

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY  
ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT  
**HANDBOOK**  
2020-2021

19<sup>th</sup> EDITION

ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

WACO, TEXAS

# 2020-2021 EGSA Handbook

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## CHAPTER 1

# GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The English Department offers two graduate degree programs: the Master of Arts, MA, program and the Doctor of Philosophy, PhD, program. The MA program allows for a concentration in creative writing and a creative thesis, although the degree remains a literature degree. The PhD program offers concentrations in British Literature, American Literature, and Rhetoric & Composition. The PhD program also offers an interdisciplinary certificate in Religion and Literature. The official guidelines and detailed requirements for both programs are posted on the [English Department website](#). This site is the primary guidance for planning your degree. This handbook is intended only for quick reference. See the chapter on “[Funding](#)” for information on program lengths.

#### **MA in English: Beyond the BA**

*Minimum Required Graduate Course Credits: Thesis Track (30 credit hours); Non-Thesis Track (33 credit hours)*

##### *Graduate Course Requirements:*

- **1 foreign language** (does not count toward total credit hours)
- Seminars: thesis track-**8 seminars total** (24 credit hours); non-thesis track-**11 seminars total** (33 credit hours); consisting of the following
  - Bibliography and Research (3 credit hours)
  - Literary Theory (Literary Criticism) **or** Linguistics **or** Rhet./Comp. (3 credit hours)
  - Electives: for thesis track, 6 electives (18 credit hours); for non-thesis track, 9 electives (27 credit hours)
- **Thesis** (6 credit hours)
- **Oral Examination:** Defense of the Thesis

**Notes on the non-thesis track:** The non-thesis track is possible but very uncommon. If you plan to pursue a PhD later, you should know that most graduate English departments **strongly prefer the thesis track**. Additionally, **the non-thesis track still requires an oral exam**. Students must assemble a panel of three English Department graduate faculty members to conduct the exam and are asked to discuss some of the issues that arose in their coursework with a panel of professors.

Writing a creative MA thesis is currently a possibility. Ask around to see who is currently working on one, and talk to the peer advisor to learn more.

## PhD in English: Beyond the BA (66 graduate credit hours)

### *Course Requirements:*

- **2 foreign languages** (do not count toward total credit hours). The foreign language requirement must be fulfilled before taking preliminary exams.
- **18 Seminars** (54 credit hours) consisting of the following
  - Old English language (3 credit hours)
  - Bibliography and Research (3 credit hours)
  - Literary Theory (Literary Criticism) **or** Linguistics **or** Rhet./Comp. (3 credit hours)
  - Literature Distribution Requirements (12 credit hours): 1 course from each of the following historical/geographical divisions:
    - *English 1*: Old English, Middle English, Renaissance, Seventeenth Century, Restoration and Eighteenth Century (3 credit hours)
    - *English 2*: Romantic, Victorian, Modern British, Contemporary British (3 credit hours)
    - *American 1*: Colonial American Literature to 1800, Nineteenth-Century American Literature (3 credit hours)
    - *American 2*: Modern American, Contemporary American (3 credit hours)
  - 11 Electives (33 credit hours)
    - 3 electives in your major subject area (English 1, American 2, etc.) (9 credit hours)
    - 8 free electives (24 credit hours): most of these should be English, but you can also take courses in other departments, like Philosophy, Political Science, Classics, or History.
- **Preliminary Examinations**
- **Prospectus Review**
- **Dissertation**: 12 credit hours total, including registration for at least 1 credit hour the semester you graduate.
- **Final Examination**: Defense of the Dissertation

## PhD in English: Beyond the MA (42 graduate credit hours)

### *Course Requirements:*

- **2 foreign languages** (do not count toward total credit hours). The foreign language requirement must be fulfilled before taking preliminary exams.
- **10 English seminars** (30 credit hours)
  - Old English language (3 credit hours)
  - Bibliography and Research (3 credit hours)
  - Literary Theory (Literary Criticism) **or** Linguistics **or** Rhet./Comp. (3 credit hours)
  - Literature Distribution Requirements (12 credit hours): 1 course from each of the following historical/geographical divisions:
    - *English 1*: Old English, Middle English, Renaissance, Seventeenth Century, Restoration and Eighteenth Century (3 credit hours)
    - *English 2*: Romantic, Victorian, Modern British, Contemporary British (3 credit hours)
    - *American 1*: Colonial American Literature to 1800, Nineteenth-Century American Literature (3 credit hours)
    - *American 2*: Modern American, Contemporary American (3 credit hours)
  - 3 electives in your major subject area (e.g., English 1, American 2) (9 credit hours)
- **Preliminary Examinations**
- **Prospectus Review**
- **Dissertation**: 12 credit hours total, including registration for at least 1 credit hour the semester you graduate.
- **Final Examination**: Defense of the Dissertation

\*PhD students who already hold an MA still must satisfy the distribution requirements (e.g., English 1, English 2); however, many of these requirements may have been fulfilled during the course of the MA degree. In total, **a PhD student entering the program with an MA will complete 30 hours of coursework**, but the *type* of coursework varies based upon the classes the student has completed during the MA. If distribution requirements overlap with your MA coursework, notify the Graduate Program Director (GPD), Dr. Richard R. Russell, who must approve the overlapping coursework.

