

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION INTO THE  
GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

**DEADLINE: January 15** for admission and assistantship consideration for the following academic year (August through May).

**GRADUATE COLLEGE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

The easiest way to apply for admission is to apply on-line at <http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/>.

**To be filed with:** Graduate Admissions

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

1100 Seaton Hall

PO Box 880619

Lincoln, NE 68588-0619

1. Online Application for Graduate Admission
2. \$45.00 application fee (can use a credit card on-line)
3. Two copies of all college/university official transcripts, sent from the registrar's office of the school(s) attended.

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

**To be filed with:** Graduate Chair

Department of English

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

201C Andrews Hall

Lincoln, NE 68588-0333

Phone: 402-472-0961

E-mail: [shart2@unl.edu](mailto:shart2@unl.edu)

1. Three letters of recommendation, preferably from professors of English.
2. Writing sample: 15-20 pages of a critical paper in English that you have written. If you are applying for the Creative Writing program, you should **also** submit a creative writing sample in the genre in which you are applying. The sample should include 12 poems, or no more than 30 pages of fiction (a short work or part of a novel) or creative non-fiction.
3. Statement of educational goals (1-3 pages) including why you want to get a graduate degree from the University of Nebraska.
4. Vita or resume.
5. A commentary about your teaching experience or a discussion of your teaching potential (no more than 2 pages).
6. GRE Scores. GRE scores for the general and Subject Tests may be submitted as part of an application but are not required.
7. Use GAMES for online submission of materials.

**INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS:**

International applicants should send all the information requested above, plus:

1. A TOEFL score. A score of 600 or higher (internet based 100) is required for admission to English Department graduate programs. (Students who have graduated from a U. S. college or university or from a university outside the U. S. in which English is the official language of instruction are exempt from the TOEFL requirement for admission.)
2. International Student Application and Financial Resource Certification Form (<http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/prospective/apply.shtml>) returned to Graduate Admissions.

International graduate student applicants who have graduated from a U.S. college or university or from a university outside the U.S. in which English is the official language of instruction are eligible for assistantships in their first year in our graduate degree programs.

**The MA Program in English**  
**University of Nebraska-Lincoln**  
(revised October 2009)

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** - Students have a choice of 3 ways to structure their MA programs.

**Option I:** 30-hour degree with a thesis (24 hours of coursework and 6 hours of thesis) and an oral examination. (See below for a description of the thesis.) **Under Option I, a student's program must include 8 hours of 900 or grad-only coursework.**

**Option II:** 36-hour degree with a major in English and a minor in another department or interdisciplinary area, usually consisting of 27 hours in English and 9 hours in the minor. A minimum of 18 hours of English courses is required. The student must consult with the Chair of the Graduate Committee in the minor area. The minor department may require specific courses, or have prerequisites for courses, and may also require a comprehensive exam. It is up to the student to find out about and follow the minor requirements. For the Comprehensive Examination requirement in English, the student may submit an Integrative Paper as described in the MA Comprehensive Examination section of this handbook or may choose to take a written examination. A direct admit PhD student also has the option of using the "Field" portion of his or her PhD "Field and Focus" comprehensive as the "MA Comprehensive Examination" required by Graduate Studies if he or she wishes to obtain the MA degree on the way to a PhD. **Under Option II, a student's program must include 12 hours of 900 or grad-only coursework.**

**Option III:** 36-hour degree with all coursework in English. For the Comprehensive Examination requirement, the student may submit an Integrative Paper as described in the MA Comprehensive Examination section of this handbook or may choose to take a written examination. A direct admit PhD student also has the option of using the "Field" portion of his or her PhD "Field and Focus" comprehensive as the "MA Comprehensive Examination" required by Graduate Studies if she or he wishes to obtain the MA degree on the way to a PhD. **Under Option III, a student's program must include 18 hours of 900 or grad-only coursework.**

**II. MA Program Requirements:**

- A. All MA students must take English 990, 'Introduction to Research and Scholarship in English', which is offered each fall. Students should take this course early in their programs, ideally in the first year.
- B. MA students must take courses from 5 of the 7 areas listed below, except for Creative Writing students, who take courses from 4 of the 7 areas, and an

additional writing course. [For course requirements for the Concentration in the Teaching of English, see V. below.] 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 these areas. In addition, any given course can meet 2 requirements. (For example, 20th Century Women Writers meets both Women's Literature and 20th Century literature requirements.)

