



English Graduate Guidelines

2020 - 2021

308 Morrill Hall

MA in Option in
Professional Writing

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MA in English Rhetoric and Writing Studies

The MA in English with an option in Professional Writing consists of 30 credit hours (with thesis) or 33 credit hours (non-thesis). In addition to these hours, students must fulfill the language requirement and pass the MA Qualifying Examination in MA English – Option in Professional Writing. A description of the degree requirements and regulations appears on the following pages.

Students must complete all requirements for the MA degree within seven years from their first enrollment in the courses for the MA program

Application and Admission

Admission to the MA program in English with Professional Writing Option requires a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited institution of higher learning. Other qualifications and application materials appear below. Applicants should be mindful that meeting the minimum standards for admission *does not* guarantee admission.

All students will apply through the Graduate College website: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/apply/>. All of the required documents and materials will be uploaded to the electronic application

Application Qualifications and Required Materials

- **GPA** Applicants should have an undergraduate grade-point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, particularly in English courses.
- **Undergraduate Major** Applicants for the MA in English with an option in Professional Writing usually have an undergraduate major in English (at least 24 hours beyond Freshman Composition) or a related field. In addition, students should demonstrate a background in some technical area through work experience, course work, or a combination of these.
- **Recommendations** Applicants must submit two letters of recommendation
- **Statement of Purpose** Applicants must submit a written statement of approximately 250 words that identifies a proposed area of study, reasons for undertaking graduate study in this area, relevant work experience, and future career plans.
- **Writing Sample** Applicants must submit a writing sample: a 7 to 15 page paper written for an upper-level course in an appropriate area of study.

The GRE exam is not required but students who have GRE scores are encouraged to submit them.

English Proficiency (non-native speakers)

Please note: The English Department admission requirements are **HIGHER** than Graduate College admission requirements.

Applicants who are not native speakers of English *must* submit current scores from one of the following:

- **TOEFL ibt** – minimum overall score of 100, with minimum reading and writing subskill scores of 26
- **TOEFL** (paper-based) - minimum overall score of 600
- **IELTS** - minimum overall score of 7.0, with minimum reading and writing band scores of 7.0

Please refer to the English Department website at: <http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/applications-and-admissions> , for more information.

Students are admitted to the MA English program with Professional Writing Option. If a student wishes to move from one area of specialization to another (such as from MA Professional Writing to the general MA in English) the student must submit an application to the English Graduate Office and receive approval for that change from the Admissions Committee. The application must include a new statement of purpose and a new writing sample, which will be considered along with the rest of the student's graduate file. Since this application will be an internal English Department matter, students will not have to pay an application fee. If the Admissions Committee does not grant the request, the student will still have the option of continuing in the area of specialization into which he or she was admitted.

Graduate College Rules and Regulations

There are many rules and regulations affecting graduate enrollment, tenure, examinations, theses, and dissertations that are made by the Graduate Faculty of Oklahoma State University rather than the English Department. Among the rules students should familiarize themselves with are those governing academic dishonesty or misconduct, especially those dealing with plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to become informed about all English Department, Graduate College, and University regulations.

The Oklahoma State University Catalog should be read closely by all those who are considering, or participating in, graduate studies in English at Oklahoma State University. Copies are available online at: <https://registrar.okstate.edu/University-Catalog>.

Advisor and Advisory Committee

All graduate students select an individual advisor and an advisory committee to guide them in completing their degrees.

Advisor: Students are encouraged to choose an advisor by the end of their first semester of course work, but if that is not possible, students should select an advisor by the end of their first year of graduate study. An advisor of an MA student may be any member of the graduate faculty of the English Department; in most cases, the advisor has expertise in the subject matter area in which the student plans to specialize.

Advisory Committee: The advisory committee will normally consist of the student's major advisor as committee chair and at least two additional members of the English Department's graduate Faculty.

Changes: To change an advisor and or advisory committee, go to: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html> and then to Plan of Study link

Students are responsible for resident tuition for all courses taken in excess of this limit and for all fees.

