

# **English PhD Program Policies and Procedures**

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## **Admission Criteria**

Application for admission to both the Graduate School and the doctoral program in English is made by securing and completing the proper forms from the Graduate School.

An [application form](#) is available on the website of the Graduate School. Application must be made for the doctoral program in English even if the student is already enrolled in the Graduate School.

Direct admission to the doctoral program is possible under two conditions:

1. For students with the B.A. degree, the following requirements must be met or exceeded:
  - GRE: 166 verbal, 144 quantitative
  - Undergraduate GPA: 3.0 overall, 3.5 English (4.0 system)

After successfully completing 15 semester hours, the student either becomes an official doctoral candidate or converts to the M.A. program, depending upon the recommendation of the graduate faculty.

One who is directly admitted to the doctoral program does not write the M.A. thesis and thus does not take 6 hours for the thesis. The student saves about one year or more by not writing a thesis. Of course, the M.A. degree is not received. The doctoral dissertation is written, and the Ph.D. degree is attained. See below for total number of hours required.

An individual on probation after 9 hours automatically converts to the M.A. program.

2. Students presently enrolled in the M.A. program, or who shall in the future enroll in the M.A. program, may convert to the Ph.D. program after successfully completing 15 hours with a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

In all cases involving conditions 1 or 2 above, the student shall petition the graduate faculty for permission to enter the Ph.D. program. The Graduate Program Director will then assign a committee of three English Department graduate faculty members--if possible, former instructors of the individual--to study the student's petition and performance and to make a recommendation to the graduate faculty.

In all other cases, admission is contingent upon meeting the following requirements:

1. A Master's degree from an accredited university;
2. The necessary English course requirements: see the [Graduate Catalog](#);
3. An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 in English and 3.0 overall;
4. A Graduate Record Examination aptitude score of at least 300 (verbal plus quantitative), the verbal score of which must be at least 163;
5. Three acceptable letters of recommendation.
6. A writing sample of 15-20 pages.
7. Approval from the Graduate School

### **Submission of Application and Assistantships Available**

The departmental deadline for applications is January 15. We only admit graduate students to the fall semester of each academic year. Applications received after January 15 or incomplete applications will be automatically rejected. Please send all application materials to the Baylor Graduate School so they can file them in their online system; do not send any application materials to the Graduate Program Director. It is imperative that the applicant who wishes to receive an assistantship have all components of the application in at least by the date listed in the catalog, but preferably two weeks prior. The English graduate program has three types of assistantships available. These assistantships carry stipends and tuition coverage that are highly competitive with those offered by other universities. Inquiries should be made of the Graduate Program Director.

### **Total Number of Hours**

Completion of 42 semester hours of graduate credit beyond the M.A. degree constitutes the minimum requirement. Ten graduate seminars (30 hours) are required beyond the M.A. degree. Because emphasis lies upon the adequate preparation of the student, additional work may be required at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee or the Graduate Program Director. Twelve hours of the 42 total must be allocated for the dissertation. No correspondence work may be counted for graduate credit.

For one directly admitted to the doctoral program from the B.A. degree (see above), completion of 66 hours beyond the B.A. is required, with twelve hours of the total allocated for the dissertation. Eighteen graduate classes are required beyond the B.A. degree. Transfer of no more than 6 semester hours from an accredited institution may be allowed (see Graduate Catalog for conditions).

An Advisor's Slip to be signed by the Graduate Program Director is required each semester for proper registration.

### **Specific Course Requirements**

The following courses must be taken either during the undergraduate or graduate periods of study:

- One course in *Old English language*;

- One course concerned with introduction to graduate study, such as the *bibliography and research methods* course or an equivalent course at another university;
- One upper-level course in *linguistics or literary theory or rhetoric and composition*.

Four courses are required from one of the following categories. At least one course is required from each of the other three.

- *English 1* (Old English, Middle English, Renaissance, Seventeenth Century, Restoration and Eighteenth Century)
- *English 2* (Romantic, Victorian, Modern British, Contemporary British)
- *American 1* (Early American Literature to 1800, Nineteenth Century American)
- *American 2* (Modern American, Contemporary American)

A seminar may be repeated if the content is on a different topic.

### **Minor**

Although a minor is not required, one is possible. Nine (9) semester hours constitute a minor area of study. Both the major and minor may be and usually are taken within the department in the areas of either English or American literature. Minor courses and any other courses outside of the department may be taken up to 12 hours of graduate credit; these courses must be directly relevant to the student's area of study and must be approved by the chairperson of the Department of English or the Graduate Program Director and the chairperson(s) of the department(s) in which the outside courses are to be taken.

### **Languages**

A reading knowledge of **two** languages in addition to English is required. At least one of these languages should be relevant to the student's dissertation or major area of emphasis. Completion of language requirements must be met before the preliminary examination is authorized. A language requirement may be satisfied by any of the five methods designated in the Graduate Catalog (see "Specific Degree Requirements: Doctoral Degrees"). Note: if option 1 is chosen, the course must have been taken no more than five years before the student was accepted into the Baylor graduate program.