\*Literature Before 1700

\*Literature 1700-1900

\*Twentieth Century Literature

\*Women's Literature

\*Ethnic Literature (African American, African, Native American, Latino/a, Postcolonial, Asian American)

\*Critical Theory

\*Writing, Language, and Rhetoric (Composition, Literacy Studies, Creative Writing)

- C. Students must take at least one course in American literature and one course in British literature within the above requirements.
- D. The requirements for the MA must be completed within 10 consecutive years.
- E. Coursework older than ten years will not apply toward the partial fulfillment of the degree requirements. For residency requirements, see the *Graduate Studies Bulletin*.
- F. Note: MA students may take up to 6 hours of Independent Directed Reading (English 897 or 997). If a student wishes to take more, s/he must petition the Graduate Committee in writing, with a letter of support from the student's adviser or the faculty member with whom s/he wishes to work.

### 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. S/he will help new students choose courses and will advise on all other matters relating to the MA, including helping students find a permanent adviser. Currently, the Graduate Chair is Susan Belasco, 201C Andrews Hall, 402-472-1885, [sbelasco@unl.edu](mailto:sbelasco@unl.edu). The Graduate Secretary, Sue Hart, has all forms, deadlines, and reading lists relating to the MA. She is in Andrews 202A, 402-472-0961, [shart2@unl.edu](mailto:shart2@unl.edu).
- B. **Permanent Adviser:** All MA and direct admit PhD students are responsible for finding an appropriate faculty adviser within the first two semesters of study. The Graduate Chair will assist in this process by providing students with a list of faculty members, including their areas of teaching and research and their recent projects, and by encouraging students to take courses early in their programs in their areas of interest. The instructor of the required MA class English 990 ('Introduction to Research and Scholarship in English') which most students take their first semester in the program, will also help students with the process of finding an adviser by including faculty guest speakers on the course. The 990 instructor will encourage students to consult with other faculty as part of their research projects for the course. For direct admit PhD students, the faculty adviser chosen at this time need not be the student's dissertation director. Once the

student's PhD supervisory committee has been formed, the chair of this committee will become the student's faculty adviser.

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

1. Selecting courses to meet requirements and the student's academic interests
2. Choosing among Options I, II, or III for the MA
3. Working out an appropriate plan and time frame for completing the MA
4. If Option I: how to select a thesis committee. If the thesis committee chair is different from the 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, 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. If Option II or III: choosing an area for the comprehensive exam.
5. Making sure the student submits paperwork for the MA program in a timely way (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 interest.
2. Deciding whether to obtain an MA along the way to the PhD. If the direct admit student chooses to get the MA, he or she follows the MA requirements as outlined above, but has the additional option of using the "Field" portion of the PhD "Field and Focus" comprehensive PhD examinations as the "MA Comprehensive Examination."
3. Forming the supervisory committee.

**IV. MA with a Concentration in Creative Writing**

Students must apply to and be admitted to the Creative Writing Program in order to pursue this option. MA students in Creative Writing follow the same area requirements as other MA students, except that they substitute another writing course for one of the areas. Students can choose from courses offered by faculty in the writing of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting. The Creative Writing MA falls under Option I, 24 hours of coursework and a 6 credit creative thesis plus an oral exam.

**Creative Writing Thesis:** As early as possible in her or his program, but no later than the beginning of the second year, the student chooses 3 graduate faculty members for the thesis committee (they need not all be members of the Creative Writing faculty, but at least one must be a member of the Graduate Faculty) and then files the "Request for Appointment of Thesis Committee" 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 a collection of poetry, a collection of short stories, a novella, a creative nonfiction project, a screenplay, or a mixed-genre collection. The MA thesis in Creative

Writing will consist of a minimum number of pages (40 for poetry, 75 for prose), plus an introductory discussion (minimum 5 pages) of literary influences and thematic and formal issues of craft the student addressed in her or his writing.

