THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

PH.D. PROGRAM HANDBOOK

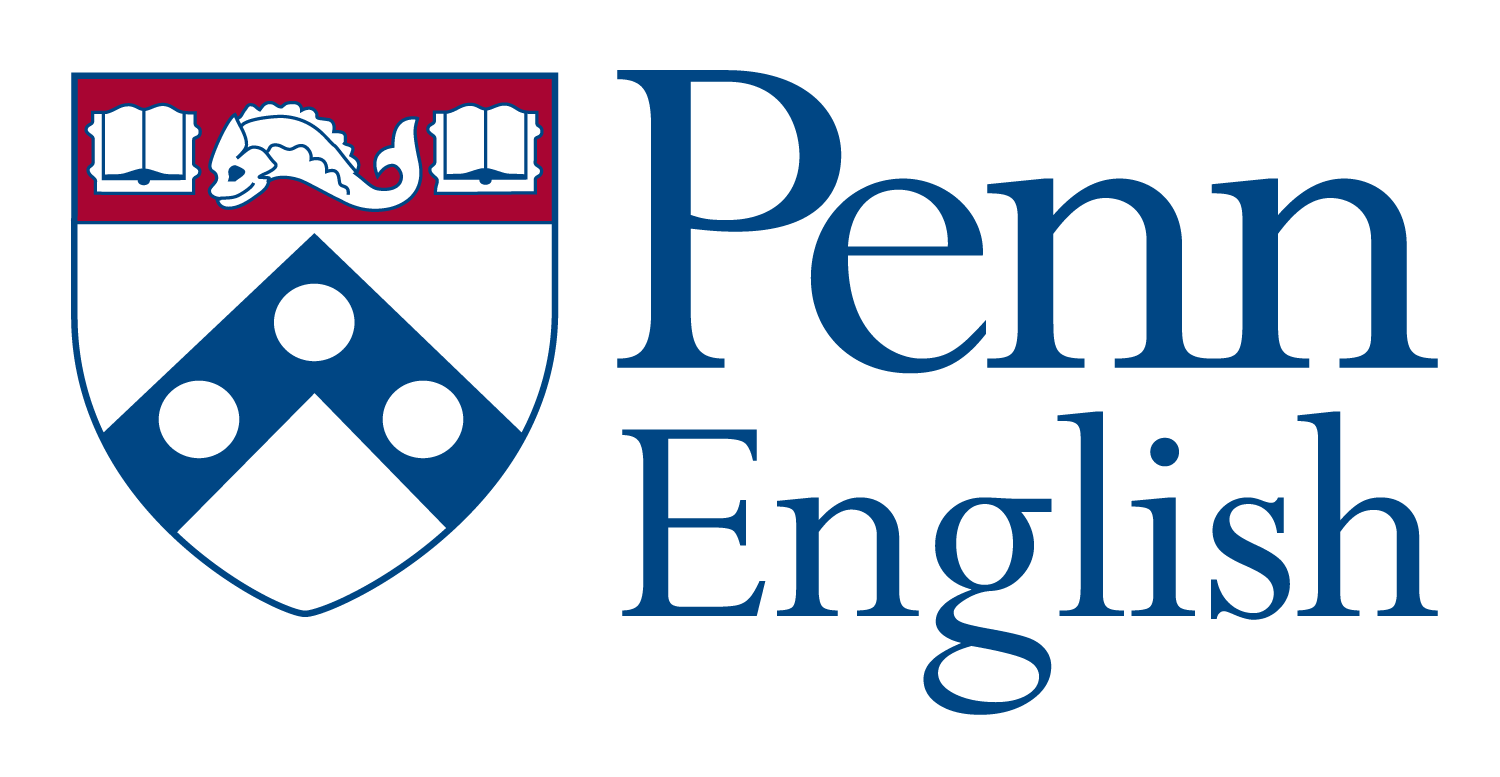


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Program Contacts, Committees, and Helpful Acronyms

**Note: Graduate students should direct initial inquiries to the Graduate Office.**

**English Department Faculty Leadership**

Department Chair: Margo Natalie Crawford (margocr@english.upenn.edu)

Associate Chair: Zachary Lesser (zlesser@english.upenn.edu)

Graduate Chair: Zita Cristina Nunes (znunes@upenn.edu)

Undergraduate Chair: Nancy Bentley (nbentley@english.upenn.edu)

**English Department Staff**

Department Administrator: Loretta Witham Turner

Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS): Meghan Hall (hallme@sas.upenn.edu)

Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies (ADUS): Becky Friedman (beckysf@english.upenn.edu)

Business Coordinator: Elizabeth Lunger (Elizabeth.Lunger@english.upenn.edu)

Assistant to the Chair: Stephanie Palmer (sypalmer@english.upenn.edu)

**Fisher-Bennett Hall Offices**

Building Manager: Ryshee “Ty” Mccoy (rymccoy@sas.upenn.edu)

FBH Business Office: (fbh-bas@sas.upenn.edu)

Associate Director of Finance and Administration: Cher Bryant

Senior Business Administrator (payroll): Tim Weal

Financial Administrative Coordinator: Kristina Zagrocki

Business Administrator: Brianna Mccoy

Computing (help@english.upenn.edu)

Senior IT Support Specialist: Brian Kirk

IT Specialist Support: Tim Murphy

IT Specialist Support: Christopher Vandergrift

Part-Time IT Support: Tracey Curtis

**Emergency Numbers**

Penn Public Safety / Penn Police: 215-573-3333 (for all on-campus emergencies)

Emergency Services: 911 (for all off-campus emergencies)

Counseling Office: 215-898-7021

International SOS: 1-215-942-8478 (use for emergencies experienced while abroad)

Additional emergency phone numbers are available here: <https://www.upenn.edu/life-at-penn/safety/emergency-phone-numbers>

**English Department Officers and Committees**

TOS Director: Nancy Bentley

Job Placement Officers: Chi-ming Yang & Abdulhamit Arvas

Dissertation Proposal Workshop Directors: David Eng & Abdulhamit Arvas

Graduate Executive Committee (GEC): Zita Nunes, Herman Beavers, Jean-Michel Rabaté, Sara Kazmi

**Graduate Division**

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Grad Dean): Beth Wenger (grad-dean@sas.upenn.edu)

Definitions and Acronyms

**School of Arts and Sciences (SAS):** comprises thirty-three departments and programs in the humanities, social sciences, and hard sciences

**Grad Division (GSAS or GAS):** office of the School of Arts and Sciences that oversees graduate education, comprised of the Graduate Dean and staff

**Graduate Office:** office of the Department of English that oversees graduate education, comprised of the Graduate Chair and the ADGS

**Standing Faculty:** comprised of all tenure-track or tenured faculty members (i.e. Assistant, Associate, and full Professors); contingent and retired / emeritus faculty are not considered part of the standing faculty

**Graduate Group:** comprised of faculty from across departments in SAS who share scholarly interests and expertise. The English Graduate Group is composed of all standing faculty in English plus faculty members outside the department who have completed the process of joining the graduate group. See the [Affiliated Faculty](https://www.english.upenn.edu/people/faculty#affiliated) page on the English Department Website for a full list of English Graduate Group members.



Spaces and Facilities

**Fisher-Bennett Hall**

The Department of English is housed in Fisher-Bennett Hall (FBH), located at 3340 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. The main entrance to the building is located at the corner of 34th and Walnut Streets. Classrooms and faculty offices are located on all four floors. The English Main Office (FBH 127), where department staff and faculty leadership have offices, is located to the right of the grand foyer at the main entrance.

English shares FBH with the Cinema Studies & Media Department (CIMS), the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Program (GSWS), the Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender Studies Program (FQT), the English Language Program (ELP), The Middle East Center (MEC), and the Music Department (MUSC).

English graduate students have 24/7 access to FBH with their PennCards. All students must tap their PennCard at the entryway card reader, located to the right of the door at all entrances, to unlock the doors. Students may be asked to present their PennCard to a security guard at the building’s entrance. This may be the case for other campus buildings as well.

**English Faculty Lounge**

The English Faculty Lounge (FBH 135) is located on the first floor, behind the grand staircase. The Faculty Lounge serves as a gathering and meeting place for faculty and staff, and as an event space for faculty- and staff-led special events (e.g. receptions for departmental lectures, recruitment activities, dissertation defenses).

The Faculty Lounge is keyed-access only. Faculty and staff are issues keys at the time of their appointment. Graduate students are welcome in the lounge during events to which they have been invited.

**English Graduate Lounge**

The English Graduate Lounge (FBH 330) is located on the third floor, behind the grand staircase. The Grad Lounge serves as a gathering and meeting place for graduate students, and as an event space for grad student-led events (e.g. working group meetings, GEA meetings). The lounge is equipped with a kitchenette with a microwave, double sink, mini-fridge, and coffee maker, as well as a television screen and attached computer for audio/visual presentations during events.

The Grad Lounge is keyed-access only. Graduate students are issued keys at the time of their appointment. Graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and informing departmental staff of any room issues or broken equipment (see **Facility Maintenance** below).

**English Grad Lab**

The English Grad Lab (FBH 327) is located on the third floor, at the end of the west hallway. The Grad Lab serves as a workspace for English graduate students. The lab includes tables and seating, six desktop iMac computers, and assigned storage lockers. The desktops can be accessed by all English graduate students (the login is the student’s PennKey and password) and they are set up to print to the third-floor copier.

The Grad Lab is keyed-access only. The key that opens the Grad Lounge will also open the Grad Lab. Graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, maintaining the cleanliness of the lab, and informing department staff of any broken equipment (see **Facility Maintenance** below)

**Offices**

Due to space limitations, graduate students are typically assigned offices only in semesters in which they are serving as a TA (in their second year) or teaching their TOS course (in their fourth year). Advanced students teaching a course for additional compensation may be assigned offices as space allows. Several students may be assigned to a single office at a time, or students may be asked to share an office with a faculty member that is currently on leave. Office assignments and keys will be issued at the start of each semester by office staff and must be returned to the ADGS within two weeks of the end of the grading period.

Students are responsible for taking care of their department-issued keys. Students should never lend their department-issued keys to others outside of the Department of English. In the event that a student misplaces one of their keys, the student should immediately report the key missing to the ADGS, who will record the loss and issue a new key to the student.

**Printing**

Graduate students have unlimited printing and copying privileges using the FBH third-floor copier, located in an alcove in the center of the building. The iMac computers in the Grad Lab are automatically set up to print to the third-floor copier, and students may set up their personal devices to print to the copier as well. Students should contact the FBH Computing Team ([help@english.upenn.edu](mailto:help@english.upenn.edu)) for assistance in setting up printing on their personal devices.

The third-floor copier only prints in black and white.

Graduate students share the third-floor copier with faculty whose offices are on the second and third floors, as well as with other programs and departments housed in FBH. All users are responsible for keeping the copier alcove clean and tidy, and for reporting problems to the computing team promptly.

The first-floor copier, located inside the English Main Office, can be accessed for color printing when the office is open.

**Classrooms**

The School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) uses a centralized classroom scheduling system. Most classrooms in FBH are managed by Central Pool Classrooms (CPC) and cannot be directly booked by the department. Courses in other disciplines may be held in FBH classrooms, and while many of our English classes will be held in FBH, some will be assigned to other campus buildings.

For courses taught by graduate students, the ADGS will request that they be assigned to classrooms in FBH, but this cannot be guaranteed.

**Mailroom**

FBH has its own mailroom, located immediately to the left of the main entrance. All current graduate students have an assigned mailbox and should check it regularly for official mail. Graduate student keys will open the mailroom.

Graduate students may have mail and packages delivered to their FBH mailbox if they so choose. This is a secure place to receive packages, but delivery may take additional days because all mail first goes through Penn’s central mail system.

Graduate students who wish to have mail or packages delivered to their FBH mailbox should use the following address:

[Student name]

Fisher-Bennett Hall, Rm 127

3340 Walnut Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104-6203

**Restrooms**

Restrooms are located on each floor of Fisher-Bennett Hall, at the end of the east hallway. The restrooms on floors one, two, and four are multi-stall, men’s and women’s. As of 2024, the third floor has a gender-neutral restroom, as well as a multi-stall women’s room. All restrooms have accessible stalls.

**Accessibility**

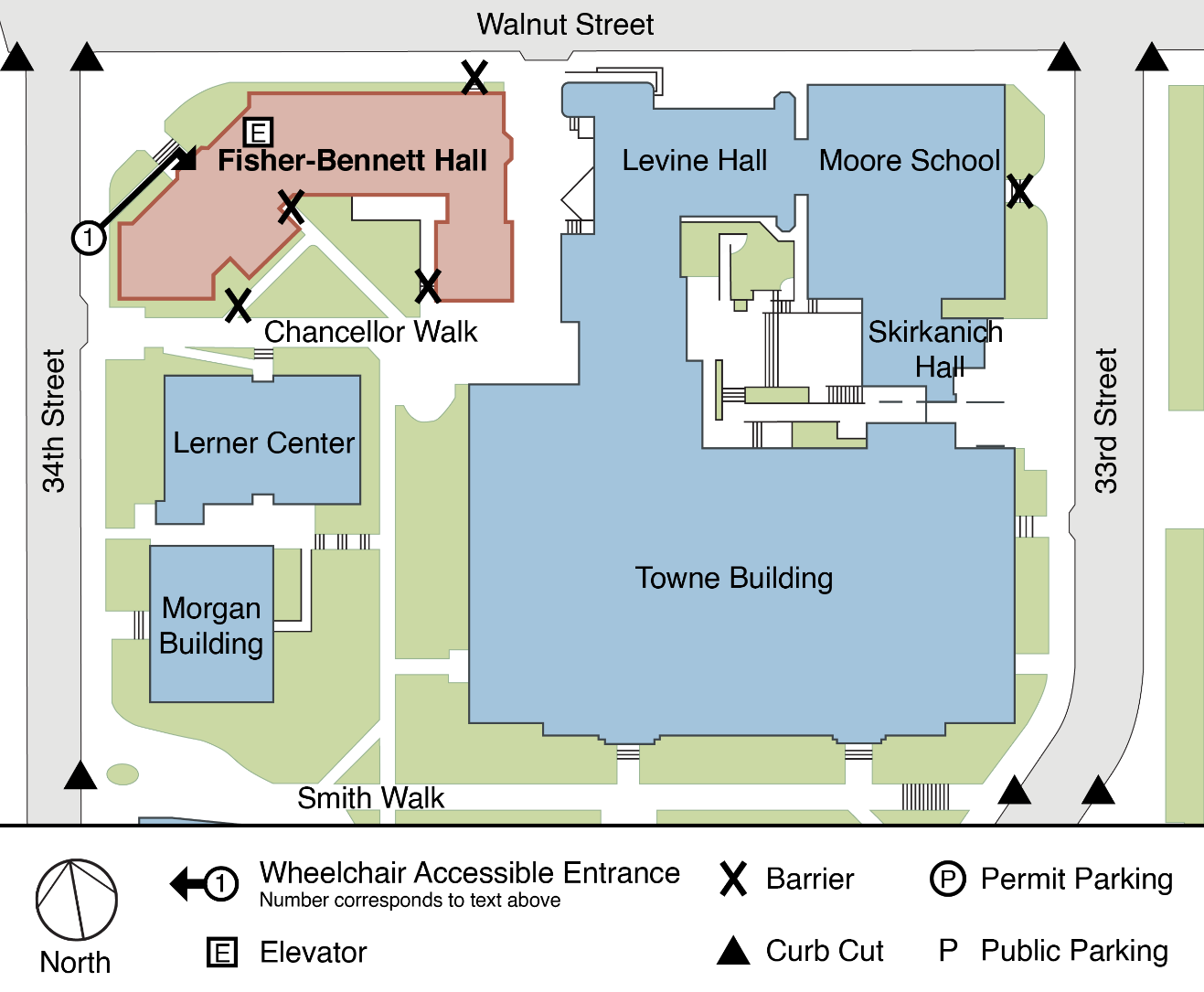
FBH has three stairwells: the grand staircase at the front entrance, a stairwell on the west side of the building across from the English Main Office, and stairwell at the end of the east side of the building. Please note: the grand staircase does not access the fourth floor.