### **Preliminary Examination**

The preliminary examination must be taken within one year of the completion of all course work, although it may be taken while the last semester of course work is in progress. Prior to scheduling the examination, it is recommended that the student determine an area of emphasis and a director for the dissertation. Under the advisement of the director, the student should consult on an individual basis with other members of the Graduate Faculty, who will also take responsibility for areas on the examination. The actual time for the exam will be determined by the student in consultation with the director, the other examiners, and the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the English Office. The preliminary examination must be completed at least one academic year prior to the conferring of the degree and six months prior to the final examination in defense of the dissertation. The student's director and other examiners are responsible for administering and interpreting the results of the preliminary examination.

The preliminary examination will be constituted of three 3-hour parts, and will cover three areas chosen by the student with the advice and consent of the director and other examiners. The areas will be:

- A. One area from those listed under "Specific Course Requirements," as the student's **major area** (3 hours) (Some options are: Old English, Middle English, Renaissance, Seventeenth Century, Restoration and Eighteenth Century, Romantic, Victorian, Modern British, Contemporary British, Colonial American Literature to 1800, Nineteenth Century American, Modern American, Contemporary American);
- B. The historical areas, consisting of the following two 90-minute exams:
  1. One **historical area contiguous with the major area** (90 minutes);
  2. **Another historical area** (90 minutes);
- C. One **open area**: e.g., an interdisciplinary topic, a genre, a major author, critical theory, a special topic, rhetoric, or linguistics.

The student and the examiner in the major area will select approximately fifteen major works of significant length over which the student will be examined. For the open areas, the student will select twelve-to-fifteen works, again with the approval of the examiner. Each half of the historical area should have from six to eight works. Examiners will have the final say in approving the lists of works for their areas.

The examination will be taken over a period of eight working days (two consecutive work weeks). The exam is nine hours, three hours for the major area, ninety minutes for each half of the historical area, and three hours for the open area. The areas of the examination may be taken in any order.

The examination will be taken over a period of eight working days (two consecutive work weeks). The exam is nine hours, three hours for each part.

The order of procedure for the preliminary examination is as follows:

1. The student should consult the director and the other examiners to arrange times for the written examination. They must consult the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant to set the times.
2. The examiners should each prepare questions that require answers of about three hours' length for the major and open areas (or ninety minutes for each half of the historical area). The student is not to see any questions until the time of administration for each area, nor is he/she to receive any advance information regarding the questions.
3. Each examiner in turn assigns a grade of either "Pass" or "Fail" and returns the examination to the director, who files the responses in the English office.
4. Examinations should be returned to the Graduate Program Director for permanent filing.
5. The student should fill out the Result of Preliminary Examination form and leave it with the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant to secure the signatures of the examiners and the Graduate Program Director. This form must be submitted to the

Graduate School prior to the first semester in which the student has registered for dissertation hours.

6. If the student fails any area of his/her written examination, he/she must make up that deficiency no sooner than four months after his/her first attempt. The privilege of taking a second examination will be given at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee. This committee may decide (a) that the initial failure is terminal, (b) that the student must take the entire written examination again, or (c) that the student must repeat only those area examinations failed at the first attempt. Under no condition, however, will the student be allowed to take any area examination more than two times. The director is responsible for arranging any makeup parts of the examination.

### **Prospectus Review**

Within six months after successful completion of the preliminary examination. This committee includes:

- the director of the dissertation (a [Graduate Faculty](#) member),
- a second member of the department, usually from the area of specialization (a Graduate Faculty member),
- and an appropriate Graduate Faculty member from [outside the department](#).

The student now should see that the members of the Dissertation Committee are listed and placed on file in the Department of English office: he/she must fill out the departmental Dissertation Committee form. With the counsel of her/his Dissertation Committee, the candidate will prepare a formal prospectus of 10-15 pages along with an accompanying bibliography. This prospectus, and the literary, methodological, generic, or other critical questions surrounding the candidate's topic, will provide the subject for a formal prospectus review. Attending the review will be the student, his/her Dissertation Committee, and up to three others (Graduate Faculty members) from within and without the department, invited by the candidate with the approval of the director of the Dissertation Committee. These meetings normally will last about an hour (see Appendix A). The student will pass or fail the prospectus review by a majority vote of the graduate faculty present. The director of the Dissertation Committee must take to the review the departmental Dissertation Prospectus Review form to be signed by all faculty members present, as well as by the candidate. This form should be secured from and returned to the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant.

In order to qualify for candidacy, the student must pass both the written examination and his/her prospectus review.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Upon completion of residence requirements, language requirements, the preliminary examination, and the prospectus review, the student should make application for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. To do this, the student and director must fill out the Record of Candidacy for Doctoral Degree form that should be secured from and returned to the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant. Approval of this application is necessary before the student is recognized as a candidate for a doctoral degree. Application must be made no later than five months prior to the date on which the degree is to be conferred. Admission to candidacy presupposes a minimum of 3.0 (B) average for formal coursework initiated in the Graduate School.

