

## **English MA Program Policies and Procedures**

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### **Admission Criteria**

Application for admission is obtained from the Graduate School, Director of Admissions and Records. An application form also is available on the website of the Graduate School.

Admission is contingent upon meeting the following requirements:

1. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, or proof of equivalent training at a foreign university;
2. The necessary English course requirements (see the [Graduate Catalog](#));
3. An undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 in English and 3.0 overall;
4. A GRE aptitude score of at least 300 (verbal plus quantitative), the verbal score of which must be at least 160;
5. Three acceptable letters of recommendation;
6. A writing sample of 15-20 pages;
7. Approval of the Graduate School.

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

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

### **Degrees Offered**

The Department offers the Master of Arts in English Literature. The M.A. program consists of a thesis track and a non-thesis track (see below). The student considering the non-thesis track must realize that the thesis track is regarded as the much preferred one by most

graduate faculty in English departments, if the student plans to apply for the Ph.D. program at Baylor or elsewhere.

### **Total Number of Hours Required**

For the student electing to pursue a thesis track, the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. Completion of 30 semester hours of graduate credit constitutes the minimum requirement;
2. Six hours of the 30 are credited for the thesis;
3. A defense of the thesis constitutes the oral examination.

For the student electing to pursue a non-thesis track, the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. Completion of 33 semester hours of graduate credit constitutes the minimum requirement;
2. A focus on Baylor graduate coursework constitutes the oral examination (see below).

Transfer of no more than 6 semester hours from an accredited institution may be allowed (see Graduate Catalog for conditions).

Residence of at least nine months is required--i.e., one academic year, three summers, or a combination of a fall academic semester and a summer residency.

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

### **Specific Course Requirements**

At least 18 hours of graduate credit in the major area of study (i.e., in English and American literature).

Students electing to pursue the *thesis option* shall take English 5304 (Bibliography and Research Methods) and one additional course drawn from the fields of literary theory/criticism, linguistics, rhetoric and composition theory, and principles of teaching writing.

Those wishing to concentrate on *creative writing* must take at least two courses (six hours) in creative writing. This will fulfill the requirements for a minor (see below).

Students electing to pursue the *non-thesis option* shall take a minimum of two courses drawn from the fields of bibliography and research methods, literary theory/criticism, linguistics, rhetoric and composition theory, and principles of teaching writing.

All coursework must be graduate-credit conferring. (See Graduate Catalog.)

### **Minor**

Although a minor is not required, one is possible. The minor, consisting of six hours of graduate credit, may be taken inside the department (i.e., in an area other than English and American literature -- such as creative writing, linguistics, literary criticism, etc.) or outside the department (i.e., in history, philosophy, etc.). A minor outside the department must be

directly relevant to the candidate's area of study. The minor must be agreed upon with the advice and consent of both the Graduate Program Director in the Department of English and the chairperson of the department in which the minor is to be taken.

### **Language**

The foreign language requirement of intermediate proficiency in one language may be satisfied by any of the five methods designated in the Graduate Catalog (see "Specific Degree Requirements: Master of Arts"). Note: if option 1 is chosen, the course must have been taken no more than five years before the student was accepted into the Baylor graduate program.

### **Admission to Candidacy**

Admission to candidacy for the master's degree is automatically approved by the Graduate School when the student has completed approximately one-half of the course of study. The candidate must have maintained a "B" (3.0) average for admission to candidacy.

### **Writing Expectations**

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

### **The Thesis**

The thesis-track candidate must present an acceptable thesis on a problem in the field of his/her major subject. This thesis must give evidence that the candidate has pursued a program of research, the results of which reveal both superior technical competence and a significant contribution to knowledge.

