines, and by replying promptly to her requests. As with all staff in the department, Anne should always be treated with great respect.

**B. Permanent Adviser:** All MA and direct admit PhD students are responsible for putting their committee together *by the end of their second semester of study*. The Graduate Chair can assist in this process. For direct admit PhD students, the faculty adviser chosen at this time need not be the student's dissertation director; once their PhD supervisory committee has been formed, that committee chair will become their adviser. Should a student ever wish to change advisers, they should speak with the Graduate Chair, who will assist in that process.

**The adviser will advise MA students on:**

1. Selecting courses to meet requirements and the student's academic interests
2. Choosing between Option A and Option B

3. Selecting a committee chair and forming a committee:
  - For Option A (Thesis Option): If the selected committee chair is different from the current adviser, the thesis chair will become the adviser at this point. The thesis adviser will help the student define a topic and an appropriate approach, help identify other committee members, and, with the other committee members, work closely with the student on the process of writing and revising the thesis. The thesis committee must hold an oral exam with the student over the thesis.
  - For Option B (Non-Thesis Option): If the selected committee chair is different from the current adviser, the committee chair will become the adviser at this point. The committee chair will help the student choose an area for the comprehensive exam and assemble a committee to administer the oral exam.
4. Working out an appropriate plan and timeframe for completing the MA
5. Making sure the student submits paperwork for the MA program in a timely manner (The Graduate Chair may advise on this).

**The adviser will advise direct admit PhD Students on:**

1. Selecting courses to meet requirements and the student's academic interests
2. Forming the supervisory committee
3. Deciding whether to obtain an MA along the way to the PhD. If the direct admit student chooses to get the MA, they will follow the MA requirements as outlined above, but have the additional option of using the "Field" portion of their PhD "Field and Focus" comprehensive PhD examinations as their "MA Comprehensive Examination."

#### **IV. Minors, Specializations, and Certificates**

Some students may wish to pursue additional qualifications while completing their MA in English. Some of these students may wish to choose Option B, but be aware that some specializations require students to choose Option A and complete a thesis in the area of specialized study. Students should study the requirements for all additional qualifications early in the program so that they can plan accordingly. Popular qualifications include specializations in Ethnic Studies or Women's and Gender Studies, a minor in Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and certificates in Digital Humanities or the Teaching of Writing.

Students are not required to declare a specialization in our graduate programs, but we offer English specializations in Creative Writing, Composition and Rhetoric, and Literary and Cultural Studies. In addition, we offer interdisciplinary specializations in Ethnic Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, Great Plains Studies, and Nineteenth Century Studies. We also have certificate programs in Digital Humanities and the Teaching of Writing, as mentioned above.

If students wish to pursue a minor, they should consult with the Graduate Committee Chair in the minor area. The minor department may require specific courses, may have prerequisites for courses, and may require a separate comprehensive exam, although it is possible that the minor adviser will simply join the rest of the committee for the oral exam. It is the student's responsibility to learn about and follow the requirements for the minor.

To formalize your specialization, please follow the process outlined on the English Graduate Specialization pages:

- **Composition and Rhetoric** ([unl.edu/english/composition-and-rhetoric/graduate-specialization](http://unl.edu/english/composition-and-rhetoric/graduate-specialization))
- **Literary and Cultural Studies** ([unl.edu/english/literary-and-cultural-studies/graduate-specialization](http://unl.edu/english/literary-and-cultural-studies/graduate-specialization))

Students can also specialize in interdisciplinary programs and earn certificates:

- **Ethnic Studies** ([ethnicstudies.unl.edu/current-graduate](http://ethnicstudies.unl.edu/current-graduate))
- **Women's and Gender Studies** ([unl.edu/wgs/graduate-specialization-and-graduate-minor-requirements](http://unl.edu/wgs/graduate-specialization-and-graduate-minor-requirements))
- **Great Plains Studies** ([unl.edu/plains/academics/graduate.shtml](http://unl.edu/plains/academics/graduate.shtml))
- **Nineteenth Century Studies** ([unl.edu/19thcentury/graduate](http://unl.edu/19thcentury/graduate))
- **Digital Humanities Certificate** ([unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/programs/DIGH-GCER](http://unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/programs/DIGH-GCER))
- **Teaching of Writing Certificate** ([unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/programs/TWRT-GCER](http://unl.edu/gradstudies/academics/programs/TWRT-GCER))

Learn more about specializations at [unl.edu/gradstudies/prospective/programs/English](http://unl.edu/gradstudies/prospective/programs/English).