Plan of study

A plan of study is a listing of course work the student intends to take for completion of the degree and as estimated time schedule. The student must develop the plan with his/her advisor and advisory committee. The Graduate College requires MA students to file a plan of study with the Graduate College before completing the 17th hour of graduate credit. A hold is automatically placed on the registration of any student attempting to enroll beyond 17 hours who does not have a plan of study approved by the Graduate College.

Planning Meeting: *Prior to the end of the second semester of full-time enrollment*, students must schedule a meeting with their advisory committee. During that meeting, the student and their committee will discuss the student's preparation, professional goals, and the plans for graduate study. The student and committee should agree upon:

- A plan of Study
- Fulfillment of the language requirement
- Tentative plans for the MA Qualifying Examination
- Tentative plans for the thesis

Creative Component: The course used as a creative component must be designated with an asterisk on the plan of study.

Submitting the Plan of Study: Following the plan of study meeting, the student will complete and submit the plan of study online at: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html> and the advisory committee and the Graduate Director will sign electronically.

Changes: Changes to the plan of study can be made with the approval of the advisory committee. A revised plan should be submitted to the Graduate College *at the beginning of the intended semester of graduation*. Changes can be made here: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>.

Ten Year Rule: A final plan of study may not include any course more than ten years old at the time of actual graduation.

Checklist for Plan of Study

- Minimum of 30 hours for thesis option, or 34 hours for non-thesis option, beyond baccalaureate degree
- Minimum of 16 hours in English
- At least 21 hours of course work at the 5000/6000 level at OSU
- All courses must be taken for graduate credit
- No more than 9 hours of course work taken as a special student or transferred from another institution
- No course work may be included if it was previously used to complete requirements for another degree.
- The plan of study must be signed electronically by the advisor, committee members and the Graduate Director.

Timeline Check

By the end of the second semester of enrollment the student must have:

- Chosen an advisor in Rhetoric and Writing Studies area of study
- Chosen the advisory committee and submitted the Departmental Advisory Form: <http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-forms> to the English Graduate Office
- Met with the committee and discussed plan of study
- Filed plan of study (online at the Graduate College <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>).

Course Requirements

The MA in English Rhetoric and Writing Studies offers two course requirement plans: thesis and non-thesis. The following requirements govern these options.

Thesis Plan: Students take 30 semester hours, including six credit hours of thesis.

Non-Thesis Plan: Students take 34 semester hours, including a three-credit internship and a one credit-hour Independent Study course. They write a creative component, an article-length paper, or research project, as part of this course.

Required Courses: Regardless of whether the opt for the thesis or non-thesis approach, Professional Writing students are expected to complete 18 semester hours of required course work and to fulfill total hour requirements from among the elective courses available. The proposed program of work is planned in consultation with the student's advisory committee.

Required Course Listing (18 hours):

Rhetoric and Writing Studies Core Courses:

- ENGL 5593 Seminar in Style and Editing
- ENGL 5553 Studies in Visual Rhetoric and Design
- ENGL 5523 Genres in Professional Writing
- ENGL 5340 Studies in Discourse Analysis

Six hours from the following:

- ENGL 5353 Studies in the History of Rhetoric
- ENGL 5560 Seminar in Professional Writing
- ENGL 6350 Topics in Rhetorical Theory
- ENGL 6500 Topics in Professional Writing

Creative Component:

- ENGL 5210 Directed Study (one credit hour)
- ENGL 5520 Internship in Professional Writing

Thesis:

- ENGL 5000 Thesis

Sample Electives:

Professional Writing:

- ENGL 5013 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- ENGL 5223 Teaching Professional Writing

- ENGL 5560 Seminar in Professional Writing (various topics)
- ENGL 6500 Topics in Professional Writing (various topics)

Composition:

- ENGL 5213 Composition and Pedagogy

Linguistics:

- ENGL 5143 Descriptive Linguistics
- ENGL 5123 Approaches to Language Acquisition
- ENGL 5130 Studies in English Grammar
- ENGL 5140 Seminar in Linguistics (various topics)
- ENGL 6410 Topics in Linguistics (various topics)

TESOL:

- **ENGL 5243** Teaching English as a Second Language
- **ENGL 5333** Seminar in TESOL: Second Language Testing
- **ENGL 5313** Internship in TESOL
- **ENGL 5120** Studies in TESOL (various topics)
- **ENGL 6420** Topics in Second Language Acquisition (various topics)

Courses other than those listed may be taken as electives if approved by the advisory committee.