FBH also has an elevator, located to the left of the grand staircase, that goes to all 4 floors and the ground level.

FBH is wheelchair accessible via ramps at the main entrance. The back and east side entrances do not have ramps. Both the main and east side entrances have automatic door openers.

Most classrooms in FBH are flat and fully accessible with moveable tablet arm chairs or seminar tables and loose chairs in the rooms. Lecture room 401 is partially tiered, with two rows of tablet-arm chairs at the flat-floored front of the room.

In the event that one of the building’s accessibility features is not properly functioning or available, students should immediately contact the Building Manager, copying the ADGS.

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**Facility Maintenance**

It is the responsibility of all building occupants to report problems with the building and/or equipment as soon as they are noticed. Building issues such as faulty windows or door locks, pests, leaky sinks, out-of-order restrooms, and thermostat issues should be reported immediately to the Building Manager, copying the ADGS.

Broken equipment that belongs to the Department of English (e.g. kitchenette equipment, computers, printers, lounge furniture) should be reported immediately to Stephanie Palmer, copying the ADGS.

**Keys**

Graduate students are issued a Grad Key that gives them access to the Grad Lounge, Grad Lab, and FBH mailroom. If a student misplaces their key, they should contact the ADGS as soon as possible.

Many doors in FBH lock automatically when closed. Students should keep their keys on their person at all times to avoid being locked out. Students should be cautious about leaving valuables unattended in common areas, even if the door locks automatically.

**Libraries**

There are nine university libraries located on or near Penn’s campus. The largest of these is Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, located at 3420 Walnut Street, a short walk from FBH. The entrance is located on Locust Walk. In addition to housing the university’s main collection of books and materials, Van Pelt-Dietrich also houses the Kislak Center for Rare Books and Special Collections (sixth floor), the Furness Shakespeare Library (sixth floor), a graduate student study space (fifth floor), and the Weigel Information Commons (ground level), where students can rent digital equipment and request assistance with digital projects.

To enter Van Pelt-Dietrich, students must scan their PennCard. Guests without a PennCard will need to show a government-issued ID at the security desk and sign in. At certain times and in certain cases, library access may be restricted to PennCard holders only. Please see <https://www.library.upenn.edu/vanpelt/access-and-visitor-information> for more information on hours, access, and policies.

Students may borrow materials by either visiting the library in person or requesting the materials be delivered to their home address using the [Books By Mail](https://guides.library.upenn.edu/circulation/vpbooksbymail) service. The library can also provide electronic scans of book chapters or articles not available online via the [Scan and Deliver](https://guides.library.upenn.edu/resourcesharing/requestscan) service. Students may also borrow materials from other participating libraries via the Interlibrary Loan (ILL), E-Zborrow, and BorrowDirect [services](https://guides.library.upenn.edu/resourcesharing/borrowdirect).

Another major library, the Fisher Fine Arts Library, is located at 220 South 34th Street. Fisher Fine Arts houses collections to support research in art and architecture, the decorative arts, photography, historic preservation, and city planning and urban design. It boasts a materials collection of over seven thousand [material samples](https://www.library.upenn.edu/finearts/materials-library) and the Common Press, a working [typography studio](https://www.library.upenn.edu/finearts/common-press). Fisher Fine Arts also has quiet study space on its first floor.

In addition to Van Pelt-Dietrich and Fisher Fine Arts, the university has the following resource libraries:

* [Biddle Law Library](https://www.law.upenn.edu/library/) (3501 Sansom Street)
* [Chemistry Library](https://www.library.upenn.edu/chemistry) (231 South 34th Street)
* [Holman Biotech Commons](https://www.library.upenn.edu/holman) (3610 Hamilton Walk)
* [Levy Dental Medicine Library](https://www.library.upenn.edu/dental) (240 South 40th Street)
* [Library at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies](https://katz.sas.upenn.edu/resources/library-katz-center) (420 Walnut Street)
* [Math/Physics/Astronomy Library](https://www.library.upenn.edu/mpa) (3N1 David Rittenhouse Library)
* [Penn Museum Library](https://www.library.upenn.edu/museum) (3260 South Street)
* [Veterinary Medicine: Atwood Library and Information Commons](https://www.library.upenn.edu/vet) (380 South University Avenue)
* [University Archives & Records Center](https://archives.upenn.edu/) (4015 Walnut Street)

Additionally, the following libraries have affiliations with Penn and some of their collections may be available for direct borrowing:

* [Architectural Archives](https://www.design.upenn.edu/architectural-archives/home) (220 South 34th Street)
* [Athenaeum of Philadelphia](https://philaathenaeum.org/) (219 South 6th Street)
* [Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing](https://www.nursing.upenn.edu/history/archives-collections/) (418 Curie Blvd)
* [Demography Library](https://www.pop.upenn.edu/demography-library) (3718 Locust Walk)
* [Penn Museum Archives](https://www.penn.museum/about-collections/museum-archives) (3260 South Street)
* [Pennsylvania Hospital Medical Library](https://www.library.upenn.edu/pennsylvania-hospital-access) (800 Spruce Street)

**Campus Research Centers**

Penn is home to over 200 research centers, institutes, laboratories, and international initiatives. Please see <https://research.upenn.edu/research-at-penn/centers-institutes/> for the complete list. Below is a short, non-exhaustive list of centers and laboratories that have been most relevant to English graduate student interests:

* [The Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender](https://gsws.sas.upenn.edu/center/about) (FQT Center)
* [The Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies](https://clals.sas.upenn.edu/) (CLALS)
* [The Center for Africana Studies](https://africana.sas.upenn.edu/center)
* [The Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies](https://katz.sas.upenn.edu/)
* [The Center for the Advanced Study of India](https://casi.sas.upenn.edu/) (CASI)
* [The James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies](https://korea.sas.upenn.edu/)
* [The Middle East Center](https://mec.sas.upenn.edu/) (MEC)
* [The Center for East Asian Studies](https://ceas.sas.upenn.edu/)
* [The McNeil Center for Early American Studies](https://www.mceas.org/) (MCEAS)
* [The Wolf Humanities Center](https://wolfhumanities.upenn.edu/)
* [The Center for Experimental Ethnography](https://www.ceepenn.org/) (CEE)
* [The Price Lab for Digital Humanities](https://pricelab.sas.upenn.edu/)

**Academic Support and Professional Development Centers**

Penn also houses centers dedicated to supporting the intellectual and professional growth of students as they complete their degrees. These include:

* [The Grad Student Center](https://gsc.upenn.edu/) (GSC): a hub for information, programming, resources, and support for graduate and professional students at Penn
* [The Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Innovation](https://cetli.upenn.edu/) (CETLI): a center supporting instructors of all levels of experience with workshops, mini-courses, and individualized feedback
* [Career Services](https://careerservices.upenn.edu/): a center offering career planning resources, individualized career advising, and programming tailored specifically to graduate and professional students
* [The Weingarten Center](https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/): Penn’s home for academic support and disability services. The Weingarten Center offers learning consultations, tutoring, and interactive programs to support students as they develop learning strategies to further their academic and professional goals. Disability Services provides comprehensive, professional services and programs for students who self-identify with disabilities to ensure equal academic opportunities and participation in University-sponsored programs.

**Wellness and Cultural Resource Centers**

Penn has several centers dedicated to supporting student health and wellbeing and for fostering student communities.

* [Wellness at Penn](https://wellness.upenn.edu/)
  + Student Health: a hub for medical care, specialist referrals, immunization compliance, and student health insurance
  + Counseling: a hub for individual and group counseling, and referrals to external providers
* [Pottruck Fitness Center](https://recreation.upenn.edu/sports/2019/9/25/facility-locations.aspx): Penn’s main fitness center featuring four floors of weight and cardio equipment, an Olympic-size pool, basketball courts, and fitness and Pilates studios. Graduate students who are fully funded have basic access to Pottruck (use of some specialized equipment and classes may incur additional membership fees).

**Please note: 2024-2025 renovations may temporarily impact the availability of some Pottruck facilities. See** <https://recreation.upenn.edu/sports/2019/9/25/facility-calendar.aspx> for up-to-date scheduling information.

* [Office of the Chaplain](https://chaplain.upenn.edu/): Penn’s office for spiritual health, providing pastoral support to students of all faiths
* [The Penn Women’s Center](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/pwc)
* [The Pan-Asian American Community House](https://secure.www.upenn.edu/vpul/paach/) (PAACH)
* [Makuu](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/makuu) (the Black Cultural Center)
* [The LGBT Center](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lgbtc/)
* [La Casa Latina](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lacasa)
* [Greenfield Intercultural Center](http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/gic)
* [The African American Resource Center](https://aarc.upenn.edu/)
* [Natives at Penn](https://pennclubs.com/club/natives-at-penn)
* [Penn Association for Gender Equity](https://pennclubs.com/club/page)
* [Penn Hillel](https://pennhillel.org/)
* [Penn First Plus](https://pennfirstplus.upenn.edu/)

Program Overview & Benchmarks

**Overview**

The Ph.D. in English is a flexible five- or six-year program that combines broad coverage of literatures in English, broadly conceived, with concentrations shaped by the individual student’s interests. Ph.D. students generally study a wide range of literary traditions and theoretical frameworks during their first two years of coursework, and then begin to specialize in their third year. In their fourth, fifth, and often sixth years, students write their dissertations. Throughout the program, Ph.D. students are taught, advised, and supported by the department’s faculty, and they stay apprised of new scholarship in their respective fields through participation in Departmental Working Groups, through which they also share their own work.

All Ph.D. students, regardless of citizenship, receive five years of educational support which covers tuition, fees, and health insurance and includes a competitive stipend.

The Ph.D. in English is often a stepping stone to an academic career, but our alumni also go on to pursue careers in the public and private sectors.

**Program Benchmarks**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Coursework:   * Proseminar (ENGL 6000) * Pedagogy (ENGL 8000) * Twelve additional graduate seminars that fulfill distribution and 7000-level requirements   Examinations:   * 50-Book Exam * Field Exam * Two foreign language requirements | Teaching:   * One semester of service as a grader * One semester of service as a teaching assistant (TA) * One semester of teaching as a TOS Instructor of Record   Dissertation Milestones   * Dissertation proposal (approved by committee with feedback from GEC) * Annual dissertation progress report * 4th-year work-in-progress with Departmental Working Group of student’s choice * 5th-year work-in-progress in departmental symposium * Dissertation defense * Dissertation deposit |

Sample Program Timeline

Below is a sample timeline for progression through the program. Actual progression may vary slightly from student to student. This timeline is an outline only. Full details and policies related to benchmarks can be found in their respective sections further on in the handbook.

**Year 1**

Fall: Take **Proseminar** + 3 additional graduate seminars that fulfill **distribution and 7000-level requirements**.

Spring: Take 4 graduate seminars that fulfill distribution and 7000-level requirements. Prepare for the **50-Book Exam** by first identifying 1 standing faculty member to serve on the exam committee, then working with the full committee to construct a 50-Book List, and finally submitting the committee-approved list to the GEC for feedback by a designated date, usually in April.

[Recommended] Fulfill at least one language requirement by passing a language exam or making plans to take one of the **Grad Division’s Reading for Knowledge courses** in the summer.

Summer: Read and prepare for the 50-Book Exam.

**Year 2**

Fall: Take 3 graduate seminars and serve as a **grader** for an undergraduate course or take **Pedagogy** + 2 graduate seminars and serve as a **teaching assistant** for an undergraduate lecture course

Spring: Take 3 graduate seminars and serve as a grader for an undergraduate course or take **Pedagogy** + 2 graduate seminars and serve as a teaching assistant for an undergraduate lecture course. Prepare for the **Field Exam** by first identifying 3 standing faculty members to serve on the exam committee, then working with the full committee to construct a Fields List, and finally submitting the committee-approved list to the GEC for feedback by a designated date, usually in April.

Summer: Read and prepare for the Field Exam, submitting write-ups at intervals designated by the committee.

**Year 3**

**Fall: Read and prepare for the Field Exam. Submit a portfolio of all write-ups and a revised seminar paper by a designated date in November. Schedule the oral exam within a designated 2-week period in December.**

**Spring: Take the Dissertation Proposal Workshop. Submit the committee-approved Dissertation Proposal by a designated date in April. Take the TOS Workshop to prepare for teaching in Year 4. Course titles, descriptions, and syllabi may be due by designated dates throughout the semester. Fulfill both language requirements by the end of the year.**

**Summer: Begin researching and writing the dissertation. Submit the Dissertation Progress Report by a designated date in late-summer/early-fall.**

**Year 4**

Research and write the dissertation. Teach the TOS in either the fall or spring semester. Present part of a dissertation chapter as a work-in-progress with a departmental working group of the student’s choice. Meet annually with full committee about dissertation progress. **Submit the Dissertation Progress Report by a designated date in late-summer/early-fall.**

**Year 5**

Research and write the dissertation. Present part of another dissertation chapter in a conference paper-style at a departmental colloquium. Meet annually with full committee about dissertation progress. **Submit the Dissertation Progress Report by a designated date in late-summer/early-fall.**

**Apply for fellowships or jobs with the support of the dissertation committee.**

**Year 6**

Research and write the dissertation, aiming for **dissertation completion.** Apply for graduation, defend dissertation, and complete dissertation deposit.