## V. MA with a Specialization in Creative Writing

MA students in Creative Writing follow the same area requirements as other MA students. Students can choose from courses offered by faculty in the writing of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting. The Creative Writing specialization falls under Option I, 24 hours of coursework and a 6 credit creative thesis plus an oral exam.

Information about the specialization can be found here:

<https://www.unl.edu/english/creative-writing/graduate-specialization>.

**Creative Writing Thesis:** As early as possible in their program, but *by the end of the second semester of study*, the student chooses three graduate faculty members to serve on their thesis committee (They need not all be members of the Creative Writing faculty) and files the [Creative Writing Committee Form](#) with the English Graduate Office. The thesis committee will guide the student as to the format of the thesis, but a creative thesis will generally be based on an original work of substantive creative activity by the student: a collection of poetry, a collection of short stories, a novel, a novella, a creative nonfiction project, or a mixed-genre collection.

The MA thesis in Creative Writing is based on a minimum number of pages (40 for poetry, 75 for prose), but these pages are not submitted as the thesis. Instead, the thesis will consist of: (1) a critical introduction of literary influences and thematic and formal issues of craft the student addressed in their writing, (2) an introduction to the work, and (3) a sample of the creative activity. The adviser will assist the student in selecting the prose or poetry for the sample. The English Department requires that members of thesis committees have adequate time to read and offer suggestions on the final draft of any thesis. Therefore, ***the final draft of the thesis must be given to committee members at least one month before the deadline for approval of the manuscript.***

The thesis committee conducts an oral examination of 1-2 hours on the thesis. This requirement cannot be waived. When planning to defend the thesis, students should consider the fact that faculty members are not on duty in the summer and are thus not obligated to be available for a thesis defense during that time period. Please check with your committee members well in advance for their availability and willingness to meet for your thesis defense during the summer months.

Students must file the [Final Examination Report](#) with the English Graduate Office *at least four weeks before the oral exam* (three weeks in the summer).

## **VI. MA with a Concentration in the Teaching of English**

Students with established careers in K-12, community college, state college, and liberal arts college English teaching, or who envision careers in such teaching, may elect to complete an MA with a Concentration in the Teaching of English. The Concentration in the Teaching of English can be completed through Option A (Thesis Option) or B (Non-Thesis Option). However, instead of completing the area requirements for regular MA students (See Section II.B.), students pursuing an MA with a Concentration in the Teaching of English must complete 9-12 hours through three courses focused on teaching English.

- **One course in the teaching of writing:**
  - 957B: Nebraska Writing Project (6 credits)
  - 857A: Composition and Rhetorical Theory (3 credits)
  - 880: Writing Center Theory and Practice (3 credits)
  
- **One course in alternative approaches to teaching English:**
  - 857B: Nebraska Writing Project (3 credits)
  - 882: Literacy and Community Issues (3 credits)
  - 992: Nebraska Humanities Project (3 credits)
  - 895: Internship in the Teaching of English (3 credits)
  - 992B: Place Conscious Teaching (3 credits)
  - 973: Seminar in Literacy (3 credits)
  
- **One course in the teaching of literature:**
  - 995: Approaches to Teaching Literature (3 credits)
  - 991: Nebraska Literature Project (3 credits)
  - 800 or 900–level courses in literary areas with a focus on pedagogy, as approved by the Graduate Chair (*It is recommended that the student complete a major project in pedagogy in the course.*) (3 credits)

The remaining hours in the Concentration in Teaching English can be selected from the full range of graduate course offerings.

## **VII. The Scholarly Thesis for the MA with a Specialization in Literary and Cultural Studies, Composition and Rhetoric, or the Teaching of English**

The scholarly thesis (for Option A) should generally be an article-length paper (a minimum

of 35 double-spaced pages, excluding bibliographic materials) developed towards possible future publication under the guidance of a thesis director with research experience in the field. Usually, but not necessarily, the thesis develops by further extending a seminar project. The thesis should involve research informed by current issues and trends in scholarship.