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.**

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 for the Master’s Degree” with the English Graduate Office at least 4 weeks before the oral examination (3 weeks in the summer).**

#### **V. 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 may be completed through Options I (24 hours + thesis), II (27 English hours + 9 minor department hours), or III (36 hours in English). Instead of completing the area requirements for regular MA students (see II.B. above), students taking an MA with a Concentration in the Teaching of English must complete 9-12 hours through three courses focused on teaching English.

##### One course on the teaching of writing:

957B Nebraska Writing Project (6 credits)

857B Nebraska Writing Project (3 credits)

857A Composition and Rhetorical Theory (3 credits)

880 Writing Center Theory and Practice (3 credits)

##### One course on research in teaching English:

882 Literacy and Community Issues (3 credits)

895A Nebraska Writing Project Internship (3 credits)

895 Internship in the Teaching of English (3 credits)

##### One course on the teaching of Literature:

995 Approaches to Teaching Literature (3 credits)

991 Nebraska Literature Project (3 credits)

992 Nebraska Humanities Project (3 credits)

800 or 900-level courses in literary areas with a focus on pedagogy, as approved by the Graduate Chair

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

## **VI. The Scholarly Thesis for the MA with Concentrations in Literature, Composition and Rhetoric, and the Teaching of English**

The MA Thesis (for Option I, 24 hours of coursework plus 6 hours of thesis) should regularly 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 MA thesis committee includes three members of the graduate faculty, at least one of whom is a Graduate Faculty Fellow.

The student chooses a thesis committee and files the “Request for Appointment of Thesis Committee” with the English Graduate Office before completing half the hours in the program (for full-time students, usually the beginning of the second semester of coursework). 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! 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 for the Master’s Degree” with the English Graduate Office at least 4 weeks before the oral examination (3 weeks in the summer).

In Option I, the comprehensive exam requirement is fulfilled by the MA thesis and oral.

Please check with the English Graduate Office about deadlines for filing the thesis, the “Final Examination Report for the Master’s Degree,” and other forms.

## **VII. MA Comprehensive Examination**

MA students doing Options II or III must satisfy the comprehensive examination requirement through an oral examination of 1-2 hours. The student will select an examination committee of 3 English professors with whom the student has worked. (If the student has completed an Option II 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 form with Graduate College (at least 4 weeks before the exam), the student will provide the examination committee with a statement of 1200-1500 words summarizing and analyzing the student's 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 the student has developed, and the connection of this understanding to the student's future career path. The Graduate Chair notifies students in writing of examination results.

### **VIII. Graduate Studies Requirements/ Paperwork:**

- A. Memorandum of Courses.** Each MA student must file a "Memorandum of Courses" with the English Graduate Office before completing half the hours in the program, usually before the end of the second semester. These forms are available from the English graduate secretary and must be approved by the Graduate Chair.
  
- B. Application for Advanced Degree.** Students must fill out and file the "Application for Advanced Degree" and pay a fee of \$25 at 109 Canfield Administration Building at the beginning of the semester or summer in which they intend to graduate. This date is posted prominently outside the English Graduate Office. Students should be certain that they have made arrangements for fulfilling all departmental and Graduate Studies requirements before filing this form. If you do not graduate in the term for which you have applied, you will have to reapply for graduation (and pay another fee). **You cannot graduate without filing this form.**
  
- C. Final Examination Report.** MA students must file a "Final Examination Report" with the English Graduate Office at least 4 weeks before graduation (3 weeks in the summer). We make sure the report is completely filled out and then send it on to Graduate Studies. The report certifies that the examination or thesis procedure has been approved and that incompletes have been removed in all courses except the thesis. Students do not have to have taken the comprehensive examination or completed the thesis when they file this form. In the case of an exam, students should have settled the area on which they will be examined or write an Integrative Paper, and the exam date. In the case of a thesis, the adviser must have approved the final draft of the thesis, and the oral exam date must be set.

### **FINANCIAL AID DEADLINE:**

January 15 for admission and assistantship consideration for the following academic year (August through May). There are no additional materials required to apply for departmental assistantships. Simply check the box on the admissions application.