**Apply for jobs.**

Coursework Policies and Procedures

**Timeline**

Ph.D. students must complete a total of fourteen grade-bearing graduate-level courses in their first two years of the program. Two of these courses are required: ENGL 6000, the first-year Proseminar, and ENGL 8000, the second-year Pedagogy course. Ph.D. students should work in consultation with their advisors to select the other twelve courses with the aim of fulfilling distribution and 7000-level requirements and expanding and strengthening knowledge of their area(s) of specialization.

Students without prior graduate training take four courses per semester in their first year, then three courses per semester in their second year. A typical progression is shown below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TERM 1 | TERM 2 | TERM 3 | TERM 4 |
| Proseminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar |
| Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar |
| Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Pedagogy ↔ | Grad seminar |
| Grad seminar | Grad seminar | [TA duties] ↔ | [grader duties] |

Students with prior graduate training may transfer in up to two credits which count toward the total of fourteen required courses. Students who transfer in credit only need to complete twelve grade-bearing graduate-level courses in their first two years of the program, and usually take three courses per semester for both years. A typical progression is shown below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TERM 1 | TERM 2 | TERM 3 | TERM 4 |
| Proseminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Grad seminar |
| Grad seminar | Grad seminar | Pedagogy ↔ | Grad seminar |
| Grad seminar | Grad seminar | [TA duties] ↔ | [grader duties] |

Students who wish to take an alternative progression (e.g. four courses per semester in the first year, two courses per semester in the second year) should discuss their plans with their advisor and the Graduate Office to ensure that their plan satisfies minimum registration requirements and other administrative policies.

See **Transfer Credit** below for complete rules and procedures.

The Department of English has limited options for accelerating progression through the program. Program benchmarks (coursework requirements, exams, teaching requirements, etc.) cannot be waived and they must be completed in order, but students who wish to progress through the program more quickly may take additional courses at the beginning of the program to enable taking the Field Exam and advancing to candidacy early. All plans for an accelerated timeline must be discussed with the student’s advisor and the Graduate Chair. Final approval of all plans lies with the Graduate Chair, who will consider the feasibility of the plan in question and ensure that all program benchmarks will be met.

**Proseminar**

All first-year Ph.D. students are required to take ENGL 6000, Proseminar, in their first semester of study. This seminar introduces students to the institutional dynamics, methods, and concepts that have shaped literary and cultural studies, reflecting upon the origins of the discipline of English itself and considering some of the ways that the discipline has been undone and redone by a range of theoretical and institutional transformation. Students will read and discuss foundational work as well as recent and emergent material to gain breadth of understanding and develop their own critical investments.

**7000-level and Distribution Requirements**

At least five of the twelve or fourteen courses taken while at Penn must be at the 7000 level (see **Course Levels** below). English courses at the 6000, 8000, and 9000 levels do not count toward this requirement. However, 6000-level courses taken in departments that classify graduate seminars into only 5000 and 6000 levels (i.e. where 6000-level courses are the upper-level courses) may count toward the 7000-level requirement.

Additionally, Ph.D. students must fulfill six distribution requirements through coursework.

1. **Pre-1700:** One seminar covering literature, theory, or other writing from pre-1700
2. **1700-1900:** One seminar covering literature, theory, or other writing from 1700-1900
3. **Post-1900:** One seminar covering literature, theory, other writing, or film from post-1900
4. **Lit of the Americas:** One seminar covering literature, theory, other writing, or film from the Americas (includes North, Central, and south Americas)
5. **Lit outside the Americas:** One seminar covering literature, theory, other writing, or film from outside the Americas
6. **Minority Lit:** One seminar covering literature, theory, other writing, or film from or about minority perspectives (racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality, etc.)

Any course may count for up to two distribution requirements. For example, a course on race and empire in eighteenth-century British literature would fulfill any two of the following requirements:

1700-1900, Lit outside the Americas, Minority Lit.

In cases where there is uncertainty about the classification of a course, students should consult with the Grad Chair. For courses that cover but do not specialize in a single period or geographic area, students may count the course toward a particularly distribution requirement if their final project or paper is focused on the subject of the distribution requirement, with prior approval of the Grad Chair.

**Course Levels**

Graduate seminars in the Department of English are generally classified as either 5000- or 7000-level. 5000-level seminars are broader in conception and aimed at coverage of a particular literary period, genre, or author(s). Instructors are encouraged to include assignments that venture away from conventional academic writing (public-facing, creative, creative-critical, multimodal, etc.). 7000-level seminars will be narrower in conception and address more circumscribed problems, themes, objects, or methods. Instructors are encouraged to assign a full-length (20- to 25-page) academic essay as their final assignment.

The Department of English uses the 6000 level only for Proseminar (ENGL 6000).

8000-level courses are reserved for courses related to pedagogy, exam preparation, and the Dissertation Proposal Workshop.

9000-level courses are reserved for graduate-level writing courses (coordinated by the Center for Professional and Creative Writing), independent studies, internships, and Dissertation registration.

**Transfer Credit**

Ph.D. students who have completed a master’s degree or another graduate degree in a relevant discipline prior to matriculating at Penn may submit a written request to transfer up to two CUs from their prior graduate training. In general, one CU is equal to one semester-long, graduate-level course. For degrees from programs on the quarter or trimester systems, the process of approval will include assessing how many courses should count for a single CU.

All requests will be reviewed for approval by the Graduate Office. The Grad Chair reserves the right to decline transfer credit requests if the prior graduate training has no relevance to the current program of study.

Written requests for transferring credit should be addressed to the ADGS and should include the course number, course title, and term the course was taken (e.g. Fall 2020) for each course. The ADGS will solicit requests for transferring credit in the summer before students’ first year so that transfer credit may be processed prior to beginning coursework.

Transfer credit does not count toward the 7000-level or distribution requirements, only toward the overall CU requirement. Transferred courses will appear as “General Credit” on the student’s transcript and will not include original titles.

**Courses outside of the English Department**

Ph.D. students may take up to one graduate-level course per semester outside of the English Department. The following count as “outside” courses:

* Graduate-level courses taken in other departments at Penn (e.g. an Africana studies grad seminar)
* Graduate-level courses taken at other institutions via the Ivy+ Exchange or Penn-Rutgers Exchange programs (e.g. a comparative literature course at Princeton)
* Most graduate-level creative writing courses at Penn (e.g. ENGL 9000, Fiction Workshop)

Courses in other departments at Penn that are crosslisted with English do not count as outside courses.

A maximum total of four “outside” courses may count toward a student’s coursework requirements.

Students who wish to take more than one outside course in a single semester may request an exception from the Grad Chair, who may consider the following:

* The relevance of the outside course to the student’s intellectual and professional interests
* Whether a similar course will be offered in English in the same academic year
* Whether the additional outside course will cause the student to exceed the four-course maximum total

In a case of an overload, where the student has completed or is on track to complete all coursework requirements on time and wants to take an additional outside course that will not count toward their 14 CUs, neither the per-semester or total maximum rules for outside courses apply.

**Independent Studies**

Ph.D. students may take up to one grade-bearing independent study per year, contingent on the approvals of the proposed independent study’s faculty advisor and the Grad Chair. Independent studies add to faculty workload and therefore require faculty permission.

Independent Studies are intensive courses of study typically focused on a topic relevant to the student’s intellectual or professional interests. The student works closely with the independent study faculty advisor to develop a list of readings and assignments and agree to meet at pre-determined intervals to discuss the student’s progress through the material.

Independent studies may involve only one student and one faculty advisor, or there may be a small group of students who work with one or two faculty advisors.

Once the student(s) and faculty advisor(s) have agreed to an independent study, the student should submit an Independent Study Proposal Form: <https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3JgVZeVMWJp9uf4>

The completed form is circulated to the independent study faculty advisor(s), the Grad Chair, and any other appropriate stakeholders for approvals, after which the course is built in Penn’s registration systems for enrollment.

A maximum of two grade-bearing Independent Studies taken in any department may count toward a student’s 14 required CUs. Independent studies are not intendent to replace coursework and should only be proposed if the topic of study will not be covered in an English graduate seminar in the same academic year. Independent studies tend to be more intensive than regular graduate seminars, so students should exercise caution in overloading their schedule for the given semester.

Once a student has completed their coursework requirements, neither the per-year or total maximum rules for independent studies.

In cases of overloads, where the student has completed or is on track to complete all coursework requirements on time and wants to take an additional independent study that will not count toward their 14 CUs, neither the per-semester or total maximum rules for independent studies apply.

**Internships**

In cases where the Department runs an internship course for credit, students may count only one internship course toward their coursework requirements.

**MLA Courses**

Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) courses are masters-level seminars coordinated through the School of Liberal and Professional Studies (LPS). MLA courses covering literature-related topics are typically rostered through the English Department – that is, their courses begin with ENGL – and are occasionally taught by English Department standing faculty, but they are otherwise run entirely through LPS.

In general, Ph.D. students may not count MLA seminars toward their coursework requirements. Ph.D. students who wish to count an MLA seminar toward their coursework requirements may request an exception from the Grad Chair, who may consider the relevance of the MLA course to the student’s intellectual and professional interests, the availability of courses covering similar topics in the given academic year and the workload and level of difficulty of the MLA course in question. The Grad Chair reserves the right to decline a request to take an MLA course for coursework credit and/or to require additional assignments or readings be undertaken to bring the course to the level of a Ph.D. course.

**Ivy+ Exchange & Penn-Rutgers Exchange Programs**

Ph.D. students who have successfully completed their first year of coursework (at least 6 CUs of graduate-level courses) are eligible to take courses or conduct dissertation research at one of the following universities.

University of California, Berkeley

Brown University

University of Chicago

Columbia University

Cornell University

Harvard University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.)

University of Pennsylvania

Princeton University

Stanford University

Yale University

Rutgers University

Penn has tuition-exchange agreements with these universities, which allows Ph.D. students to take courses offered by the institutions without incurring additional tuition costs. Participating students will likely incur travel and/or housing expenses as a result of taking courses outside of Philadelphia and are eligible to apply to the department’s Stuart Curran fund to help defray those costs.

Most commonly, Ph.D. students use these exchange programs to take a single course at one of the participating universities that are within commuting distance of Philadelphia (e.g. Princeton, Columbia, Rutgers). In rare cases, students may request to complete a full semester of courses or undertake dissertation research at a partnering institution for a semester.

Students who wish to take a single course through one of the exchange programs should discuss their interest with their advisors and notify the Graduate Office of their intentions as early as possible and no later than 3 weeks before the start of the semester. The paperwork to set up the exchange requires signatures from all stakeholders and can take several weeks to process, and registration must be completed by the end of the host institution’s Course Selection period, so beginning the paperwork early is paramount.

Students who wish to take a full semester of courses or undertake dissertation research at a partnering institution should notify the Grad Chair and ADGS of their interest as early as possible and no later than the last day of Penn advanced registration deadline in the semester prior (typically November for the spring semester, March for the fall semester). Advanced registration deadlines can be found here: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/penn-academic-calendar>.

Courses taken through the Ivy+ Exchange and Penn-Rutgers Exchange programs are considered “outside” courses. In cases where a student requests to take a full semester of courses at a participating institution, they must also gain approval from the Grad Chair to take 3 or 4 outside courses in a single semester.

Participation in either exchange program must be approved by the course instructor, the Penn English Grad Chair, Penn’s Office of the Grad Division of the School of Arts and Sciences, and the host institution’s administrators.

Please note that not all schools within participating universities will participate in the exchange program. For example, while the School of Arts and Sciences at a participating university may offer their courses for exchange, the School of Design at the same university may not. In cases where a host institution does not approve the student’s request for any reason, that decision is final and there is no appeal process.

For more information on the Ivy+ and Penn-Rutgers Exchange Programs, please see: <https://pan-school.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division/programs/exchange-scholar-program>.

**Graduate Certificates**

Ph.D. students may work towards obtaining one or more Graduate Certificates offered by departments and programs in the School of Arts and Sciences. Graduate certificate programs provide interdisciplinary training and expose students to methodologies and traditions outside of their primary area of focus.

Most graduate certificate programs require a combination of targeted coursework and special projects. Some programs also require an application, participation in colloquia, or other benchmarks. Ph.D. students who are interested in obtaining a Graduate Certificate should read the requirements for the program in question thoroughly and discuss their interest with their faculty advisor.

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| --- | --- |
| [Africana Studies](https://africana.sas.upenn.edu/department/graduate/certificate-program) [Cinema Studies](https://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/graduate/certificate) [Human Rights](https://www.law.upenn.edu/international/certificate/globalhumanrights/)[Digital Humanities](https://pricelab.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-certificate-digital-humanities)[Social, Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (SCAN)](http://neuroethics.upenn.edu/scan/)[Women, Gender and Sexuality](https://gsws.sas.upenn.edu/program/graduate/graduate-certificate)[Urban Studies](https://urban.sas.upenn.edu/students/graduate-certificate-program) | [World History](https://www.history.upenn.edu/graduate/guidelines)[Experimental Ethnography](https://www.centerforexperimentalethnography.org/certificate.html)[Latin American Studies (LALS)](https://clals.sas.upenn.edu/graduate/graduate-certificate-lals)[Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies](https://web.sas.upenn.edu/global-medieval-studies/graduate-program/graduate-certificate-in-global-medieval-renaissance-studies/)[Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies (REEES)](https://rees.sas.upenn.edu/graduate/upenn-eusp-certificate-russian-eastern-european-and-eurasian-studies-reees-social-sciences) [CETLI Teaching Certificate](https://cetli.upenn.edu/programs/grad-students/teaching-certificate/) |

**General Registration Requirements**

The School of Arts and Sciences requires Ph.D. students to be registered for at least 3 CUs per semester until the dissertation proposal is approved, after which students are registered for ENGL 9950, “Dissertation”, which counts as full registration. In the Ph.D. program in English, students must be registered for at least 3 courses per semester for years one and two. In Year Three, Ph.D. students are registered for placeholder courses that account for the independent work they are completing in preparation for their Field Exams and to write their Dissertation Proposals. Starting in Year Four, Ph.D. students are registered for ENGL 9950 and remain registered until they complete the degree.