The thesis committee includes three members of the graduate faculty. The student should put together their thesis committee and file the [Scholarly Thesis Committee Form](#) with the English Graduate Office before completing one-half of the credit hours required for their program (for full-time students, usually *by the end of the second semester of study*).

The English Department requires that members of the thesis committee have adequate time to read and offer suggestions on the final draft of the thesis. ***Therefore, the final draft of the thesis must be given to committee members at least one month before the deadline for approval of the manuscript.***

Readers assess the thesis and judge it a "pass," "no pass," or "revise and resubmit." If a majority of the readers judge that the student fails or should be asked to revise, they will do so with specific comments from the readers as to what needs to be done to meet MA thesis standards. If a student's thesis fails twice, they must petition the Graduate Committee in writing for permission to revise and submit it a third time. Approval is not guaranteed.

Once the written thesis is passed, the thesis committee conducts an oral examination of 1-2 hours on the thesis. ***This requirement cannot be waived!*** Students should consider the fact that faculty members are not on duty in the summer and some faculty may not be available for an oral during the summer. Please check with your thesis committee members well in advance. Students must file the [Final Examination Report](#) with the English Graduate Office *at least four weeks before the oral exam* (three weeks in the summer).

In Option A, the comprehensive exam requirement is fulfilled by the MA thesis and oral exam. Consult the Graduate Studies [Master's Degree Milestones](#) webpage and/or check with the English Graduate Office for information about other requirements.

## **VIII. MA Comprehensive Examination**

MA students who choose Option B must satisfy the comprehensive examination requirement through an oral examination of 1-2 hours. The student selects an examination committee of three English professors with whom the student has worked. (If the student has completed a minor in another department, one of the examining professors may be selected from the minor department.)

It is the student's responsibility to contact the professors, attain their agreement to serve as oral examiners, and schedule the exam at a mutually agreeable time. In preparation for the exam, the student might meet with examining committee members to discuss topics and questions for the exam. After filing the [Final Examination Report](#) with the English Graduate Office *at least four weeks before the oral exam* (three weeks in the summer), the student will provide their examination committee with a statement of 1200-1500 words summarizing and analyzing their main intellectual work during the MA and posing the key



questions that have emerged during that work. The oral examination will explore the student's work through the MA, the understanding of English Studies that the student has developed, and the connection of this understanding to the student's future career path.

When planning to complete the comprehensive examination, students should consider the fact that faculty members are not on duty in the summer and are thus not obligated to be available for an examination during that time period. Please check with your committee members well in advance for their availability and willingness to hold your examination during the summer months.

After the oral examination, the chair of the student's committee completes an Oral Examination Report, which deems the examination results a "pass," "no pass," or "conditional pass," and submits it to the Graduate Chair. Students who receive a "conditional pass" must do further work to pass the oral examination, the nature and extent of which will be clearly delineated in the Oral Examination Report. Any examination committee member may write a dissenting report to the Graduate Chair if they wish. If the student fails a comprehensive exam, they cannot retake it in the same semester. If a student fails the exam twice, they must petition the Graduate Committee in writing for permission to revise and submit it a third time. Approval is not guaranteed.

## **IX. Graduate Studies Requirements & Paperwork**

**A. Departmental Committee Form:** The English Department requires MA students to file a Committee Form appropriate to their choice of Option A or B. The Committee Form, along with other required forms, can be found linked at the bottom of the [MA Timeline](#) webpage (unl.edu/english/ma). The completed Committee Form should be turned in to the Graduate Assistant, who will pass the form on to the Graduate Chair for approval before sending it to the Graduate Studies Office to be approved and filed.