Methods Course for Teaching Assistants: Teaching assistants must take an appropriate pedagogy course or courses in their first semester of teaching at Oklahoma State University. These hours may be counted as part of the total hours of course work.

Electives: Students choose the remaining hours of course work in consultation with their advisory committees. Course selection should take into account the student's thesis subject, professional goals, and preparation for the MA Qualifying Examination.

ENGL 5990: Special Problems – limits enrollment (with permission from the Graduate Director) to those students who elect the creative component rather than thesis. The use of ENGL 5999 is restricted to those students who have completed course work and need to enroll in one or two hours in order to fulfill enrollment requirements.

Transfer Hours: Students may transfer up to nine graduate hours from another university granting a master's degree in English. A student's advisory committee shall determine the number of hours of transfer credit to be awarded. If a student uses the hours for a degree at the previous institution, the hours are not applicable to the MA degree at OSU.

Independent Study: Independent Study courses may be occasionally arranged with an instructor when no regular graduate course on the desired topic is available during the student's expected tenure. Each of the two course numbers (ENGL 5120 and ENGL 6120) may be used for up to six credit hours per semester and no more than nine hours total per course number. All students requesting an Independent Study course must hold a meeting with their advisory committee and receive approval by the members of the committee. Special forms must be used by those who wish to enroll in such courses. ***These forms are available on the forms page of the English Graduate website. This form should be submitted no later than the end of the first week of graduate enrollment period prior to the semester in which the Independent Study course is taken.*** A student who has completed the 17th graduate credit hour in a degree program but does not have an approved plan of study on file in the Graduate College may not arrange an Independent Study.

The Graduate Studies Committee will evaluate applications for Independent Study in accordance with the following criteria and procedure:

1. Has the student's advisory committee approved the course?
2. Has the student taken regularly offered courses related to the subject?
3. Is the Independent Study unlikely to have a negative impact on enrollment in concurrent or immediately subsequent course offerings?
4. Does the Independent Study fill a gap in the student's curriculum? Or is the specific course content unlikely to be offered during the student's expected tenure?
5. Are the materials clearly listed?
6. Is the work appropriate for the number of credit hours requested?
7. Is the list of assignments and percentages awarded to each clearly explained?
8. Is the schedule of conferences sufficiently specific?

If all eight questions may be answered affirmatively, the Graduate Director will send a written notice by email to the proposed instructor, who will then inform the student.

If one or more questions cannot be answered affirmatively, the Graduate Director will contact the proposed instructor in an effort to clarify and/or resolve the problem(s). If no resolution can be reached, the Graduate Director will inform the proposed instructor of the denial and the reason(s) for the denial in writing. The proposed instructor will then inform the student.

End of Semester Evaluations: All graduate students will be evaluated in writing at the end of each semester by the professors with whom they have taken courses. ***These evaluations are kept on file in the English Graduate Office and are available for the students to read.***

Grade of “Incomplete”: The following regulations apply to students who receive what at OSU is termed the “composite incomplete” grade (“IB”, “IC”, “ID”, or “IF”) for any of their course work within the English Department:

- Students must complete course work within one calendar year, after which time the preliminary grade (expressed by the second letter of the composite) becomes permanent in accordance with University policy. Individual faculty members, however, may establish a shorter time limit for completing course work. Faculty will identify the time limits in the “remarks” dropdown of the electronic grade sheet.
- Teaching assistants or associates having more than three incomplete grades on their records will not be recommended for reappointment.
- Teaching assistants or associates having any incomplete grades on their records will not be recommended for summer employment.