Ph.D. students who fail to remain registered for at least 3 CUs per semester or ENGL 9950 will drop below full-time status and jeopardize their stipend. Students must be attentive to any holds placed on their account which may delay or prevent registration.

All graduate seminars are graded. Both M.A. and Ph.D. students must maintain a 3.0 (B) average to be considered in good standing. Students who take incompletes will be considered not in good standing until the incomplete is resolved. See the **Academic Good Standing** section below for full details.

Students may register for courses within the designated Course Selection period for each term using [Path@Penn](https://path.at.upenn.edu/student/landing), the online registration and information system. Reference guides for Path@Penn can be found here: <https://srfs.upenn.edu/path-at-penn>.

In cases where course enrollment is restricted (e.g. by department, degree type, instructor permission), students will need to request permission to enroll. In these cases, students should write directly to the instructor to request permission to enroll and should also submit a permit request via Path@Penn. Instructions for requesting a permit can be found here: <https://apps.srfs.upenn.edu:44306/secure/Pennant-Training/Path-Request-Permission-to-Take-a-Class.pdf>

If the course instructor approves the written request, the student should then forward their approval to the ADGS (if the course is rostered in English) or to the department or program’s graduate coordinator (if the course is rostered elsewhere) to inform them that the instructor has given permission to enroll. Administrative staff are responsible for approving or denying permit requests.

**Residency Requirement**

Ph.D. students are expected to be “in residence”, living in or within commuting distance of Philadelphia, while taking courses, while attending the required third-year workshops, and in the semesters in which they teach.

Outside of in-residence semesters, students may elect to live elsewhere. Students who live outside of Philadelphia are expected to maintain regular communication with their advisors and dissertation committee to agree on and arrange for in-person attendance at important benchmarks, and to continue to contribute to departmental culture through in-person and virtual participation in departmental events as appropriate.

**Advance Registration**

For the fall and spring terms, Penn runs an advance registration period in which students submit requests for their preferred courses in Path@Penn. Students are not automatically registered during this period; instead, all course requests are processed at the conclusion of the advance registration period regardless of when the request was submitted. There is no guarantee that students will be enrolled in all of their requested courses, but in many cases, advanced registration enables students to secure seats in their preferred courses.

Permit requests cannot be approved during the Advance Registration period. Students requiring a permit to register should follow the steps above after the Advance Registration period has ended.

All dates for the Advance Registration and regular Course Selection periods can be found here: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/penn-academic-calendar>.

**Auditing**

Ph.D. students in coursework may audit a maximum of two courses per semester over and above their registered courseload. This may include undergraduate- and graduate-level languages courses in other departments. Any student interested in auditing a course should first write to the course instructor to request permission to audit and to determine the level of class participation that will be expected of them as an auditor. The student should then forward the email exchange with the instructor to the ADGS to request that they be registered for the course as an auditor. Requests to audit a course must be made before the Course Selection period for the given term ends.

Ph.D. students who have completed their coursework requirements may either audit or take for credit one additional graduate seminar per semester.

**Receiving the M.A.**

For the M.A., the university requires eight courses, a scholarly report, and a general examination. A research paper submitted for a graduate class may count as the scholarly report. The general exam will be satisfied by a one-hour discussion of coursework by two members of the graduate group.

All M.A. students are required to complete at least one 7000-level seminar. M.A. students are not required to complete distribution requirements.

Ph.D. students who wish to obtain their M.A. are required to complete all components of the M.A. degree, including the scholarly report and the general exam.

Exam Policies and Procedures

Ph.D. students are required to pass the following exams:

* The 50-Book Exam (Year Two, taken the day before the first day of fall classes)
* The Field Exam (Year Three, taken in early December)
* Two foreign language exams, or alternative (taken in any semester before Year Four)

**The 50-Book Exam**

University requirement: The Qualification Exam Requirement, which the 50-Book Exam satisfies, must be passed within the first two years of study.

The 50-Book Exam requires students to demonstrate knowledge of a group of texts that is diverse in terms of historical period; genre and form; national and geographic origin; and racial, gendered, and sexual identifications. Students work with a committee of three faculty members to create a list of 50 works; at least 30 of which should be from outside the student’s designated area of specialization. As this is a generalist exam aimed at building broad coverage of well-known literary, theoretical, and cinematic works, at least 35 of the 50 works on the list must come from the department’s [50-Book List](https://www.english.upenn.edu/graduate/requirements-rules-procedures/first-year-oral-exam/50-book-list). At least 30 of the 50 works should be outside of the student’s designated area of specialization.

The student will organize the selected 50 works into three broad rubrics according to genre, historical period, and theme or theory. Each topic should provide a framework to structure the reading with works that speak to one another. Each of the three rubrics should include one or two critical, theoretical, or historical works (books, articles, and other media). All or most of the works from the period chosen by the student should be included in the Historical Period list (i.e., not in the Genre or Theme/Theory lists) to prevent that period's overrepresentation in the exam as a whole; no more than 20 works from that period should appear on the full list.

Rubrics:

* **Genre:** At every stage of its history, literary studies has asked whether works of literature can and should be classified into distinct kinds, types, and forms. This rubric is an opportunity for students to enter that conversation by considering a recognizable genre or mode in the context of its development across different periods, places, languages, and/ or cultures. Topics may as broadly framed as drama, epic, romance, novel, or poetry. They may also be more specific, such as tragedy, comedy, lyric, pastoral, autobiography, melodrama, elegy, travel writing, naturalism, noir, the gothic, science fiction, and utopia. In every case, the rubric should be developed in a way that will allow the examinee to address the chosen topic in specific and general ways, paying attention to the formal characteristics of the genre or mode at a particular place and time and to the changes that it undergoes as it evolves.
* **Historical Period:** This framework invites students to explore the contours of a major literary-historical period and to understand how literary works are embedded in historical contexts. The period may be designated by literary historiography (seventeenth century, turn of the twentieth century), or literary movements (age of romanticism, modernism). The reading list for this framework should include a range of genres and authors, and when useful, a transatlantic or transnational perspective. The rubrics should follow recognized periods, though these may be as broad as a long century or as narrow as several decades.
* **Theme or Theory:** This is the broadest category with the most leeway for the development of a specific interest. The topic should be focused enough to be easily understood and capacious enough to include a variety of texts across time periods, genres, and national traditions. Some thematic suggestions: literature and law, representation of labor, environmentalism, sexuality, gender, coming of age, afro-futurism, figures of monstrosity, the body in pain, memory, empire. A theoretical concept should provide an optic or set of questions through which to interpret a variety of texts. A student may draw on notions that have been defined --or refined-- by specific thinkers, or a topic addressed by a variety of theorists to be used as theoretical or thematic handles. One might select a specific critical movement e.g. Marxism, psychoanalysis, queer theory, material texts/DH --or a concept: e.g. mimesis, hegemony, realism, pragmatism, power, racialization, the performative, subjectivity, orientalism, mourning, epistemology of the closet, bio-power, desire, the uncanny.

Lists should be neatly organized with entries including the author’s name, title of the work, and date of original publication, listed either in alphabetical or chronological order. Committees may request that students write short rationales for each list as an exercise in better defining their rubrics, but students generally do not need to include rationales in their final 50-Book Lists.

Committee Selection: In their spring semester, first-year Ph.D. students select one standing faculty member in the English Department to serve on their 50-Book Exam committee. Students may decide to ask their first-year advisor or another faculty member. If a faculty member declines for any reason, the student should approach another faculty member. If the student has any issues with deciding on or requesting a committee member, they should speak with the Grad Chair who can suggest possible options.

This exam is the first time Ph.D. students will approach a faculty member to ask to work with them. Students should submit the request in writing and offer to meet to discuss their intellectual interests if the faculty member is not already familiar with the student’s interests and work.

Once the committee member has been selected, the student should provide the committee member’s name to the Graduate Office, who will then assign the other two committee members and designate a chair. Please note: the committee member selected by the student is never the chair of the committee and the two other committee members are faculty members in fields outside of the student’s fields.

All lists must be approved by the full 50-Book Committee before being submitted to the GEC for review by a date determined each year, typically in April. The GEC will read and provide feedback on all lists but final approval of each list lies with the committee. The GEC’s feedback may concern the definition or breadth of the list rubrics, the historical or geographic distribution of the list’s works, conspicuously missing canonical works that fit the student’s rubrics, or any other aspect of the list.

Taking the exam: Students prepare for the exam over the summer. On the Monday before fall classes begin, students take a two-hour oral exam in which they discuss the works on their list in response to their exam committee’s questions. The exam commonly begins with the student giving brief remarks (approximately five to seven minutes) on the insights they’ve gained into the works they have read and highlighting any common themes. Afterwards, the exam committee takes turns asking questions. These questions may relate to specific works on the list, common themes across works or lists, or the scope and definition of the lists themselves.

The committee will provide detailed feedback on the student’s performance at the end of the exam and in a written report shared with the Grad Chair. The Grad Chair will then meet with each student at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the feedback and make a plan for addressing it during the upcoming year.

Eligibility: Students must be in good academic standing to take the 50-Book Exam. All students must resolve any outstanding incompletes on their record by June 1st to be eligible to take the 50-Book Exam.

Should a student fail the 50-Book Exam, they are allowed to retake the exam with a new committee assigned by the GEC. The second exam must be scheduled no later than the end of the fall semester. The student will be considered not in good academic standing until they have passed their 50-Book Exam.

**The Field Exam**

University requirement: The Candidacy Exam Requirement, which the Field Exam satisfies, must be passed by the end of the fifth year of study.

In the fall semester of their third year, Ph.D. students take a field examination which is meant to give them 1) an intensive knowledge of their teaching and research fields, and 2) a strong basis from which to craft a dissertation prospectus. The Field Exam will be given by a committee of three faculty members, who must be members of the English graduate group. Identified by the student, potential members have the option to assent or not to that student’s request to serve on the committee. With permission, students may have a fourth member or a member outside of the graduate group. One of the committee members from the Graduate Group should be designated by the student as Exam Chair.

In early spring, the Graduate Office provides an orientation to help second-year students prepare for the field exam and to convey deadlines for finalizing a committee and submitting the field list. During the spring semester, second-year students work in consultation with their committee to formulate a list of 70 works in their field(s) of specialization that are organized into three rubrics of the student’s choosing, broadly corresponding to:

* One Primary List of 30 works, composed of both primary and secondary sources
* Two Contributing Lists of 20 works each, composed of both primary and secondary sources

The primary list is typically organized by historical period, genre, and/or geographic area; the contributing fields are typically organized by theoretical tradition, literary or cultural thematic, or critical problematic.

Each list should be framed by a rationale of approximately 250 words consisting of a brief description of the field, and key questions or problematics to be examined in and across the lists. Students should adhere to the total of 70 works unless a slight variation is approved by the student’s committee to ensure adequate time for exam preparation.

Students should work closely with their committee members to construct their lists. This will

take several rounds of revision.

All lists, approved by the full Field Exam Committee, will be submitted to the GEC for review by a date determined each year, typically in April. The GEC will read and provide feedback on all lists, but final approval of the list lies with the individual committee.

Committee Selection: In their spring semester, second-year students select a committee to oversee their Field Exam, designating a chair. Committees are generally composed of three standing faculty members from the English Graduate Group. The exam chair must be part of the English Graduate Group. Students may request to add a fourth member to their committee or to add someone outside of the English Graduate Group to their committee by writing to the Grad Chair with their reasons for needing different or additional expertise for the student’s research interests at this stage of preparation. The Grad Chair will consider these requests on a case-by-case basis.

The Field exam is the first time that Ph.D. students will fully assemble their own committee. Students should submit their requests to faculty in writing and offer to meet to discuss their intellectual interests if the faculty member is not already familiar with the student’s interests and work. If a faculty member declines for any reason, the student should approach another faculty member. If the student has any issues formulating a committee, they should speak with the Grad Chair who can suggest possible options for moving forward.

Exam Preparation: Students begin reading and preparing for the exam in the summer following their second year and continue through November of their third year. During this time, students will submit regular write-ups to their full exam committees in response to prompts that help the students think synthetically. The committee is responsible for setting expectations for the frequency of write-ups and for sending prompts.

In late November, students submit a portfolio consisting of all write-ups that have been submitted to the committee during the preparation process, as well as a revised version of a seminar paper that was submitted during their Ph.D. coursework that best exemplifies their critical work. The student will also set a date with their committee for their oral exam, to take place within a designated two-week period in early December. The two-hour oral exam will consist of rigorous questions about the student’s lists, fields, and write-ups; at the end of the oral exam, the student will know the outcome and receive feedback. The exam committee will formalize their feedback in a report to the Grad Chair that will be kept in the student’s academic file. The committee will follow up with the student in the weeks following the exam with detailed feedback on the seminar paper.

Eligibility: Ph.D. students must be in good academic standing to take the Field Exam. All students must resolve any outstanding [incompletes](https://www.english.upenn.edu/graduate/requirements-rules-procedures/incompletes) from their record by September 1st of their third year to be eligible to take the Field Exam.

Should a student fail the Field Exam, they are allowed to retake the exam with their existing committee, or with a new committee if the student so chooses. The second exam must be scheduled and passed no later than February 15th for the student to return to good academic standing and to enroll in the Dissertation Proposal Workshop.

**Foreign Language Requirement**

Ph.D. students are required to fulfill two language requirements before the start of their fourth year in the program. Students who entered the program prior to 2022 are not subject to the time limit and may complete their language requirements at any point before scheduling their defense. Ph.D. students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one language requirement by the end of their first year.

Students whose research requires advanced knowledge of another language are encouraged to discuss options for demonstrating their proficiency in that language with their faculty advisor and/or dissertation committee.

Graduate students may fulfill a language requirement in one of three ways:

* **Passing a timed translation exam.** These 2-hour exams are administered virtually twice per year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring, by the Department of English in consultation with faculty with the relevant language expertise. The exams consist of translating two passages of approximately one page each from a language of the student’s choosing into clear, readable English. The student will be informed of the outcome of their completed exam within a few weeks.
  + Students may request an exam in any language besides English, including languages in which they already have fluency.
  + Students may use dictionaries or online language searches to aid in their translations.
  + Should a student fail the language exam, they should plan to take the next offered exam.
* **Enrolling in a Reading for Knowledge language course, offered each summer by the Grad Division of the School of Arts and Sciences.** These courses meet online three times per week and are typically offered in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Latin (subject each year to student interest and the availability of instructors). Once the Graduate Office receives confirmation that a student has successfully completed one of the language courses, the student will have fulfilled one of their language requirements.
* **Successfully completing at least 2 undergraduate- or graduate-level language courses** at Penn or though the Penn-Rutgers or Ivy+ Exchange Programs**.** Literature courses that entail substantial reading in a foreign language may count toward this requirement. All language or language-based courses should be approved by the Grad Chair before enrolling to ensure that they will count toward the language requirement. Audited language courses of any level only count toward the language requirement with prior approval of the Grad Chair, and approval will be based on the amount of language translation undertaken as an auditor (as attested by the course instructor).