**All of our assistantships provide full tuition remission, health insurance, and a competitive stipend.** International graduate student applicants who have graduated from a U.S. college or university or from a university outside the U.S. 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 into the MA program are eligible for up to 2 years of funding. They are not required to teach during their first year, but are normally awarded Reading Assistantships which give them the opportunity to work with the *Prairie Schooner*, the Walt Whitman Archive, the Creative Writing Program, or the Cather 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. We also offer an Advising Center assistantship for 20 hours a week, which gives one student the opportunity to work in the department's undergraduate advising office. 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 that requires 20 hours of work per week. Students teach 2 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 during the fall semester.

**Assistantship Package:**

Reading Assistantships and the Advising Center Assistantship 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 health insurance, but does not cover books and student fees.

**Students on assistantship must be registered as fulltime students (at least 9 credit hours) during each semester of their appointment.**

**Other Assistantships and Fellowships:**

The English Department also awards several fellowships, including the McPhee Fellowship and the Louise VanSickle Award (for a creative writer). Our MA students have also obtained assistantships which include tuition remission plus a stipend in the Advising Office of the College of Arts & Sciences, Student Involvement, Women's Studies, and Ethnic Studies. Still others teach at local colleges. The English Department sends notices of such openings to MA students who request them.

In their second year MA students are eligible to apply for fellowships through Graduate Studies.

**February 15** of the student's first year in the program is the deadline for graduate fellowships, although past experience shows that PhD students are more successful in winning these fellowships 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 you intend to undertake the year of the fellowship. For information and application forms, contact Graduate Studies at 472-8670, or go to their website at: [www.unl.edu/gradstudies/](http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/)

## **RESOURCES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**Listserv.** The department regularly communicates with graduate students via its listserv. [ENG-GRAD@listserv.unl.edu](mailto:ENG-GRAD@listserv.unl.edu).

**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 graduate students; to offer representation to the Department through its elected representatives, the EGSA Executive Committee; and to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas, concerns, and suggestions among graduate students of 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.

**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**

**Graduate Studies** is located at 1100 Seaton Hall. Graduate Studies handles all matters related to graduate programs and student status, including international student status. Call 472-2878, or check the website at <http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/>

**International Affairs** 420 University Terrace. This office handles matters having to do with international students, including visa problems or questions. Call 472-5358.

### **Afrikan People's Union**

A student group which holds regular meetings and sponsors special programs.  
<http://www.unl.edu/apu/index.html>

### **Mexican American Student Association**

A student group which holds regular meetings, does programming, and sponsors educational activities. <http://www.unl.edu/masa/>.

### **International Student Organization**

A student group which hosts programs and activities. Email: [unl.x.iso@gmail.com](mailto:unl.x.iso@gmail.com)  
**University of Nebraska Inter-Tribal Exchange (U.N.I.T.E.)**. A student group which organizes events and activities, including a powwow. <http://www.unl.edu/unite>.

**UNL Committee for GLBT Concerns**. A group of faculty, staff, and students who sponsor programs and discuss issues related to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. <http://www.unl.edu/lambda>.

## **PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT APPEALS**

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

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 College Bulletin, procedures for graduate student academic appeals are as follows:

#### **I. Appeal of course grades.**

- 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. 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 his/her 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.
- B. 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.
- A. Appeals will be to the full Graduate Committee.
- B. Appeals must be based on one of the following:
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 Committee acted capriciously or in an unfair or discriminatory way in reaching the original decision.
- C. The student and the student's adviser may submit written statements on behalf of the student. Such statements should also include any new evidence in the case which the student wishes to present.
- D. The student may appear before the Graduate Committee to present the case against termination.
- E. A notice of appeal must be made within six weeks of the decision to terminate, except during the summer.
- F. The appeal will be heard as soon as possible after the gathering of evidence.
- G. Decision of the appeal will be determined by a simple majority and will be communicated to the student, the adviser, and the Graduate College in writing by the Graduate Chair.
- IV. Appeals not covered above shall be dealt with analogously.
- V. If the Graduate Committee denies an appeal, the student's next recourse is to the UNL Graduate Council, as specified in the *Graduate College Bulletin*.