Students should familiarize themselves with Section 6.2 of the University Academic Regulations found in the ***University Catalog*** found here: <https://registrar.okstate.edu/University-Catalog> for a full explanation of University policy governing incomplete grades.

Language Requirement

Methods of Demonstrating Proficiency: In order to fulfill the language requirement for the MA in English, students must demonstrate reading knowledge of one other language other than English by passing a translation test, or taking course work, or submitting the departmental form on which the student’s advisory committee affirms that the language is the student’s primary language. Students who elect to take a translation test must choose from among the following languages: French, German, Greek, Italian, Latin, Old English, Russian, and Spanish. ***The language requirement must be fulfilled prior to taking the MA Qualifying Examinations or defending the MA Thesis.***

Petition for Alternative Method of Demonstrative Proficiency: Students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for approval to fulfill the language requirement with demonstrable proficiency in a language other than English that they have gained through study and/or residence in an area where the language is spoken. This petition is completed by means of a departmental form: <http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-forms> and must have the support of the student’s departmental advisory committee.

Reading Knowledge May be Demonstrated in any of the Following Ways:

- Reading knowledge can be demonstrated by passing a translation test in one of the languages listed above. The test shall consist of a total of three 250 – 300 word passages in the language, two from scholarly articles and one from a primary text. For Latin, Greek, or Old English, the test will consist of three primary texts. With access to a dictionary, students must translate any two of the passages. The test for reading knowledge must be completed within the three hour time limit.
- Reading knowledge can be demonstrated by taking one three credit hour *upper division* undergraduate course in which the instruction and readings are primarily in the language or by taking one three credit hour graduate language reading course. Students must receive a grade of “B” or better in the specified course to fulfill the requirement. See the Graduate Director for information regarding such courses.

Coursework may be completed after enrolling in the OSU English Department Graduate Program, or it may have been completed no more than five years prior to matriculation.

- A student who holds a Master’s degree from another university may fulfill the reading knowledge requirement by providing **written** proof that he or she has satisfactorily a language requirement for the Master’s degree at the awarding institution. The documentation should be in the form of either **(a)** a specific posting of the language requirement having been met on the student’s transcript or, **(b)** a letter from an appropriate official at the institution that awarded the Master’s.

Scheduling the Translation Test: Translation tests are arranged by the English Graduate Office. They are offered three times a year, at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters (typically the third Wednesday of the semester) and the summer test is held the Wednesday after the last day of the spring semester. **Notices of Intent** to take the test are due no later than the end of the first week of classes. The fee for the exam is \$40.00 and must be paid by check or money order (payable to the English Department) prior to the test date. Sample exams are available in electronic format from the English Graduate Office.

Timeline Check:

Before taking the MA Qualifying Examination the Student must have:

- Fulfilled the language Requirement
- Maintained a GPA of 3.0 or above on all graduate course work. *All courses carrying graduate credit, including transfer hours on the approved plan of study, will be calculated in this grade point average.*
- Filed an approved plan of study with the Graduate College (<https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>)
- Submitted a Notice of Intent to Take MA Qualifying Examination form to the English Graduate Office by the end of the second week of classes. (<http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-forms>)

MA Qualifying Examination in Professional Writing Option

The Qualifying Examination for the MA in English Professional Writing Option, is a five hour long examination that is administered on a single day. It is given each September and February, on the fifth Saturday of each semester. Students must submit a Notice of Intent to take the examination by the end of the second week of classes. Students must take the exams on the Stillwater campus. No exams are offered during the summer.

Exam Areas: The MA Professional Writing Option qualifying exam will consist of two essay question choices in each of the three areas below. Students must answer a total of four questions. They must answer at least one question from each of the following three categories.

- Theories in Rhetoric and Professional Writing
- Genre and Discourse
- Style, Editing, and Visual Rhetoric and Design

Preparations: The English Graduate Website has reading lists for all areas here: <http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/ma-qualifying-exams>. The English Office has copies of past exams in electronic format available upon request. Students should consult with their advisor and advisory committee when preparing for the MA Qualifying Examination.