Dissertation Policies and Procedures

All Ph.D. students are required to write a dissertation that is based in original research and makes a sustained argument about the subject of the student’s choice. The precise length and scope of the dissertation, as well as the number and division of chapters, should be determined by the dissertation committee in consultation with the student.

**Dissertation Committee**

The following policies governing the composition of dissertation committees are set by the Vice Provost for Education. For full information, see: [Academic Rules for PhD Students](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/)

“Upon advancement to candidacy, each student forms a Dissertation Committee consisting of at least three faculty members (including at least two members of the graduate group). At least half of the members of the Dissertation Committee must be members of the graduate group at the time of appointment to the committee. Faculty who are not members of the graduate group may serve only with the written approval of the graduate group. The authority to approve membership on committees may be delegated to the graduate chair. A graduate group may establish additional requirements, such as a requirement for outside reviewers on the Dissertation Committee. [The English Department does not compensate committee members external to Penn.]

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee must be a member of the Standing Faculty in the graduate group. If the Chair of a Dissertation Committee leaves the Standing Faculty before the dissertation is completed, then a new chair from the Standing Faculty in the Graduate Group must be appointed as chair. The Dissertation Committee chair is responsible for convening committee meetings, advising the student on graduate group and university expectations, and assuring the graduate group chair that the group’s requirements have been met. [Please see **Appendix A: Mentoring Guidelines** below for expectations related to meetings.] The Dissertation Supervisor may serve as Chair of the Dissertation Committee, but is not required to do so. [In the English Department, the Dissertation Supervisor is the Chair of the committee].

The Dissertation Supervisor is the person primarily responsible for overseeing the student’s dissertation research. A student may have both a Dissertation Supervisor and a Dissertation Co-Supervisor, or two Dissertation Co-Supervisors, if that responsibility is shared equally.

Dissertation Supervisors and Dissertation Co-Supervisors must be members of the Standing Faculty at Penn, with special approved exceptions. A member of the Associated Faculty (such as Research Faculty or Adjunct Faculty) may be permitted to serve as a Dissertation Supervisor with prior approval of the Vice Provost for Education on a case-by-case basis. The Graduate Group Chair may petition the Vice Provost for Education, in advance, for an exception. In such cases, a member of the Standing Faculty in the graduate group must be appointed as the Dissertation Committee Chair.

The dissertation committee meets at least once annually with the student to review the student’s progress. The student prepares an Annual Dissertation Progress Report and the committee gives timely feedback (within one month) and confirms whether progress is satisfactory. A copy of the signed progress report is submitted to the Dissertation Supervisor and Graduate Group Chair and is documented by the School in the student’s academic record. The committee feedback contributes to the determination of a mark of S (satisfactory progress) or U (unsatisfactory progress) to the student’s dissertation status course.”

**Dissertation Proposal**

In the spring semester, third-year Ph.D. students who have advanced to candidacy enroll in the Dissertation Proposal Workshop. Taught by two faculty members, generally one senior and one junior, the workshop typically meets 8 times per semester. The workshop is aimed at supporting students as they prepare their proposals and typically involves a series of exercises designed to help define the project’s subject, determine its scope, formulate and articulate a main argument, develop chapter descriptions, and workshop the full draft. The workshop is a requirement of the program; participation is mandatory. If illness or other circumstances make it impossible to attend, the student must petition the Graduate Chair with a proposal for an alternate arrangement.

Throughout the semester, students also meet regularly with their committees to discuss progress on the dissertation proposal. The final draft should be approximately 2500 to 3000 words in length, plus a bibliography.

Following the advice of the committee, the proposal ought to set forth, as clearly and concisely as possible, some or all of the following:

* Any background information pertinent to the subject
* A close exposition of the subject and its merits within the field of study
* Acknowledgement of previous scholarship pertinent to the subject
* The proposed method of organizing the subject and a tentative indication of the table of contents
* Any special research needs or problems encountered
* A bibliography

If the subject is inter-disciplinary, the student should describe his or her proficiency in the related discipline(s).

Upon receiving approval from all committee members, students submit their proposals to the GEC for feedback by a designated date in April. Committee approval can be conveyed through title page signatures and/or written notice of approval forwarded to the ADGS. The GEC will read and provide feedback on all proposals but the responsibility of final approval lies with the committee.

In order to remain in good standing in the English Ph.D. program, all students must have completed an approved proposal by the end of the spring semester of their third year. In rare cases, the Graduate Chair may approve a 1-month extension. In cases where a committee requires revisions, students must complete revisions to the satisfaction of their committee by the first day of classes of the fall semester.

**Dissertation Progress**

For full information on the Provost's Policies for Dissertation Progress, see: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/#dissertationcommittee>

In years 4, 5, and 6, Ph.D. students research and write their dissertations under the supervision of their dissertation committees.

Each summer, dissertating students are required to submit a Dissertation Progress Report, a brief summary of what they have accomplished in the preceding year and their plans for the upcoming year. This report is reviewed and approved by the student’s dissertation chair, their Graduate Chair, and the Graduate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and serves as an annual review of the student’s progress.

Dissertating students are required to meet with their dissertation advisor a minimum of once per semester to discuss their progress and any challenges or roadblocks they are facing. The advisor and the student should agree to deadlines for the submission of work and for the sharing of drafts with the full committee. Dissertating students are required to meet with their full committee at least once per year to discuss their progress and plans for the next year.

In their fourth year, students must present a draft of a dissertation chapter to one of the Departmental Working Groups. Students may propose alternative on-campus settings for the fourth-year WIP (e.g. the GSWS graduate colloquium) to the GEC for approval. All requests must be made by February 1st.

In their fifth year, students must present a twenty-minute conference-style version of another dissertation chapter in the annual departmental symposium, to take place in late spring.

Continuous registration as a graduate student is required unless a formal leave of absence is granted. Graduate students considering taking a leave of absence should consult the University's most current [Leave of Absence Policy](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/phdstudentleaveofabsence/) for guidelines and procedures.

**Dissertation Defense**

When the dissertation is near completion, the student and their committee will discuss scheduling the dissertation defense, the capstone event of the program. Students submit their completed dissertation to their full committee at least two weeks before the defense date, or by a date determined by the committee. In the defense, the student will present their work to a public audience, followed by a Q&A. The student will also meet with their committee privately to discuss the dissertation in response to the committee’s questions. The student will know the outcome by the end of the defense.

According to [university guidelines](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/), the defense will be chaired by the dissertation supervisor. At least three members of the dissertation committee must participate in the defense, and it is the expectation of the English Department that all committee members be present for the defense. In cases of an emergency, the Graduate Chair will assist in alternative arrangements. Defenses may be conducted in-person, virtually via video conferencing (e.g., Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams), or in a hybrid format with some individuals participating remotely and some in-person.

The defense is announced on the department listservs and calendar and consists of two parts. The public portion (1 hour) will be open to all faculty and students within the Graduate Group of English. Other guests of the student may attend. The public portion will consist of a 20-minute presentation by the student on the main arguments and chapter summaries of the dissertation, followed by a Q&A moderated by a member of the committee. The private portion (1 hour) consists of a conversation between the student and the committee members, which offers the opportunity for further questions, more detailed discussion, candid evaluation, recommendations for revision, and suggestions for future plans for publication.

Immediately after the private portion, the student will step out and the committee will confer to decide whether or not to ask for specific revisions before final submission. If revisions are deemed necessary, the committee may designate the committee chair as responsible for evaluating the revisions and approving the dissertation in its final form.

**Graduation**

The Provost’s [Graduate Degrees Office](mailto:https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/graduate-and-professional-education/graduate-degrees/) oversees the University graduation process for all PhD and Research Master’s degrees at the University. See the [website](mailto:https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/graduate-and-professional-education/graduate-degrees/) **for information on applying for graduation, deadlines, dissertation/thesis formatting, dissertation/thesis deposit, and more.**

**Information about school graduation ceremonies and University commencement is shared with graduating students each year, and can be found at** <https://commencement.upenn.edu/>**.**

**Annual Progress Reports and Evaluation**

University requirement: The dissertation committee is required to meet at least once annually with the PhD student to review the student’s progress. The student prepares an Annual Dissertation Progress Report and the committee gives timely feedback (within one month) and confirms whether progress is satisfactory. A copy of the signed progress report is submitted to the Dissertation Supervisor and Graduate Group Chair and is documented by the school in the student’s academic record.

SAS Graduate Division policy: All students must complete a written self-assessment and receive some form of written feedback every year. The nature of this process differs across graduate groups—from Individual Development Plans to detailed letters (in small groups), to brief forms that are completed by students and faculty.

English Department Policy: Beginning in January 2025, all Ph.D. students will be required to submit a self-assessment that asks them to reflect on their progress and achievements in the past year and to articulate plans for strengthening their performance in the coming year. The self-assessment will be completed via an online form and will be shared with the student’s advisor(s) for feedback, and with the graduate office.

The self-assessment is due the first day of classes in the spring semester.

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Teaching and Career Planning

**Teaching**

All Ph.D. students in English are required to complete one semester each of **grading,** serving as a Teaching Assistant **(TAing)**, and **teaching** a **One Series** courseas the instructor of record. Students are not required to teach in years 1, 3, and 5.

**Year 2**

In their second year, Ph.D. students serve for one semester as a grader for a lecture course or medium-sized seminar and for one semester as a teaching assistant for a large lecture course.

TAships and Graderships are longstanding opportunities for pedagogical training provided by the English for graduate students. Our Gradership Guidelines (**Appendix D: Gradership and TAship Guidelines**) outline duties and expectations of graders, and our TA Guidelines (**Appendix D: Gradership and TAship Guidelines**) outline the duties and expectations of teaching assistants.

As graders, students gain hands-on experience in providing effective feedback on undergraduate research and writing. Students also work closely with the faculty instructor to observe pedagogical practices, learn about course design and gain familiarity with the field or topic of the class.

As teaching assistants, students gain experience in providing instruction, fostering discussion, designing and grading assignments, and course administration. TAs attend all lectures during the week and then lead a section on Fridays.

These teaching assignments are built into the Ph.D. program and are conditions of the five-year funding packages, meaning that they do not include additional compensation. They are also treated as foundational learning experiences and are accompanied by extensive pedagogical training and support from faculty and peer advisors.

In the semester in which they TA, students will enroll in ENGL 8000, Pedagogy, taught by the instructor of the lecture course. This class functions partly as a TA meeting but also includes assignments to develop teaching skills, such as reading theoretical works about pedagogy. This course also guides students through preparing sample syllabi and a teaching philosophy statement in anticipation of for later teaching and potential job market.

**Years 3 and 4**

In the spring semester of their third year, Ph.D. students take a workshop to prepare to teach their One Series course. The One Series (TOS) courses are a requirement of the English major, which means that all of majors need to take at least one TOS section to complete the major. These seminars are designed to provide a semester-long in-depth study of a major work. With enrollment caps of approximately eight students, TOS courses address emergent research methods, advanced writing and critical thinking skills, and debates surrounding canonization. The selected work at the core of each TOS serves as both hub and entry point. Students will use it as a way to gain new access to a range of other primary and secondary texts, and to learn different ways that works can be interrogated, studied, questioned, reassessed. The TOS Workshop prepares students by having them submit course titles, course descriptions, syllabus drafts, and assignments for faculty and peer review, and by providing guidance on course administration and organization.

In their fourth year, Ph.D. students teach their TOS course. All TOS instructors are observed by the TOS Faculty Director and TOS Graduate Mentor, and meet regularly to discuss their seminar’s progress and any issues that arise.

**General** **Rules and Resources**

In general, students are required to complete their teaching requirements in the years specified above. In cases where a student has an academic reason for delaying one of their teaching requirements, they may write to the Graduate Chair and Undergraduate Chair to request that the requirement be delayed or an alternative arrangement be made. The most common reason for requesting a delay is receiving an external fellowship with service requirements that will make teaching at the same time challenging or that requires the student to be away from the department for the entirety of the year in question. The Graduate Chair will consider requests to delay teaching on a case-by-case basis and may consult the GEC and the Undergraduate Office. Please note: in cases where a student needs to takes medical, family, or military leave, the clock stops on their progress toward the degree and they will complete their teaching requirements according to their academic re-entry plan.

Guidelines for Graderships and TAships are included in the back of this handbook (**Appendix D: Gradership and TAship Guidelines**).

In addition to the pedagogical training and support offered by the department, Ph.D. students are encouraged to take advantage of Penn’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLI), which hosts workshops, mini-courses, and informational sessions about various topics in university teaching. CETLI can also arrange for a graduate fellow to observe a class session and offer feedback. After teaching their TOS, rising fifth-year Ph.D. students are eligible to be nominated for the CETLI Graduate Fellowship.

In cases where Ph.D. students in good standing (see **Academic Standing** policy below) want to take on additional work through teaching, TAing, or grading, they should discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of the work in question with their advisors. Whenever possible, additional work should contribute to the student’s career training. International students should also consult their Penn ISSS advisor about whether their visa allows them to take on additional work.

In cases where the department seeks to hire additional graders or TAs, an announcement with a description of the position, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and deadlines will be shared with all English graduate students. The Gradership Guidelines outlines the procedures the English Department uses for determining which courses will be assigned graders in a given semester.

**Career Planning**

The Penn English Department runs a comprehensive Job Placement Service and is committed to providing all of our graduate students with the advice, mentoring, and support they need in order to prepare themselves for a successful job search. The Department's Placement Officers, currently Abdulhamit Arvas and [Chi-ming Yang](https://www.english.upenn.edu/people/chi-ming-yang), assist job seekers in preparing CVs, application letters, dissertation abstracts, and teaching portfolios; help students to prepare for interviews and coordinates the dress-rehearsal mock interviews in which numerous faculty members participate; offer advice on campus visits and the selection and presentation of a job talk and/or teaching demo; coordinate practice job talks; and assist job seekers in negotiating the terms of an offer. The Placement Officers are also available to answer questions about the job market from graduate students at earlier stages of the program.