As a result, if any of these requirements are met with a course taken as a graduate student elsewhere, then **another elective seminar** must be taken to reach the total of 10 seminars beyond the MA degree. Most PhD students entering the program with an MA will already have completed many of the distribution requirements, allowing them to primarily take courses in their specific historical area, depending on what courses are being offered and pending the GPD's approval.

## **PhD in English with a Graduate Certificate in Religion and Literature**

(effective for students entering the program in Fall 2017 and following)

### *Course Requirements:*

- **Fulfill the above requirements for the PhD track in which you are enrolled** with the following restrictions:
  - **1 Literature Seminar**-course must have a demonstrable component of religion in it (e.g., “English Religious Authors”),
  - **1 Literature and Religion course**-usually specified in the course description and may be cross-listed between the two departments, e.g., English/Religion **(If you are unsure whether a course counts toward either of these requirements, you can ask the professor teaching the course or the GPD.),**  
**AND**
  - **1 Religion Seminar** (3 credit hours)-taught in the Department of Religion.

**NOTE:** The Graduate Certificate in Religion and Literature does not appear on the student’s transcript, but students may list it on their C.V.

## CHAPTER 2

# COURSEWORK

### COURSE LOADS

Depending on their needs and interests, graduate students typically take two seminars each semester and may take one or two seminars during the summer. Two summer sessions are available each year, with at least one graduate English seminar each session. If you want to take summer classes but are not interested in the summer offerings, you may find a willing professor who will allow you to do an independent study. (It is a good idea to make sure the professor is teaching or on campus during the summer before asking them. [See below](#) for more information on taking an independent study.) **MA students may be allowed one independent study, and PhD students may be allowed up to two.**

**Those students who enter the program without an MA must take 18 hours in the first year to be eligible to teach the next year.** This is typically distributed as 6 credit hours during Fall and Spring semesters and 3 credit hours during each summer session, although students sometimes choose to take 9 hours during Fall or Spring semester (or both).

### TRANSFERRING IN CREDITS

You may transfer in up to two courses for a total of 6 credit hours towards fulfilling your degree. The Graduate School policies on Transfer Credit as listed in the current [Graduate Catalog](#) must be followed, including

- coursework must carry a grade of "B" or better (no pass/fail permitted);
- course work must be from an accredited university and appear on a graduate transcript;
- course work must have been taken within 5 years of matriculation; and
- credits toward extension, workshops, thesis or dissertation hours are not transferable.

**If you are a PhD student with an MA from another institution, your MA credits count toward your degree, but they will not show up on the “degree audit” (a tool showing your complete/incomplete degree requirements) in BearWeb.** To remedy this, complete a [petition form](#) for the graduate college that specifies which course numbers you want to count toward your PhD credit hours, note on the petition that BearWeb does not recognize you as needing fewer credits due to having an MA, and include a transcript from your MA institution. Make sure the courses you wish to include adhere to the above guidelines.

## **REGISTERING FOR CLASSES**

Spring registration usually begins in late October or early November. Summer and Fall registration begins after Spring Break. Course descriptions for each semester are printed and available in the English Office (as well as the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor lounge) prior to registration. Classes are filled strictly on a first-come, first-served basis, and registration dates are based upon seniority. **The English Office will notify students when they are eligible to register via email.**

When registering for classes, keep in mind that students are only permitted to take a course with the same number twice (e.g., ENG 5374). If you need to take a course for a third time, even if the topic and professor are completely different from previous courses of that number, you must get special permission from the GPD and the Graduate School.

## **REGISTERING FOR CLASSES IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

**To take a course outside the English department, you will first need to get the approval of the professor, and depending on the department, you may need additional permissions in order to register.** With the professor's permission, you can register through BearWeb. As long as you are registered for two graduate-level classes—regardless of department—you are considered full-time and your funding will not be affected. You do **not** need the GPD's approval to take classes in another department.