Evaluation: Each question will be evaluated by three readers from the specific subject area covered by that section of the exam. Student anonymity will be maintained. If a student answers two questions in a single area, the readers in that area will evaluate each question separately. All readers evaluate exam questions individually before meeting as a committee to discuss student performances and provide a rating of "Pass with Distinction", "Pass", "Pass/Terminal", or "Fail" for each question. *To be eligible for the MA in English, students must pass all the questions..*

Notification of Results: The Graduate Director will email notification of exam results to students and the advisors no later than two weeks after the exams were taken.

Retakes: *Students may only take the MA Examinations twice.* Students who fail one or more questions the first time must retake only the number of questions failed. They must pass three questions in total, and the retaken questions combined with those questions originally passed must draw from at least *two areas*. Students are also allowed to retake the exam or parts of the exam in the next major semester in order to improve an original rating of "Pass/Terminal MA". Students retaking part of the exam will have two hours to answer one question, three hours to answer two questions, and four hours to answer three questions.

Appeals: Normally, a second failure on any section of the MA Qualifying Examination will result in termination of the student's work toward the degree. However, when course work has been of exceptionally high quality, a student may, after a second failure, petition the Graduate Studies Committee for permission to take the exam a third and final time. In order to petition, the student must have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher in the graduate courses taken at OSU. In addition, the student's petition must be supported by favorable end-of-semester evaluations from at least three professors.

Thesis (optional)

Should the student choose to write a thesis, the thesis is expected to be a substantial research project on a topic related to Professional Writing. The thesis director should be a member of the Professional Writing graduate faculty of the English Department.

Prerequisites: In order to defend a thesis, whether traditional or portfolio, students must:

- Have fulfilled the language requirement
- Have a grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate course work taken beyond the baccalaureate degree. *All courses carrying graduate credit, including transfer hours on the approved plan of study, will be calculated in this grade point average.*
- Have an approved plan of study on file with the Graduate College
- Submit a completed Intent to Defend form before the end of the second week of classes in the semester in which they intend to defend. (<http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-forms>)
- Meet all Graduate College deadlines and requirements

Traditional Thesis Format

This consists of 24 hours of course work, plus six hours of ENGL 5000: Thesis, leading to a traditional thesis and defense. The thesis is expected to be approximately 50-60 pages in length.

Thesis Committee: Unless a student requests a change, the advisory committee serves as the thesis committee. If it is necessary to change the committee, a new committee form must be completed electronically on the Graduate College website: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html> and notification provided to the English Graduate Office.

Prospectus: *MA candidates writing a traditional thesis should submit a prospectus (approx. 1000 words) no later than the first semester they are enrolled in thesis hours.* The prospectus must be approved by the candidate's committee. Committee members must be notified in writing if an approved prospectus differs from the submitted thesis, (if, for example, the topic of the thesis changes or the authors or texts to be treated are altered or the number or character of the chapters changes). Students must provide a copy of the approved prospectus to the English Graduate Director.

Reading Procedure: At the time that the prospectus is approved, the candidate and the committee members should agree upon a reading procedure for the individual chapters or papers. Matters to be discussed in reaching an agreement might include which chapters and papers each member of the committee needs to see as they are completed by the candidate; whether the individual committee members wish to see the thesis or portfolio sections serially or all at once; and how much time committee members will need to finish reading a section or the entire thesis, ***Under no circumstances should a completed thesis be submitted to any committee member for reading fewer than two weeks before the defense.***

Deadlines: Students submitting theses must adhere to the deadlines established by the Graduate College and by the English Department.

Style: The student must write the thesis according to the guidelines in the current Graduate College Manual, available from the Graduate College or at: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html> (thesis and dissertation guidelines).

Defense Copy (Final Draft): The defense copy of the thesis should contain *all* of the chapters in a completed form with full documentation.

Final Copy: If, as a result of the defense, revisions to the thesis are required, committee members *will not* sign the thesis until they are satisfied with the revisions.