In addition to the job placement support provided by the department, all graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of the university’s Career Services office, which provides workshops and resources specifically tailored to graduate student career preparation, one-on-one consultations, and access to online career exploration tools. Career Services also runs a Career Exploration Fellowship (unpaid) for Ph.D. students that pairs fellows with a host organization for shadowing and gaining practical knowledge and experience of non-academic career paths.

Academic Good Standing

**Incompletes**

The following policy regarding incompletes is set by the Grad Division of the School of Arts and Sciences.

“A student who fails to complete a course will receive, at the instructor’s discretion, either a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure). It is expected that a student will complete the work of a course during the term in which that course is taken. The Graduate Division of Arts & Sciences permits an extension of up to one year for the completion of the course. Faculty are expected to grade completed work for a student receiving an incomplete in a timely manner. If the course remains incomplete after one calendar year from its end date, it will not be credited toward a degree.

Please note: This is different for students who have not finished their required coursework to begin dissertation registration. A one semester grace period is allowed for completion of incomplete courses needed to register for the first term of dissertation registration. This is less than the usual one-year extension.

Students will be placed on administrative leave if incomplete courses are not completed within one calendar year.”

In addition to this policy, the English Graduate Program sets the following rules and requirements for taking incompletes.

All students are permitted to take one long incomplete per academic year. More than one short incomplete may be requested in a single year, provided that the incomplete is resolved in a timely manner. Exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances, with approval from the student’s academic advisor and the Grad Chair.

For the purposes of our graduate seminars, **short incompletes** are defined as an extension of deadlines for assignments or other work that falls within the semester’s grading period (ex. an additional week on a final essay). In the case of short incompletes, the instructor expects to submit a letter grade for the student’s performance by the time that grades are due (early January for fall, mid-May for spring). Therefore, the extended deadline should allow the instructor time to review and grade the late assignment.

**Long incompletes** are defined as an extension of deadlines for assignments or other work that does not fall within the semester’s grading period. In this case, the instructor expects to submit an “I” as the student’s grade, which will remain on the student’s transcript until the incomplete is satisfied (or becomes a permanent incomplete).

Students planning to take an incomplete, short or long, are required to fill out a departmental Incomplete Form, signed by the student, the instructor, and the Grad Chair. The form should be turned in to the Graduate Chair and/or Associate Director of Graduate Studies. This form will not be kept in the student’s academic file, but is simply a way to ensure that lines of communication remain open in cases of incompletes and that all parties (student, instructor, and Grad Office) are clear on expectations and timelines. The Incomplete Form is available on the Canvas GradHub site.

In cases where incomplete requests pose a threat to a student’s progress – for example, if a student is requesting several short incompletes in a row – the Grad Chair may request to meet with the student or may request a written plan for satisfying the incomplete(s).

Ph.D. students must clear all incompletes from their records before being approved for the 50-Book Exam and Field Exam. Students with incompletes on their records will not be allowed to enroll in the Dissertation Proposal Workshop, or submit a dissertation proposal to the GEC for approval. Students with incompletes on their record will be ineligible for departmental travel funding or departmental support for other sources of funding for research and conference travel.

In unusual circumstances, exceptions may be granted with the approval of the student’s advisor and of the Grad Chair.

**Program Benchmarks**

Program benchmarks must be completed in order and in a timely manner. Students in coursework are informed in writing of their progress and of any lapse in good standing. Students in their 3rd year and above are expected to complete the field exam by the end of the fall semester and to complete the prospectus by the end of the spring semester. Dissertating students submit an annual report on their progress, which is reviewed by their advisor, the Grad Chair, and the Grad Dean. In rare cases, deadline extensions may be granted with the prior approval of the Grad Chair and the student’s advisor.

While the Graduate School permits long incompletes, no English Department benchmark or teaching assignment may be undertaken with incompletes on record or while a previous benchmark is outstanding.

Students should review eligibility requirements for funding and other opportunities, as they require good standing.

All first-year students must resolve any incompletes by June 1st in order to take the 50-Book Exam. All students taking Field Exams must resolve all incompletes by September 1st of their third year.

Students who are not in good academic standing are not eligible for the following:

* Departmental travel funding (e.g. the Stuart Curran fund, summer institute funding)
* Additional work opportunities hosted by the department (e.g. paid graderships)
* Serving as a working group coordinator
* Serving in other leadership positions in the department (exception: GEA)
* Completing the next benchmarks out of order. Students who have not completed their dissertation proposal, for example, may not begin their 4th-year teaching requirement.

Time to Completion

The university requires students to complete their degree within 10 years (20 semesters) of study. After 20 semesters, if the student has not completed their degree, they will be dropped from the program.

Withdrawals and Readmission

Students who are considering withdrawing from the Ph.D. program should first discuss their plans with their faculty advisor and dissertation committee, if applicable, and with the Grad Chair. Once plans are finalized, the student should submit written documentation of their plans to withdraw to the Graduate Office. At this time, the Graduate Office will supply additional details about the logistics of withdrawing.

Former students who withdrew after their dissertation proposal was approved (generally, years 4 and up) may petition to be readmitted for the purposes of completing, defending, and depositing their dissertation for the degree.

Petitions for readmission must be addressed to the current Grad Chair and the GEC. The former student should explain their reasons for seeking readmission and provide a detailed description of the dissertation​ completion to date and a detailed plan for any work left to be completed. The former student must also have the support of a dissertation supervisor and committee, who should attest in writing to the former student’s dissertation progress and the feasibility of their plan for completion.

If readmitted, the student will have one calendar year, without funding, to defend and file their dissertation. Because time is limited and enrollment will incur tuition and fees, former students should only petition for readmission once they are very close to completing their dissertation and defending.

Former students who withdrew before a dissertation proposal was approved are ineligible for readmission.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

The Ph.D. student Leave of Absence Policy is governed entirely by the Provost’s Office. For up to date information on this policy and procedures for applying for a leave of absence, please go to <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/phdstudentleaveofabsence/#:~:text=Leaves%20of%20absence%20from%20PhD,example%2C%20mandatory%20military%20service).> And <https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/graduate-and-professional-education/doctoral-students/#leave>

General Policies and Resources

The links below provide detailed information on policies set by the University Provost’s Office and the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences, as well as resources for graduate education and grievance reporting policies and resources.

**Policies:**

[Academic Rules for PhD Programs](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/)

[Academic Rules for Research Master's Programs](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-research-masters/)

[PhD Student Leave of Absence Policy](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/phdstudentleaveofabsence/)

[Family Friendly Policies for PhD Students](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/family-friendly-policies-phd-students/)

[Code of Academic Integrity](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/)

[Code of Student Conduct](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-student-conduct/)

[Guidelines for Addressing Academic Issues of Students with Disabilities](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/students-with-disabilities/)

[Guidelines for Student Protection in Sponsored Research Projects](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/protection-sponsored-research/)

[Fairness of Authorship Credit in Collaborative Faculty-Student Publications for PhD, AM, and MS Students](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/fairness-authorship-credit-collaborative-faculty-student-publications-phd-am-ms-students/)

[Policy on Secular and Religious Holidays](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/secular-religious-holidays/)

[Alcohol and Other Drug Policy](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/alcohol-drug-policy/)

[Sexual Misconduct Policy, Resource Offices and Complaint Procedures](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/)

[Evaluation and Certification of the English Fluency of Undergraduate Instructional Personnel](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/evaluation-certification-english-fluency-undergraduate-instructional-personnel/)

[All other policies for Penn students](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/)

**Resources:**

[University Academic Calendar](https://almanac.upenn.edu/penn-academic-calendar)

[Graduate Student Center](https://gsc.upenn.edu/)

[New Student Resources](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/new-students)

[Resources for PhD Students](https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/graduate-and-professional-education/doctoral-students/)

[Resources for Students with Children](https://familycenter.upenn.edu/)

[Academic Policies and Support](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/academic-policies-and-support)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/diversity)

[Engagement & Wellness](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/wellness)

[Funding & Finances](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/graduate-funding-and-finances)

[Safety and Campus Conduct](https://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/wellness/safety-and-campus-conduct)

International student resources – ISSS office

[Gender Neutral Restrooms](https://facilities.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/gender_map_5_3_lr.pdf)

**Grievance Reporting Policies and Resources:**

[Sexual Misconduct Policy, Resource Offices and Complaint Procedures](https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/sexual-misconduct-resource-offices-complaint-procedures/)

[Policy, Handbooks & Procedures of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs](https://oaaeop.upenn.edu/resources/policies-handbooks-procedures)

[Complaint Resolution, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs](https://oaaeop.upenn.edu/resources/complaint-resolution)

[Policies and Resources of Office of Student Disabilities Services](https://weingartencenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/disability-services/)

[Penn Violence Prevention Policies and Resources](https://pvp.universitylife.upenn.edu/)

**Confidential Resources:**

[Special Services, Division of Public](https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/about/special-services/) Safety (215-898-6600), 4040 Chestnut Street

[Penn Women’s Center](https://pwc.universitylife.upenn.edu/) (215-898-8611), 3643 Locust Walk

[Wellness at Penn](https://wellness.upenn.edu/) (215-746-3535), 3535 Market Street

[Counseling](https://wellness.upenn.edu/student-health-and-counseling/student-health-and-counseling-counseling) (215-746-9355), 3624 Market Street

[Office of the Chaplain](https://chaplain.upenn.edu/) (215-898-8456), 240 Houston Hall

[LGBT Center](https://lgbtcenter.universitylife.upenn.edu/) (215-898-5044), 3901 Spruce Street

[African American Resource Center](https://aarc.upenn.edu/) (215-898-0104), 3643 Locust Walk

[Office of Violence Prevention](https://pvp.universitylife.upenn.edu/#:~:text=Penn%20Violence%20Prevention%20(PVP)%20engages,support%20services%20and%20primary%20prevention.) (215-898-6081), 3611 Locust Walk

[Office of the Ombudsman](https://ombuds.upenn.edu/) (215-898-8261), 236 S. 34th Street

Funding

The Department of English recognizes the importance of financial support to students' success in the Ph.D. program. All admitted Ph.D. students are awarded identical 5-year funding packages, either through the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship or the William Fontaine Fellowship.

Both fellowships provide the following:

* 5 years of tuition
* 5 years of fees, including General and Clinical Fees
* 5 years of coverage under [Penn’s Student Health Insurance](https://wellness.upenn.edu/insurance-requirements/penn-student-insurance-plan-psip) (PSIP)
* 5 years of a competitive 12-month stipend for each academic year. The stipend for 2024-2025 is $41,800. The stipend is typically adjusted slightly for cost-of-living increases each year.
* Basic membership in Penn's athletic facilities

**Stipend Payments**

Stipends are paid on a monthly basis for either 10, 12, or 13 months, depending on the student’s year in the program and source of funding. The identical standard fellowships from the School of Arts and Sciences, the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship and the Fontaine Fellowship, are paid on a 12-month basis with the exception of the first year, when they’re paid over 13 months to allow students to be paid right after the start of classes. Students receiving other fellowships, including fellowships internal to the English Department, receive a 10-month fellowship at the university minimum. While this looks different for each student, a typical progression is shown below:

YEAR 1 Ben Franklin Fellowship $41,800 13 months (August - August)

YEAR 2 Ben Franklin Fellowship $41,800 12 months (September - August)

YEAR 3 Ben Franklin Fellowship $41,800 12 months (September - August)

YEAR 4 Ben Franklin Fellowship $41,800 12 months (September - August)

YEAR 5 Ben Franklin Fellowship $41,800 12 months (September - August)

YEAR 6 Auerbach Fellowship $39,425 10 months (September - June)

\*Note: this sample progression uses 2024-2025 figures does not take into account annual cost-of-living increases typically applied to stipends.

Stipend payments are made on the last business day (M-F) of the month via payroll. At the start of the program, students will complete an employee information form and subsequently go to the onboarding office to complete onboarding. All students will be signed up for direct deposit unless they prefer a check.

Students taking a sixth year to complete their dissertations apply to a range of internal and external competitive fellowships to fund their final year. We recognize that increasingly students are supported by yearlong fellowships rather than by teaching appointments, and in response, we have developed robust resources for preparing students for their applications, including workshops, a monthly funding digest, and a fellowship deadline calendar. See **Sixth-Year Funding** (**Appendix C: Sixth-Year Funding**) for more information.

The graduate stipend is intended to enable students to focus on completing program benchmarks and writing their dissertations in a timely manner. In cases where Ph.D. students in academic good standing want to take on additional work, they should discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of the work in question with their advisors. Whenever possible, the work should be aimed at strategically building the student’s resume and generating additional income without jeopardizing progress toward the degree. International students should also consult their Penn ISSS advisor about whether their visa allows them to take on additional work.

**Payslips**

All records related to stipends and any additional compensation earned on campus are accessible via Workday@Penn: <https://www.workday.upenn.edu/>

Students are responsible for checking their payslips regularly for accuracy, particularly if additional compensation is included in that month’s paycheck, and if taxes are withheld. Questions regarding payroll may be directed to the ADGS, who can refer the student to the appropriate office based on the specific issue. Students can navigate to the **Pay** tab to view and download monthly payslips.

Students can also view their tax documents in Workday.

**Travel Funding**

The Department of English has three sources of funding available to support graduate student research travel, including travel to academic conferences. Policies and application procedures for each fund are listed below, followed by a non-exhaustive list of travel funding sources offered by the School of Arts and Sciences and the university.

**All business travel at Penn is governed by Penn’s Travel & Entertainment Policy:** <http://www.finance.upenn.edu/comptroller/travel/>

**The Department of English defines research travel as travel undertaken for the express purpose of developing an academic project.** This may include primary research (e.g. library and archive visits, interviews, fieldwork), the development of ideas and knowledge base (e.g. working meetings with collaborators, summer institutes, training workshops), and presentation of research at academic conferences and workshops. The research activity should advance the student’s academic work, whether for a dissertation or another academic project. Creative projects must be connected to the student’s academic work and supported by the academic advisor to be eligible for departmental research travel funding.

Personal travel may be tacked on to research travel, but departmental funding may only be used for qualifying expenses related to research travel.

**Department Travel Funding Sources**

**Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel**

The Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel was established through the generosity of esteemed colleague [Stuart Curran](https://www.english.upenn.edu/people/stuart-curran), Professor of English from 1974 until his retirement in 2013. The fund honors Professor Curran's deep commitment to stimulating and guiding graduate student research.