**B. Memorandum of Courses:** Each MA student must file a [Memorandum of Courses](#) (Please type) with the English Graduate Office *before completing one-half of the credit hours required for their program* (for full-time students, usually before the end of their second semester of study). This form, along with other forms, can be downloaded from the Graduate Studies [Master's Degree Milestones](#) webpage. The Memorandum of Courses must be approved by both the student's adviser and the Graduate Chair. The student must complete the Memorandum of Courses form with the assistance of their adviser, who will sign the typed form. The student should then turn in the completed form to the English Graduate Office for review by the Graduate Chair. The Graduate Assistant will then send the form to the Graduate Studies Office for final approval and to be officially filed in the student's record. ***You cannot graduate in the same semester in which you file a Memorandum of Courses.***

**C. Application for Degree:** Students must file an [Application for Graduation](#) early in the semester in which they intend to graduate. The Application for Graduation can be submitted electronically via MyRED. If this is not filed, a diploma will not be ordered, and the student's graduation will be postponed. If a student is late in filing, please check with the Master's Programs Coordinator in Graduate Studies before proceeding. For the online Application for Graduation, go to MyRED, and click on the "Academic" tab.

This will take you to the online application. While the application is user friendly, step-by-step instructions can be found under [Graduation Application Instructions](#). Each Application for Degree results in a \$25.00 non-refundable charge on your student bill. The application and fee apply only to the term indicated on the application and is not transferable to another term. ***If a Memorandum of Courses has not been approved, the option to file an Application for Graduation will not be available.*** If you have not filed your Memorandum of Courses by the end of the second semester, it is wise to file it no later than the end of the first month of the third semester to enable timely processing.

**D. Final Examination Report:** MA students must file a [Final Examination Report](#) with the English Graduate Office *at least six weeks before graduation* (four weeks in the summer). Filing the Final Exam Report certifies that the examination or thesis procedure has been approved, that incompletes have been removed in all courses except the thesis, and that the oral examination date and time have been set. Additionally, for students doing Option A, this certifies that the adviser has approved the final draft of their thesis, and for students doing Option B, it certifies that the student has settled on the area on which they will be examined.

**Please follow these directions to complete the form:**

1. Only complete Parts 1, 2, 3, 5, and the first section of Part 4.
2. In Part 2, for “MAJOR: Written exam waived?,” please select “Yes, therefore oral must be taken.”
3. Leave everything blank for “MINOR: Written exam waived?” unless you have a minor. If you have a minor, check “Yes” in response to both questions on this line, unless you plan to take a separate written or oral examination for the minor.
4. In Part 4, fill in the blanks regarding the oral exam and check “No” for “Waived?”
5. At this point, the only signatures required are those of your adviser, the Graduate Chair, and, if you have a minor, your minor adviser. All of these go in Part 3.

Send the form to the Graduate Assistant, who will take note of the oral examination date before sending it on to the Master’s Programs Coordinator. (The rest of the form will be completed by the student’s committee members and the Graduate Studies Office *after* the oral exam; advisers will get the form back from Graduate Studies shortly before the oral exam.)

## **FINANCIAL AID DEADLINE**

The deadline for admission and assistantship consideration for the following academic year (August–May) is listed on the department website. There are no additional materials required to apply for departmental assistantships. Simply check the circle on the admissions application.

**All of our assistantships provide full tuition remission, a reduced rate health insurance, and a competitive stipend.** International graduate student applicants who have graduated from a US college or university, or who have graduated from a university outside the US in which English is the official language of instruction, are eligible for assistantships in their first year in our graduate degree programs.

### **Department Assistantships:**

Students admitted with funding into the MA program are eligible for up to two years of funding. They are not required to teach during their first year, but are normally awarded Research Assistantships which give them the opportunity to work with the *Prairie Schooner*, the Walt Whitman Archive, the Creative Writing Program, the Cather Project, the *Western American Literature* journal, or the Livingston Project, or to assist faculty on their research, plan national conferences, or arrange visits by nationally known writers.

These assistantships require 15 hours of work per week. As much as possible, we match up students with professors and projects according to their interests in making these assignments. The second year of funding is typically a Teaching Assistantship or an equivalent assignment requiring 19.6 hours of work per week. Students teach two sections of first-year composition each semester. We support new TAs with a required weeklong teaching workshop the week before classes begin and a required seminar in Composition Theory and Practice (ENGL 957): students are required to take ENGL 957 in the fall of the academic year in which they start teaching (usually their second year).