Thesis Defense (Optional)

A thesis defense will consist of a public oral examination by the thesis committee. It will be no fewer than 45 minutes, but may be longer. The candidate submitting a research thesis will answer challenges to the thesis argument as well as questions on the scholarly, historical, and/or cultural backgrounds of the thesis subject. The candidate submitting a portfolio will answer challenges to the arguments of the six papers and to the statement of scholarly development, with particular focus on the revised paper. The thesis defense occurs after the student has submitted a complete draft of the thesis or portfolio to all committee members

Intent to Defend Form: Candidates will file a nonbinding Intent to Defend form (found here: <http://english.okstate.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-forms>) with the Graduate Director before the end of the first two weeks of the semester in which they expect to defend the thesis. Each member of the committee will sign this form before it is filed with the Graduate Director. The date, time and room location must be arranged by the student. If a student does not defend in the semester when the Intent to Defend form is filed, he or she should resubmit the form when he or she is prepared to defend.

Defense: Under no circumstance should a completed thesis be submitted to any committee member for reading fewer than two weeks before the defense. The English Graduate Office must be notified no less than two weeks before the defense of the date, time and location of the defense as well as title of thesis. The English Graduate Office must be informed of any changes in the scheduled defense date, time or location.

No thesis defense will be held after the beginning of the summer session.

Timeline check:

Before being eligible to graduate student must have:

- Passed the oral defense of thesis/portfolio and turned in the signed Results of Final Defense Form to the English Graduate Office and the Graduate College.
- Filed an Application for Graduation found here: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>
- Filed a Graduation Clearance form found here: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>

- Fulfilled the language requirement
- Updated Plan of Study if needed
- Submitted the final copy of the thesis in accordance with the format guidelines at: <https://gradcollege.okstate.edu/resources/current-student-resources.html>.

Length of Financial Support for Teaching Assistants

A teaching assistant who has not been placed on strict academic probation and who is making satisfactory progress toward the degree is eligible for financial support for a maximum of three years. A student who obtains an MA in English at OSU and then enters the PhD program is eligible for and additional five years of support.

If exceptional circumstances warrant, a student in the final year of financial support may petition the Head of the English Department for an additional year's support. Such exceptional cases will be judged on an individual basis and in light of the Departmental policies and staffing needs.

Ineligibility for the MA Degree

The Graduate Director may upon proper cause declare a student ineligible for a degree from the English Department at Oklahoma State University. Upon determining that such cause exists, the Graduate Director will immediately notify the student's advisor, who will discuss the matter with the student and respond to the Graduate Director within fifteen working days. Should the Graduate Director still believe that proper cause exists, he or she will write a letter to the student indicating the reasons for the decision. The student may then appeal to the Graduate Studies Committee within ten working days for a hearing.

The Graduate Studies Committee will review the appeal and report its findings to the Graduate Director, who will notify the student. The student may then appeal that decision to the full Graduate Faculty of the English Department. The decision of that group shall end the Departmental appeal process.

Appeals and Petitions

All appeals involving grades or charges of academic dishonesty, or misconduct must be directed to the OSU Academic Appeals Board. Contact the Provost's Office (101 Whitehurst) for information and forms. Petitions involving teaching assistantships must be directed to the Department Head.

All other petitions or appeals must be directed in writing to the Graduate Director, who will then forward the petition to the appropriate body, usually the Graduate Studies Committee (for special requests as described within the English Graduate Guidelines) or the English Graduate Faculty (for exceptions to English Department policy). The Graduate Director will notify students by mail of the decision reached by the Graduate Studies Committee or Graduate Faculty, with a copy to the student's advisor. For exceptions to university policy, the Graduate Director will forward the petition to the Graduate Council. Students are urged to discuss matters with their advisors and the Graduate Director **before** making a formal petition or appeal.

If the Graduate Director does not act upon a student's written request within a reasonable amount of time, a student and/or advisor may appeal directly to the Department Head. If a student has exhausted all appeals procedures within the Department and is still not able to resolve the problem, he or she may appeal to the Graduate College.