Any graduate student (M.A. or Ph.D.) may apply to the Curran Fund to help defray costs of any research travel, up to $500 per fiscal year (July-June). Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Eligibility: All graduate students in good standing who have not maxed out their $500 limit in the current fiscal year (July-June) are eligible to apply. Students who apply for less than the $500 maximum will have the remainder of their allotment available until the end of the fiscal year. Annual allotments do not roll over from year to year.

Procedures: To apply for the Stuart Curran Fund, please visit<https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9yHaX2PYNwrG6eG>

Students must complete and submit the online form before the start date of their trip. Approval will be requested from the student's advisor (indicated on the form) and the Graduate Chair. Once approved, the AD of Graduate Studies will send the student an award letter by email and initiate the payment through Penn Marketplace. The process may take up to 2 weeks. There is no need to submit receipts at the end of the trip.

**Library Research Fund**

The Department allocates a modest budget to fund student travel for the purpose of library research. Students may apply for funds up to $250 per fiscal year (July-June). A maximum of ten students will receive these funds per year. Funds may be used to cover any eligible travel expenses they incur as part of their library research.

Eligibility:Any graduate students in good standing who has not applied for Library Research Funds this fiscal year is eligible to apply.

Procedures:To apply for the Library Research Fund, please visit:<https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bqQyiuKkVoxmn1s>

Students must complete and submit the online form before the start date of their trip. Approval will be requested from the student's advisor (indicated on the form) and the Graduate Chair. Once approved, the AD of Graduate Studies will send the student an award letter by email and initiate the payment through Penn Marketplace. The process may take up to 2 weeks. There is no need to submit receipts at the end of the trip.

**Approval will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis until the year's funds have been exhausted.**

**Summer Institute Fund**

The Department allocates a modest budget of $6000 (total) to fund Ph.D. student participation in summer scholarly institutes and other qualifying summer research activities.

The amount per award will depend on how many students apply in a given year and the amount they are requesting. The Department typically cannot fully fund everyone who applies fully, but will divide the funds equitably to partially fund all eligible applicants. Summer Institute Funding is stackable with other sources of travel funding, such as the Stuart Curran.

Eligibility: Any Ph.D. student in good standing who is attending a summer institute or has another qualifying summer research activity is eligible to apply.

Procedures: The Grad Chair and ADGS will send out application instructions early in the spring semester each year, along with the total amount of funding available.

**Other Travel Funding Sources**

**SAS Dean’s Travel Subvention**

The Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences provides travel funding for one trip per year to Ph.D. students to participate at academic conferences. Only Ph.D. students who are full-time School of Arts and Sciences graduate students in residence at the University are eligible to apply for these funds. Departmental approval is contingent on good academic standing.

Travel funds may be used to cover eligible travel expenses consistent with university policy. Expenses will be covered up to a maximum of $600.

For full eligibility information and application procedures, please visit:<https://www.sasgov.sas.upenn.edu/individual-funding>

**SASGov Research Grants**

The SASGov Research Grant is intended to fund multiple aspects of a student’s research project. This can include funding for research activities such as field campaigns, data acquisition, experiments and laboratory tests. Departmental approval is contingent on good academic standing.

Funds are limited and the applications are highly competitive. Applications will be assessed on the basis of need and merit. Funds are not guaranteed. The maximum award each applicant can receive is $2000.

Applications are accepted by specified deadlines throughout the year. For full eligibility information and application procedures, please visit:<https://www.sasgov.sas.upenn.edu/individual-funding>

**GAPSA Individual Grants**

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GAPSA) administer several research and travel awards each year. For full information, application procedures, and deadlines, please see: [**https://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/individual-grants**](https://www.gapsa.upenn.edu/individual-grants)

Departmental approval is contingent on good academic standing.

Appendix A: Mentoring Guidelines

The English Department believes that mentoring should not happen only one time, in one way, or with a single advisor and must be conducted according to clear and transparent guidelines, responsibilities, expectations, and record-keeping on each side. Mentoring must address each aspect of the graduate student’s academic and professional training and reflect the requirements for each benchmark and changing intellectual goals. For this reason, the Graduate Office, faculty, and students will engage in an ongoing consultative process throughout the degree.

Incoming MA and PhD students are assigned a faculty advisor by the Graduate Chair and a peer mentor by the Graduate Student Association. Students also meet individually with the Graduate Chair in the fall to plan for the first year and in the spring to discuss the 50-book exam and upcoming second-year responsibilities. For the field and dissertation committees, students select their own committees, and there is no expectation that committees remain the same from one benchmark to another or as scholarly and/or professional interests change. Peer mentoring continues throughout the degree and is critical at the Work-in-Progress presentation to a relevant Working Group in the fourth year. In addition to serving as a hub of intellectual and scholarly exchange, the Working Groups are mentoring opportunities for professional development in terms of administration, interactions with possible future employers and colleagues, and effective management of collegial collaborations.

The Graduate Office provides orientations for incoming graduate students and workshops for continuing students on academic and professional matters, as well as opportunities for faculty to discuss mentoring and advising.

The English department has two placement officers who work closely together to support students who seek a career in academia, outside of academia, or a combination of both.

**Expectations of the advisor**

Establish a shared set of expectations with your advisee regarding how frequently you will meet and how to manage communication between formal meetings. Per university policy, you are expected to meet at least once each semester. The advisee has the primary responsibility for scheduling meetings with you. Let your advisee know if your availability changes as a result of frequent travel, leave, administrative duties, or personal leave.

Ensure that your advisee meets with their dissertation committee each year or at time intervals indicated by the dissertation committee once the prospectus has been approved. The primary advisor/dissertation supervisor is expected to attend those meetings. As in the above, scheduling of dissertation committee meetings is the responsibility of the dissertator.

In your meetings, discuss your advisee’s plans to achieve programmatic milestones and short- and long-term goals. Help the advisee to establish priorities with regard to programmatic requirements, independent research, and writing. Students may neither undertake benchmarks (such as exams) nor serve in leadership positions in the GEA or Working Groups while they have incompletes on their records. Please discuss time-management strategies to avoid the need to request incompletes, except in cases of illness or other emergencies.

Although it is not the advisor's responsibility nor within their professional capacity to provide counseling with regard to health and well-being, advisors should make sure that their advisees are well aware of relevant resources available to them at Penn. These are listed in the Graduate Handbook or may be obtained from the Graduate Office.

Support your advisee’s efforts to build professional networks and to develop professional skills, including academic writing, public engagement, conference presentation, application to fellowship and grant programs, and participation in working groups. Help the advisee to assess the relative utility, with regard to professionalization, of various activities and forms of publication.

Provide timely feedback on your advisee’s research projects and dissertation chapter drafts. This feedback should ideally be expressed in written form and should provide detailed constructive criticism, especially if substantial issues emerge. Committees, where relevant, should decide with the student when or if feedback will be shared with the committee as a whole. In-person meetings are also recommended. If, for some reason, there will be a delay in providing feedback, discuss the timing of your response with your advisee.

As advanced advisees prepare for the job-search process, devote attention in your meetings and communications to the specificities of your discipline(s). Also alert your advisees to the job-placement meetings and resources of the English Department. Provide advice about preparation of letters and other application materials and submit your own letters of recommendation in a timely manner.

The advisor/advisee relationship should be characterized at all times by mutual respect, shared trust, and transparency. In the event that interpersonal issues arise that cannot be resolved between the advisor and advisee, the advisor should speak with the Graduate Chair of the program.

In some instances, a faculty member may decide that working with an advisee is impossible. In that event, the faculty member should notify the Graduate Chair of English and then the student to provide guidance regarding alternatives.

**Expectations of the advisee**

As an advisee, you should schedule regular individual meetings with your advisor / dissertation supervisor. At a minimum, you should meet once each semester. Use these meetings to discuss your progress towards programmatic milestones, independent research and writing, professional development, dissertation progress, and preparations for the job market. Discuss and establish your priorities and plans to achieve short- and long-term goals. Keep your advisor informed as your plans and projects change. Never be reluctant to ask questions. It is your responsibility to schedule these meetings. Leave your meetings with notes on a shared understanding of what was covered and a plan with dates, if appropriate.

Once your prospectus has been approved, schedule meetings with your dissertation committee annually or at time intervals indicated by the committee. As with the above, it is your responsibility to schedule these meetings.

Establish a timeframe for communications with your advisor, including how long it generally takes you to provide a response to their communications. Let your advisor know how you will ensure they will hear from you within the specified time.

If you encounter roadblocks to your progress or significant complications in your personal life, inform your advisor and/or the Graduate Chair of this delay as early as possible. Efforts will then be made to develop and implement a strategy to address the academic issues. Again, an advisor cannot serve as a counselor but may be a trusted presence who can refer you to relevant university resources. The Graduate Office can also provide referrals.

Occasionally, a student may wish to change their primary advisor. This may happen for any number of reasons. In that event, seek the advice of the Graduate Chair and other trusted faculty members to discuss whether a change is in your best interest. When you identify an alternative advisor, approach them to determine whether they are available and well-matched to help you achieve your educational and scholarly goals. Any change should be preceded by a meeting with the Graduate Chair and respectful communication with the current advisor.

The advisor/advisee relationship should be characterized at all times by mutual respect, shared trust, and transparency. In the event that interpersonal issues arise that cannot be resolved between the advisor and advisee, the advisee should speak with the Graduate Chair of the program.

Appendix B: Ph.D. Course Chart

**Required PhD Coursework to be completed by end of second year.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Requirement | Course | Semester Taken | Completed |
| Proseminar |  |  |  |
| Language Exams |  |  |  |
| 7000 Seminar 1 |  |  |  |
| 7000 Seminar 2 |  |  |  |
| 7000 Seminar 3 |  |  |  |
| 7000 Seminar 4 |  |  |  |
| 7000 Seminar 5 |  |  |  |
| Teaching Assistantship/ Pedagogy Workshop |  |  |  |
| Gradership |  |  |  |
| 50-Book Exam |  |  |  |

**Distribution Requirements**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Requirement | Course | Semester | Completed |
| Pre-1700 |  |  |  |
| 1700-1900 |  |  |  |
| Post-1900 |  |  |  |
| Literature of the Americas |  |  |  |
| Literature Outside Americas |  |  |  |
| Minority Literature |  |  |  |

**Additional Courses (for total of 14 for direct admits or 12 for MA-holders with 2 transfer credits)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course | Semester Taken | Complete/Incomplete | Notes |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Additional Requirements:**

Teaching:

* TOS workshop (spring 3rd year)
* 1 semester as an Instructor of Record for The One Series

Examinations:

* Qualifying Exam (the “50-Book Exam”)
* Candidacy Exam (the “Field Exam”)
* 2 foreign language exams

Dissertation Milestones:

* Dissertation Proposal Workshop (proposal approved by committee with feedback from GEC) due end of spring 3rd year)
* 1 Work-in-Progress (“WIP”) in 4th year
* 1 Work-in-Progress (“WIP”) in 5th year in Departmental Colloquium
* Dissertation defense
* Dissertation deposit

**Other topics:**

* Career Goals and how to prepare for them
* Available Fellowships and appropriate times to apply
* Membership in professional organizations
* Publications
* Service and leadership positions

Appendix C: Gradership and TAship Guidelines

### **Gradership Process at Penn English**

TA-ships and graderships are a longstanding part of the built-in forms of teaching opportunities the English department provides for our graduate students. This document aims to outline the procedures the English department uses for assigning graduate students to courses as graders and TAs.

**Grading and TAing in your Second Year:**

First, on the issue of nomenclature: the distinction between being a TA and a grader. At Penn English, only the ENGL 8000 Pedagogy seminar is assigned TAs, i.e. the graduate students enrolled in ENGL 8000 Pedagogy (a required course in the second year) are the TAs in the Pedagogy faculty instructor’s large lecture course being offered that semester. They attend the MW lectures, run a Friday recitation section, and grade the written work of the students in their section following the guidelines of that semester’s instructor. A class without recitation sections would have a Grader, not a TA. Graders attend class, grade a portion of the written work, and may hold office hours. Second-year graders and TAs do not receive additional compensation for this work; this service is an integrated part of the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship package they receive upon being admitted into the Penn English graduate program.

Second:  who grades and when.  At Penn English, the second-year grad cohort is divided into two groups.  One group serves as TAs for the Pedagogy course in the Fall and grades for individual classes in the Spring. The other group does the reverse.

How are second-year graders assigned to courses? After advance registration each semester (usually in mid-November and mid-April, respectively), the undergraduate office makes a list of courses that are large enough to justify a free grader but do not go over 40 (which would make that course eligible for a paid grader). As rule, we usually look for 20 and above, but this is an imperfect science. To be clear, because the second-year students are not paid, we do not have to observe the 40-student limit. This second-year gradership provides grads with teaching experience while also allowing them to work with a faculty instructor (to observe pedagogical practices, to experience from the instructor’s view how the various parts of a course are designed and articulated, to get to know a field/topic in more depth, etc).

With our list of courses in hand, the undergraduate office writes to the faculty instructors on the list and asks if they would be willing to take on a grader.  The finalized list of courses is then sent to the second-year grads, who return with their top three choices. We then try to give them their first or second choice, and then approach the instructors to confirm the arrangement. Once approved, the students are notified and they then discuss details of the gradership with the instructors; reading list, the grading process, etc. Grading is meant to basically be split right down the middle, with faculty instructor and grader sharing equal load. Because second-year Graders are taking a full program of courses, it’s important to make their tasks limited and specific.

**Paid Graderships**

Another category of graders is the group of advanced students (usually, but not always, ABD) who might, depending on that semester’s enrollments, be offered a list of larger courses for which they would be paid to serve as graders. The Dean’s Office, not the department, sets strict minimums on the size of classes that can have paid graders.  A course with 40 or more students can have one paid grader, a course with 60 or more can have two. Grads who would like to grade for a course must receive approval from their dissertation chair to be assigned as a grader during their dissertating years. Those interested in grading also have to make sure that the terms of their fellowship allow service work (e.g. some external fellowships do not allow service). The current stipend for this type of Grader is $3,300 (note that this amount is imposed by the College).

How we assign paid graderships: we depend on high enrollment numbers to assign paid graderships. We closely monitor the results of advance registration—for the upcoming Spring term, results come in around mid-to-late November; for the upcoming Fall term, results come in around early-to-mid April)—to determine which courses are eligible to have paid graders. With this course list in hand, the Grad Chair and the Undergrad Chair send out a call for applications to the grad listserv. We request:

* a CV
* a ranking of which courses they would like to grade for
* a very brief rationale for their choice and fitness for the role.