### **Assistantship Package:**

Research Assistantships are 10-month appointments, with students receiving a monthly stipend from August–May during the year of their appointment, plus full tuition remission (either out-of-state or in-state) for 12 hours each semester and 6 hours in the summer, and health insurance. The assistantship does not include books or student fees. MA Teaching Assistants also receive a monthly stipend from August–May, plus tuition remission (either out-of-state or in-state) for up to 32 hours during the regular academic year and summer, with a maximum of 12 hours per semester. The TA award also includes a reduced rate health insurance, but does not cover books and student fees.

***Students on assistantship must be registered as full-time students (enrolling in at least 9 credit hours per semester) during each semester of their appointment.***

### **Other Assistantships and Fellowships**

The English Department also gives several awards, including the McPhee Fellowship and the Louise VanSickle Award (for a creative writer). Our MA students have also obtained assistantships that include tuition remission plus a stipend in the Advising Office of the College of Arts & Sciences, Student Involvement, Women's and Gender Studies, and Ethnic Studies. Others teach at local colleges. The English Department sends notices of openings to MA students who request them. In their second year, MA students are eligible to apply for fellowships through Graduate Studies.

The deadline for Graduate Studies fellowships is **early in February** during the student's first year in the program, although historically, PhD students have been more successful in winning them than MA students. Before you apply, we encourage you to seek the advice of the Graduate Chair of English. Your application must include letters of recommendation from faculty as well as a thorough description of your graduate program, your progress in it, and the work that you intend to undertake during the year of the fellowship. For more information and application forms, contact the Graduate Studies Office at 402-472-8670 or visit [Graduate Fellowships for Current Students](#).

**Additional Funding Opportunities in the Department:**

The department has, or is affiliated with, a number of programs—including the Whitman Archive, the Prairie Schooner, the Cather Project, the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities (CDRH), and the Nebraska Writing Project—which are occasionally able to offer employment. The decision about which students to hire for these programs is entirely in the hands of the faculty members who are in charge of these programs. Contact the Graduate Chair for more information.

**Travel Assistance Funds:**

MA students may claim \$500 reimbursement annually for costs associated with attending scholarly conferences or other professionally relevant events. Students must be attending the conference or event in order to deliver a paper, participate in a roundtable, give a reading, or make another significant presentation of their scholarly or creative work. Contact Jaime Long, the Financial Specialist, at [jlong5@unl.edu](mailto:jlong5@unl.edu) prior to traveling in order to obtain the proper paperwork and be apprised of costs that can and cannot be reimbursed.

At the end of the fall and spring semesters, the Graduate Committee accepts applications for additional travel funding. Deadlines and information about application materials are sent out via the Graduate Student Listserv. Joy Currie Awards are awarded based on the importance of the event to the student's career, and award amounts vary. Contact the Graduate Chair for more information.

**DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Graduate Listserv:** The department regularly communicates with graduate students via the listserv [ENG-GRAD@unl.edu](mailto:ENG-GRAD@unl.edu). Only UNL email addresses can link to UNL listservs, so students must check their [@unl.edu](mailto:@unl.edu) or [@huskers.unl.edu](mailto:@huskers.unl.edu) accounts for these messages.

**English Graduate Student Association:** The English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) includes all graduate students in the English Department. EGSA exists in order to foster a sense of community among all English graduate students, to offer representation to the department through its elected representatives on the EGSA Executive Committee, and to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas, concerns, and suggestions among graduate students in the department.

**Placement:** A Placement Chair, appointed by the English Department Chair, assists students in preparing resumes, writing job application letters, and submitting writing samples, along with preparing for MLA and other interviews.

**Best Practices Policy on Letters of Recommendation:** When there is reason to believe that something is amiss with the Interfolio file (the service that manages letters of recommendations for academic jobs), the accepted department practice is that the student send their adviser or the Graduate Chair their materials from Interfolio and request advice.

**Departmental Colloquia:** The department is home to a number of discussion groups, reading groups, study groups, and a creative writing reading series. Events are regularly advertised through the Listserv.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

**Graduate Studies** is located at 1100 Seaton Hall, and Graduate Studies staff can be reached at [graduate@unl.edu](mailto:graduate@unl.edu). Graduate Studies handles all matters related to graduate programs and student status, including international student status. In addition to emailing, you can contact them at 472-2875 or go to [unl.edu/gradstudies/](http://unl.edu/gradstudies/).