### **Teaching Opportunities**

Prior to the conferral of the degree, the candidate generally will have had teaching experience in both composition and literature. This teaching may be done either at Baylor or at another college or university.

### **Professional Experiences**

The Graduate Faculty expects all graduate students pursuing the Doctor of Philosophy degree to take part in the entire spectrum of professional activities: teaching, service to the department and/or to the University, attending conferences, presenting papers at conferences, and submitting essays for publication.

### **The Dissertation**

The student will present an acceptable dissertation in the field of his/her major study area. The dissertation must give evidence that the student has pursued a program of research, the results of which reveal both superior stylistic and research competence, and offer a significant contribution to knowledge. Dissertations will ordinarily range between 250 and 350 pages; however, some types of dissertations—such as editions or bibliographies—may need to be considerably longer. In any case, 225 pages should be considered the minimum acceptable length. The dissertation director should ensure that the student adheres to these page requirements; moreover, the Graduate Program Director will not approve dissertations that fall substantially outside this page range.

Work on the dissertation should begin in the preliminary state as early in the academic career as possible, but formally it should begin when the student has completed the preliminary examination. At this time the Dissertation Committee will work closely with the student in approving the topic and directing the research to its conclusion. A prospectus must be approved by the Dissertation Committee, with copies sent to the Graduate Program Director and the Chair of the department. For the formal requirements regarding the dissertation, including the deadlines for the submission of the manuscript, the technical requirements of the manuscript (see the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook; Macintosh Palatino 12 point font or IBM Palisade 12 point font is required), the abstract, binding and microfilming costs, and research course requirements, see the Graduate School Guidelines available in the English Office. Students are reminded that the MLA Handbook was not designed to guide the construction of a dissertation; therefore the Graduate School specifications regarding preliminary pages, chapter format, and other dissertation-specific characteristics must be used in conjunction with the MLA guidelines.

### **The Final Oral Examination**

A final oral examination in defense of the dissertation is required. The candidate, with the approval of the Dissertation Committee, is responsible for arranging the final examination, coordinating its time with the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant and the Graduate School, and bringing all required materials to the examination. The Announcement of Doctoral Oral Examination form specifying the date of the defense must be filled out and sent to the Graduate School at least ten days prior to the defense: see the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant. At this defense there must be a minimum of five examiners: the Dissertation Committee and two other Graduate Faculty members from inside the department. A sixth Graduate Faculty member from inside the department is permitted, but not required. The director of the dissertation must take the Results of Oral Examination form to the defense and have the members present sign it at the conclusion of the defense.

### **Application for Degree**

The student files for graduation at the beginning of the semester in which the student anticipates degree completion. Filing is completed at the Graduate School. The student must have a minimum overall grade point average of 3.0 to be eligible to file.

### **Time Limitation**

The maximum time limit allowed is eight years from the date that the student is admitted and begins the doctoral program. The student may petition for an extension of time provided there are extraordinary circumstances. The maximum time permissible may not exceed nine years.

### **Writing Expectations**

Of particular concern to the English faculty is the writing of its graduate students. Toward that end every graduate class will not only require writing, but will expect a high level of performance from its students.

### **Appendix: Ph.D. Prospectus and Oral Presentation Guidelines**

The departmental guidelines for Ph.D. candidates provide the following general statement about the dissertation prospectus:

Within six months after successful completion of the preliminary examination, and with the counsel of her/his Dissertation Committee, the candidate will prepare a formal prospectus of 10-15 pages along with an accompanying bibliography. This prospectus, and the literary, methodological, generic, or other critical questions surrounding the candidate's topic, will provide the subject for a formal prospectus review.

Graduate faculty offer the following guidelines to help Ph.D. candidates prepare a prospectus.

The successful prospectus will include many, if not all, of the following:

- a cover page, including your name, projected dissertation title, and date;
- a formal table of contents;
- a cogent opening statement indicating what your thesis is and why it is significant (i.e., whether it will expand on or revise existing scholarship);
- a brief overview of the research you have conducted in relation to your thesis;
- an analysis of the specific issues you seek to address;
- an explanation of your methodology (i.e., both the theoretical works you will use and how they affect your critical orientation);
- provisional conclusions;
- a bibliography.

You may divide your prospectus into sections or construct a holistic prospectus--that is, one that appears as a continuous essay without any sections. (See the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the English office for examples of previously approved prospectuses.)

You may wish to consider the advice offered by Robert L. Peters in *Getting What You Came For* (New York: Farrar, 1992) and by David Madsen in *Successful Dissertations and Theses* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983). These two reference works expertly expand upon the guidelines presented here.

A standard prospectus review consists of a fifteen-minute presentation concisely articulating the thesis. Then, the Dissertation Committee and up to three Graduate Faculty members from within and without the department will, in the remaining 45 minutes, question the Ph.D. candidate on her/his dissertation prospectus.