In consultation with the instructors of the courses in question, we then make a final selection that meets everyone’s preferences and schedules. The Undergraduate Chair then sends out a hiring letter for the grad student to sign—this signed letter is then sent to the business office to arrange for payment ($3,300 per gradership).

On occasion, a faculty member from a department or program other than English asks one of our graduate students to serve as their TA/grader for a course. The department is open to such arrangements, as long as the student obtains permission from their dissertation chair and from the Grad chair. Note that in such arrangements, the stipend for the TA/grader must come exclusively from the outside department/program (or individual resources) of the faculty member making the request.

Note: We ask faculty not to make private arrangements with students in advance.  Any exception can lead to inequity and discord among both faculty and graduate students. If a faculty member wishes to be assigned a specific grader, we ask that they first get in touch with the Executive Committee before approaching the grader in question so that a fair and transparent arrangement can be discussed. In turn, grads should also refrain from making private arrangements with faculty outside of the above process.

**Compensation and Duties for English Department Graders:**

Graders hired to assist with English Department courses are paid $3,300.00 per course. Graders’ working hours not exceed 15 hours per week, averaged across the full semester. This average includes not only time spent grading, but also class meetings, time on email, reading/prep time, administrative tasks, meetings with students and/or the professor, etc. The specific duties of graders may include any of the following:

* Attend all class meetings
* Read all assigned material
* Grade and comment on student assignments by the deadline set by the primary instructor (assignments to be evenly divided among instructor and grader; e.g. in a course with one grader, the assignments should be divided evenly between primary instructor and grader,while in a course with three graders and a professor the assignments would be evenly divided by four)
* Hold office hours or review sessions to help students to prepare for papers, quizzes, exams, and other assignments or required material
* Help write assignments, paper prompts, or exams
* Help to administrate, set up, and maintain any online resources for the course
* Keep track of attendance and grades
* Lecture for all or part of a single class meeting

At the beginning of the semester, the primary instructor for a course should meet with all course graders to outline specific duties and expectations. If a professor needs his/her graders to perform duties not mentioned above, s/he must 1) ensure that these duties will not require graders to work more than 15 hours per week, averaged across the full semester; 2) clearly describe the duties to the graders; 3) receive the graders’ agreement to take on these additional duties.

**Working with TAs: Guidelines for Faculty**

Student TAs are teachers in training, and TAships are a crucial step in the preparation of students to take independent responsibility for courses of their own design. The primary goal of the TAship is pedagogical training and professional mentoring. For many students, the TAship will be the first classroom experience as an instructor. The following guidelines are designed to support a successful mentoring and a rewarding working experience:

* Before the first class, review the syllabus with the TAs, clearly outlining teaching goals and expectations. Discuss in advance all tasks that will be the responsibility of the TAs in relation to the lecture, sections (if applicable), office hours, grading, and any planning meetings. Identify important dates, deadlines, and anticipated absences.
* TAs share in grading but do not have responsibility for all the grading for the course. To support a shared grading practice that helps TAs learn best practices and ensures consistency across sections, consider a norming exercise where the instructor and TAs grade the same small selection of papers and then discuss how to align grades and written feedback for the course.
* Since a TA is not simply a grader, try to provide opportunities to engage in as many different aspects of the teaching process as is possible. These may include discussions of course-planning, effective strategies for lecturing, leading discussions, time-management, and navigating conflict. TAs may lead a regular recitation section, give one or two lectures, design and implement an activity, etc.
* TAs must not be taxed with excessive work burdens or sudden, short deadlines to accomplish work. In general, a TA should be expected to perform about 10-12 hrs. of work per week for a course, on average, including class time.
* While TAs are required to attend class meetings, it is anticipated that they may need to miss a class or two to attend professional meetings, to meet unavoidable requirements of courses in which they are enrolled, for religious observances, or for illness.
* Have a plan for emergencies.

**Working as a TA: Guidelines for Students**

The TA-instructor relationship supports both pedagogical training of the TA and the instructor’s educational goals for the course. TAs should take their responsibilities seriously, complete assignments fully and on time, communicate promptly with students and the instructor, and be a constructive member of the team led by the instructor. The TAship is a supportive setting for developing teaching expertise and confidence, while benefiting from one of the most rewarding aspects of academia.

* TAs commit to the responsibilities that come with the role of educator: to show up to classes, office hours, and scheduled meetings on time; to communicate with students in a timely manner; and never miss class, except for exceptional professional, religious or personal needs that have been agreed to in advance by the instructor.
* In teaching undergraduates, TAs understand that they are engaging with students who are not their peers. TAs set a tone of mutual respect and strive for equity and fairness in all interactions.
* TAs respect the confidentiality of student information and do not discuss student performance or other personal information with anyone beyond the instructor, the other course TAs as necessary, and administrators as appropriate.
* TAs take full advantage of this learning experience by reaching out to the instructor for help and advice in a timely fashion.

**The Grad Division of the School of Arts and Sciences sets the following Principles for Graduate Teaching and Mentoring:** <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/graduate-division/current-students/principles-graduate-teaching-and-mentorship>





Appendix D: Working Group Guidelines

Working Groups fulfill multiple functions in the English Department. In addition to serving as a

hub of intellectual and scholarly exchange across cohorts and faculty working in similar fields or

topics, the Working Groups provide frameworks for interactions with scholars from other

institutions. Working Groups foster scholarly community among graduate students and faculty in a

given field by hosting a variety of events, including reading groups, workshops by participants and

invited guests, and work-in-progress sessions (WIPs) required of fourth-year doctoral students.

As intellectual forums, Working Groups give all participants the chance to exchange ideas, feedback,

and advice. As professional endeavors, they provide their graduate student coordinators with

practical administrative experience relevant to both academic and non-academic careers. And as

undertakings in which several cohorts of graduate students work closely with one another and with

faculty, they offer important mentoring opportunities.

The following guidelines assist in these goals by clarifying and simplifying the steps for conducting

Working Group activities.

* The Graduate Office will set up Box Folders for each Working Group (WG), which will contain these guidelines, a spreadsheet populated with formulas for tracking expenses, checklists for tasks, a timeline, and templates for communications. These folders will also serve as repositories for handbooks and any documentation to be handed down from year-to-year. Coordinators are encouraged to add and maintain materials from past events that will help them to articulate the group’s emphasis, scope, and impact to future members and future employers.
* Each WG should set up a mechanism for making decisions, whether by consensus, majority, or supermajority vote.
* Each WG must have at least one Faculty Mentor (FM). The mentor is responsible for discussing programming, serving as a resource, and attending the WG’s invited lectures. Any WG without a FM in a given academic year will be dormant and not receive funding for that year. This is a return to pre-COVID practices. For any WG with difficulty in securing a FM, the Graduate Chair will advise on potential avenues for moving forward.
* All working groups should ideally have two or three coordinators. A single Working Group Coordinator (WGC) may run a group, but in that case the number of events should be adjusted to help manage the workload.
  + To receive the allotted departmental funding, WGCs must be registered English Department Ph.D. students in good standing. Exception: BCSC is a joint group with Africana, so the WGC may be from English or Africana Studies.
  + All WGCs must be in the third-year or above. First and second-year students may not serve as WGCs. Second-year students who anticipate taking leadership positions in the third year must limit any involvement beyond attendance at events to observation and training. They may neither have sole ownership of administrative responsibilities nor run events by themselves, although they may assist for practice.
  + Working Groups are extracurricular in nature and therefore should not be prioritized over curricular requirements (coursework, exams, dissertation progress, teaching, fellowship and job applications, etc.). WGCs must be in good standing. If a WGC has incompletes on their record or has missed benchmark deadlines, they will be asked to enlist an eligible graduate student or faculty delegate to take over any outstanding responsibilities. This step will permit such WGCs to focus on completing their missed work.
  + Any WG that does not meet these conditions will be dormant and not receive funding for that year. (This, too, is a return to pre-COVID practices.)
* All official invitations to external speakers must be on the FM’s letterhead according to the provided template and honorarium schedule, sent from the FM’s UPenn email, and copied to the WGC and the Business Coordinator. The signed invitation with requested information must be returned to the FM, WGC, and Business Coordinator, copying the Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS), as soon as possible so that speakers may be onboarded before the visit, ensuring timely payment and/or reimbursement and proper attention to complexities of international payments. These letters are contracts and, according to university regulations, cannot be signed by students. This approach fosters familiarity with the conventions of professional communication and reduces the labor for WGCs. These official invitations may follow initial emails between the WGC and the external speaker that tender the invitation and address scheduling, talk titles, etc. These initial emails are non-binding but should still be formal in tone, and they should indicate that official invitations will follow from the FM. Sample templates for these initial emails will be provided.
* Wherever possible, travel arrangements will be made through Concur to limit the need for reimbursements. ADGS can book flights directly through Concur and pay for Amtrak tickets. External speakers who prefer to drive or take local transportation will receive reimbursement for mileage and/or other travel costs according to Penn’s policies.
* All WGCs must complete the Working Group Coordinators Orientation before the first invitation is sent so as ensure familiarity with each step and avoid unnecessary labor or delays in payments. Subject to adjustment, there will be an orientation offered in June, and another in late August or early September.
* WGs should coordinate so that there will be no more than one event per week involving an external speaker in order to create conditions for robust audiences. There is no scheduling restriction on any WG activity internal to the English Department.
* A fair and transparent scheduling process will be developed in consultation with the WGs and GEA.
* With a minimum 1-week notice, WG event dinners held in the department can be charged

directly to the ADGS’s department credit card. So that graduate students do not incur expenses for which they must await reimbursement, dinners held off-campus should be charged to the FM’s (or another faculty member’s) credit card.

* A $500 honorarium for invited external faculty speakers will be standardized across WGs. (In accordance with University policy, honoraria may not be offered to Penn faculty or graduate students.) FMs should be cc’d on initial emails to invited speakers so that they can navigate any requests for negotiation of the honorarium.
* For events that may require a larger honorarium (special lectures, symposiums, keynotes, conferences, etc.), the WGC and/or the FM may request an exception from the GEC, which will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.
* Where a WG is co-sponsoring an event that is not primarily housed in English (a Material Texts meeting, for example), the standardized honorarium need not apply.

**Checklist**

June-July

* WG meets to determine leadership and FM. Some WGs already may have mechanisms for

doing this already in place (e.g., elections or a succession plan). In the future, groups are

encouraged to begin the process of determining leadership, in consultation with the FM

and/or the group’s members, by the end of the preceding academic year.

* WGC provides these names to GEA and Graduate Office.
* WGC and FM receive access to Box Folder and listserv.
* WGC completes WGC orientation.
* WG and FM determine programming for the year in consultation with WG members. This

plan should include any WIPs by current fourth-year graduate student members, events that

require additional time and planning (such as the Phyllis Rackin Lecture), and invited

speakers whose work reflects the interests of your membership.

August-September

* WGCs in conjunction with the GEA Scheduling Coordinator populate the calendar so that

there is no more than one invited speaker per week.

* WGC and FM develop a budget for events that does not exceed the annual amount allotted

to each working group (currently $2,500). Co-sponsorship can be helpful. Using the

provided spreadsheet, WGCs are responsible for completing, updating, and maintaining an

official budget in PennBox that includes all planned and actual costs.

* WGCs create the non-binding invitation and use it to initiate contact with potential speakers,

copying FM.

* WGC and FM draft the invitation letter so that FM may send it out, copying WGC and

Business Coordinator.

Following Speaker Confirmation

* WGC is responsible for making sure that the Business Coordinator (cc to ADGS) receives the signed letter with requested information before any travel arrangements are made.

Immediately Following Event

* WGCs must send the Business Coordinator and the Business Office (cc to ADGS) the necessary paperwork for invited speakers to be reimbursed for travel expenses

Appendix E: Sixth-Year Funding

Ph.D. students who will take a sixth year to complete their dissertations should plan well in advance to secure an additional year of funding. Many fellowships, both internal and external to Penn, are available exclusively to students entering their final year of dissertation writing. Students will apply for these in their fifth year. Other fellowships are available to students at earlier stages of their graduate careers, and students may apply for them prior to their fifth year. The School of Arts and Sciences permits Ph.D. students to “bank” a year of their regular fellowship funding if another yearlong fellowship is awarded prior to Year 6, which effectively gives the student a sixth year of funding when they use their banked year. We highly recommend that Ph.D. students seek out these opportunities earlier in the program as well as in the fifth year.

While sixth-year funding is not provided by SAS, the English Department has traditionally been successful in assisting students to obtain a sixth year of funding through a combination of SAS-sponsored, external fellowships, and departmental support. On average, six to seven graduate students enter the sixth year with SAS or external fellowships. While English graduate students have been extraordinarily competitive for SAS and external fellowships, not every deserving applicant will receive one, and so the department works to fund the remaining students. The fellowship credits to support these students derive from the Graduate Office’s careful management of its budget of fellowship credits for incoming students. For at least the last 4 years, the Graduate Office has seen all students funded in their sixth year.

The success of this system rests on the cooperation of the graduate students, who must apply for as many fellowships as possible throughout their funded years, coupled with that of each year’s faculty admissions committee, who must adhere to limits on the incoming class size. The English Graduate Office does not have adequate fellowship credits to fund an entire 6th-year class ourselves, so it is important that all graduate students apply widely for other opportunities to reduce the number of credits needed.

Incoming students are given until April 15th to accept an offer for admission, and we are committed to funding students who accept our offer. The varying deadlines for responses to fellowship applications, along with the April 15th deadline for admissions decisions, mean that 5th-year students may not have a definite answer on sixth-year funding until May. We regret that there is so much uncertainty in this process, but the steps we take are calculated to give us the best chance of funding everyone. Applying for competitive fellowships is a path to the security of guaranteed funding and is a way of creating opportunity for your fellow 6th-years.

These applications also provide excellent training in persuasive grant writing, a valuable skill in both academic and non-academic careers. To support students as they acquire that skill, we have developed and continue to refine our departmental resources, including a panel on identifying fellowships, grant writing workshops, where students share materials and receive constructive feedback from their peers and faculty, a Fellowship Deadlines Google Calendar, and a monthly Funding Digest, a newsletter that provides educational content on grant writing and list of upcoming application deadlines.

We also strongly encourage Ph.D. students to apply for relevant research funding in the form of short-term fellowships, usually offered by libraries or external endowments. Not only do these short-term fellowships provide students with opportunities to undertake exciting archival research, but they tend to increase students’ chances of receiving future fellowships and funding.