**International Student and Scholar Office (ISSO)** is located at 201 Seaton Hall. This office handles matters related to international students, including visa problems and other questions. You can contact them at 402-472-0324 or [isso@unl.edu](mailto:isso@unl.edu).

**Afrikan People's Union** is a student group that holds regular meetings and sponsors special programs. Learn more at [facebook.com/AfrikanPeoplesUnion/](https://facebook.com/AfrikanPeoplesUnion/).

**Mexican American Student Association** holds regular meetings, does programming, and sponsors educational activities. You can learn more about this student group at [facebook.com/unlmasa1970/](https://facebook.com/unlmasa1970/).

**International Student Organization** is a student group that hosts programs and activities. You can email them at [unl.x.iso@gmail.com](mailto:unl.x.iso@gmail.com).

**University of Nebraska Inter-Tribal Exchange (U.N.I.T.E.)** organizes events and activities, including a powwow. You can learn more about this student group at [facebook.com/groups/156121286696/](https://facebook.com/groups/156121286696/).

**UNL Committee for LGBTQA+ Concerns.** A group of faculty, staff, and students who sponsor programs and discuss issues related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. For more information, see their website at [involved.unl.edu/lgbtqa](http://involved.unl.edu/lgbtqa).

## **PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT APPEALS**

### **Department of English, University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

#### I. Appeal of course grades.

Appeals must be filed **within six weeks** of the official awarding of the disputed grade. In accord with the general guidelines set down in the [Graduate Studies Catalog-Appeals](#), procedures for graduate student academic appeals are as follows:

- A. First recourse shall always be to the faculty members assigning the grade. If the dispute can be settled informally, no formal appeal is necessary. Students and faculty alike are urged to exercise this option to the fullest.
- B. If a formal appeal becomes necessary, the next recourse is to the student's adviser or Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The student and the adviser decide whether the grounds for appeal are sufficient, and whether the dispute is procedural or substantive in nature, or both. The student should present an appeal in writing to the Graduate Committee, along with materials relevant to the case.
  1. If the appeal is procedural, the Graduate Committee shall decide its validity and report its judgment within two weeks of receiving the appeal.
  2. If the appeal is substantive, the Graduate Committee shall form an ad hoc committee consisting of two senior staff evaluators (who are not members of the Graduate Committee) to review the case and make recommendations within two weeks of receiving the case. Final consideration of such recommendations is the responsibility of the Graduate Committee, which shall sustain or deny the appeal within two weeks of receiving the recommendations.

#### II. Appeal of comprehensive examination decisions.

The same procedures shall apply as in I.A and B above, with the following exceptions:

- A. First recourse shall be to the individual readers of the examination.
- B. Substantive appeals shall be referred to an ad hoc committee consisting of three senior staff members familiar with the materials of the examination, but not the original readers or members of the Graduate Committee. One person shall be appointed by the Graduate Committee, one by the student in consultation with their adviser, and one by the EGSA Executive Committee. The ad hoc committee shall evaluate the disputed examination, without access to the original readers' comments or grades, and make appropriate recommendations to the Graduate Committee within two weeks of receiving the case. The final consideration of these recommendations shall be the responsibility of the Graduate Committee, which shall sustain or deny the appeal within two weeks of receiving the recommendation.

### III. Appeal Procedures in Cases of Termination for a Student in the Program.

Probation or termination recommendations may be made under the following conditions:

a) violations of the "[Student Code of Conduct](#)," b) failure to establish or maintain a supervisory committee; c) failure to satisfy "Scholastic Grade Requirements" listed in the Graduate Bulletin, d) failure in comprehensive examinations or final degree examinations, e) failure to master the methodology and content of one's field in a manner that is sufficient to complete a successful dissertation.