Work on the thesis may formally begin when the student has completed 12 hours of graduate work, has selected the thesis committee (consisting of the director from his/her area of special interest, another Graduate Faculty member of the department, and a third member (Graduate Faculty) from outside the department), and has had the topic formally approved by the thesis committee. This committee is responsible for guiding the student's research and approving the final draft of the thesis. The director of the thesis serves as chair of the thesis committee. To file the departmental Thesis Committee Form (which includes the names of the committee members and the title for the thesis as soon as they are determined), the student should see the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the English office.

If desired, the student who has demonstrated exceptional ability in creative writing may produce a creative thesis in lieu of a research thesis. All requirements and deadlines pertaining to the research thesis also apply to the creative thesis. As with the research thesis, the student may begin work on the creative thesis after completing 12 hours of graduate work, selecting a thesis committee, and having the project approved by the thesis committee.

For the formal requirements regarding the thesis, including deadlines for submission of the manuscript, the technical requirements of the manuscript (see the most recent edition of the MLA Handbook; Macintosh Palatino 12 point font or IBM Palisade 12 point font is required), the abstract, binding costs, and research course requirements, see the Graduate School Guidelines available in the English Office. Students are reminded that the MLA Handbook was not designed to guide the construction of a thesis; therefore the Graduate School specifications regarding preliminary pages, chapter format, and other thesis-specific characteristics must be used in conjunction with the MLA guidelines.

### **Application for Degree**

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

### **Oral Examination**

#### **Thesis track:**

The candidate must undergo a thesis defense after all of the above requirements have been satisfied in order to justify the topic and approach chosen, to demonstrate familiarity with methods of research, and to display a capacity for independent thought.

The candidate should arrange the time of the examination with the chair of the thesis committee and secure approval of the date from the Graduate School. Deadlines for examinations are published each semester by the Graduate School. Responsibility lies with the student for both establishing the time of the examination and making sure members of the thesis committee can attend. A minimum of three graduate faculty members (ordinarily the thesis committee) must be at the defense (i.e., the Director of the thesis, the second reader, and the third reader who is from outside of the Department of English). See the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the English office to make these arrangements. The Announcement of Master's Oral Examination form specifying the date must be sent to the Graduate School at least ten days before the defense. Also, the Director must take the Results of Oral Examination form to the defense and have the three members present sign it at the conclusion of the defense.

#### **Non-thesis track:**

The candidate must undergo a one-hour oral examination after all of the above requirements have been satisfied in order to demonstrate mastery of the field and capacity for independent thought.

The examining committee will be made up of a minimum of four faculty members (at least three from the English Department) with a terminal degree and who have taught the candidate. The fourth member will be a Graduate Faculty member from outside the English Department. All four committee members must be present. One professor shall be designated as chairperson of the examining committee and shall assist the candidate in forming an examining committee and discussing possible test content.

The candidate should arrange the time of the examination with the chairperson of the examining committee and secure approval of the date from the Graduate School. Deadlines for oral examinations are published each semester by the Graduate School. Responsibility lies with the student for both establishing the time of the examination and making sure an examining committee is assigned. See the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant in the English office to make these arrangements. The Announcement of Master's Oral Examination form specifying the date must be sent to the Graduate School at least ten days before the examination. Also, the Chairperson must take the Results of Oral Examination form to the oral and have the four members present sign it at the conclusion of the oral.

The content of the oral examination will consist of questions covering major works, figures, periods, and concepts from the student's Baylor coursework. At the candidate's request, professors may provide general information prior to the examination about the range and scope of questions they expect to ask. The student is expected to

demonstrate competence in each of the areas examined and to engage in an intellectually informed conversation with his/her professors.

A candidate who fails the oral examination may take a second examination only with the approval of the departmental graduate committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. In no case will this examination be given in the same semester as the original examination. If the candidate fails twice, no further examination will be allowed.

**Time Limitation**

The maximum time limit allowed is five years from the date that the student is first enrolled in the master's program at Baylor University. The student may petition for an extension of time provided there are extraordinary circumstances. The maximum time permissible may not exceed six years.