- A. Termination proceedings begin with the Graduate Chair. After consultation with the student's adviser, and the Department Chair, the Graduate Chair may decide to initiate termination proceedings. The Graduate Chair requests termination from the Dean of Graduate Studies in a letter that must be copied to the student. Final authority for terminating a graduate student's program rests with the Dean of Graduate Studies. Should the Dean of Graduate Studies grant the department's termination request, the student will be notified in written form, and given 30 days to indicate to initiate the appeal of this decision by submitting a written statement. The appeal process begins in the department.
- B. As per the Graduate Bulletin, appeals must be based on one of the following criteria:
  1. New evidence that might alter the original decision.
  2. Evidence that the original decision was based on inaccurate or inadequate data.
  3. Evidence that the Graduate Chair acted capriciously or in an unfair or discriminatory way in reaching the original decision.
- C. At this point, the chair of the English Department Appeals Committee will be notified. This person will henceforth serve as the student's advocate throughout the appeals process, providing guidance and advice. If they wish, the student may request an alternative advocate. The Department Chair may appoint an alternative instead of the Appeals Committee Chair.
- D. There are two routes for appeal, depending on the grounds for termination:
  1. Route One: This route is followed for terminations based on academic grounds such as academic dishonesty or lack of progress.
    - a. The student, with the support of their advocate, will first appeal the Graduate Chair's decision to their full supervisory committee for reinstatement in their degree program. If the student has not yet established a full advisory committee, the appeals process will go directly to the next level, and begin with the Graduate Committee. Appeals are made in writing. The Graduate Chair and Department Chair will provide the supervisory committee with a full written rationale for the termination decision. The student will also provide the Supervisory Committee with a written statement of appeal, based on one or more of the grounds for appeal listed above in B.
    - b. The Supervisory Committee decision will be determined by the majority opinion. Dissenting members of the committee may submit a minority report.
    - c. A majority decision to reinstate will move the appeals process to the next level, should the Graduate Chair wish to continue the process. Should the Graduate Chair decline to continue the process they will withdraw

- the termination request, and notify the Office of Graduate Studies of that decision.
- d. A majority decision to uphold the termination will move the appeals process to the next level, should the student wish to continue the process.
  - e. If the Supervisory Committee decision is deadlocked, the appeal will move to the next level.
  - f. Once a decision is reached, the Supervisory Committee must provide both the student and the Graduate Chair a written statement with their decision, vote numbers, and rationale. Should the process proceed to the next level, a copy of this document will be provided to the Graduate Committee.
2. Route Two: This route is followed for terminations based on other violations of the Graduate Bulletin and/or Student Code of Conduct.
    - a. The student, with the support of their advocate, will first appeal the Graduate Chair's decision to the Graduate Committee. That process is detailed in the following section.
  3. The second level of appeal is to the full Graduate Committee, including the graduate student representative, but excluding the Graduate Chair. Members who feel unable to make an impartial assessment of the case may recuse themselves, and the Chair of the English Department may appoint (a) temporary replacement(s). As with the previous level of appeal, the student, with the support of their advocate, will appeal in writing on the grounds specified in B. The Graduate Chair will provide the Graduate Committee with a full written rationale for the termination decision.
    - a. The Graduate Committee decision will be determined by the majority opinion.
    - b. A decision to reinstate will result in the withdrawal of the Graduate Chair's termination request, and notification of the Office of Graduate Studies of that decision.
    - c. A decision to uphold the termination will move the appeals process to the next level, should the student wish to continue the process. At this point, the Graduate Chair will notify the Office of Graduate Studies that the departmental appeals process has concluded.
    - d. In either case, the Graduate Committee must provide both the student and the Graduate Chair a written statement with their decision and rationale. If the committee decides to reinstate, the statement will be placed in the student's file. If the committee decides to uphold the termination, the statement will be forwarded to the Office of Graduate Studies.
  4. The final level of appeal is to the Graduate Council for the campus administratively responsible for the student's graduate program. In most cases, this is the final level of appeal. See the Graduate Catalog/ Graduate Student Program Appeals for more: <https://catalog.unl.edu/graduate-professional/graduate/degrees/termination/termination.pdf>.
- E. In addition to submitting a written statement as specified section D above, the student



and the student's advocate may submit to the Supervisory and/or Graduate Committees additional documentation to support one of the appeals criteria listed in section E.

- F. The appeal will be considered as soon as possible after the written appeal has been submitted, and decisions by all committees will be made in a timely manner.