**Earning a Minor:** Graduate students can earn a minor with the MA (6 credit hours) and with the PhD (12 credit hours). To receive a minor, you will need to talk to the GPD early in your program—ideally even before you register for your first seminars—and inform the GPD of your intention to get a minor. The GPD will walk you through the process of making it official. All coursework attributed to a minor must be 5000-level.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The MA requires students to demonstrate intermediate proficiency in one foreign language, and the PhD requires demonstrated reading proficiency in two foreign languages. You can satisfy this requirement in one of several ways, all of which are outlined in detail in the [Graduate Catalog](#) available both in print form and on the Baylor website.

<p>I took <b>2 years</b> of a foreign language at a previous institution, and I finished those classes <b>no more than 5 years before matriculating</b> into Baylor’s graduate program.</p>	<p>You should be able to get those credits transferred to your graduate transcript. You will need to fill out a <a href="#">petition form</a> and turn it in to the English Department office.</p>
<p><b>I am really good</b> at this one particular language, even though I have no prior courses to show for it -- OR -- I finished my language study <b>more than 5 years before matriculating</b> into Baylor’s graduate program.</p>	<p>You should be able to pass a competency exam administered by the appropriate department (Classics, Modern Languages &amp; Cultures, etc. Currently, the contact for the Modern Languages Department is Dr. Marian Ortuño: <a href="mailto:Marian.Ortuno@baylor.edu">Marian.Ortuno@baylor.edu</a>).*</p>
<p>I <b>need to take a class</b> to get to intermediate foreign language proficiency.</p>	<p>You should take a graduate-level summer language class. Baylor typically offers French, German, Spanish, and Latin during the summer. Each of these lasts for one summer session (Summer I or Summer II)--except Latin, which is a summer-long commitment. Because of the heavy workload, we strongly recommend that you NOT attempt to take a graduate seminar while taking a summer language.*</p>

**\*Even if you take a foreign language here at Baylor, you must petition to get it accepted by the Graduate School,** just as if you were petitioning for credits from another university. You will need to fill out a [petition form](#) and turn it in to the English Department office. The petition is just a formality, but you have to get it done in order to take your exams.

Do not wait to complete your foreign language requirements. **As a PhD student, you may not proceed with preliminary exams until your foreign language requirement is satisfied.** If you are trying to get prior language work accepted, keep in mind that these petitions are not always approved. Make sure to get your proficiencies accepted early to avoid unpleasant surprises when you want to start your dissertation process.



## **TAKING AN INDEPENDENT STUDY**

**MA students are limited to no more than one independent study, and PhD students are limited to no more than two.**

The independent study will only be approved if the course is directly related to your dissertation or thesis and the content of the course would never be offered as part of the regular curriculum. Whether or not these criteria have been met is subject to the approval of the GPD. If you would like to take a course that has not been offered recently but has been taught in the past, you should directly petition the appropriate professor to teach the course again (as a regular course, not as an independent study).

This is the process for arranging for an independent study:

- Ask the professor if he or she would be willing to do an independent study with you. Many professors are open to this, though it can be time-consuming for them, so don't take it personally if they decline.
- Once the professor has agreed to conduct the independent study, you and the professor will need to compile a reading list and construct a brief course description.
- Take the information to the Graduate Program Director for approval (although you might want to meet with the Graduate Program Director earlier to see if this independent study will be a possibility in the first place.)
- If approved, you will register for ENG 5308. It is up to you and the professor to decide when to meet.

## CHAPTER 3

# MASTER'S THESIS

### MASTER'S THESIS

Students pursuing an MA do not have to pass preliminary exams or submit a prospectus; however, they do have to find a thesis director, assemble a thesis committee, and complete an oral defense of their thesis. This is further outlined below.

### CHOOSING AN ADVISOR

Choosing an advisor usually happens more or less naturally: as students develop their subject area throughout their coursework, it is likely that one faculty member will emerge as the obvious fit. Sometimes the process works in reverse: students know there is someone they want to work with, so they nudge their topic in the direction of that person's field. If students want to work on something that no one at Baylor does, they will have to ask around to see if anyone working in an adjacent field is willing to take them on.

The length of the MA thesis varies by professor: some require 60-80 pages while others ask for 80-100.

### MA GRADUATION TIMELINE

- Determine your general topic and find an advisor.
- Sign up for ENG 5V99 for Fall and Spring semesters. (If you are planning on an August graduation, you will also need to take at least one credit then so that you can graduate. Check with GPD about the summer credit when you decide to be a summer grad.)
- Attend a Formatting Workshop with the Graduate School. (this is not required, but it is recommended because the final format must conform with Graduate School requirements)
- File for graduation at the beginning of the Spring or Summer semester.
- File your petition for the foreign language requirement as soon as possible.
- Determine your thesis committee (advisor, second departmental reader, and reader from another department at Baylor), and file the departmental Thesis Committee Form (listing the names of the committee members and the title for the thesis) in the English Office.
- At least a month in advance, determine the time and place with your committee members. You generally have to find an available room and reserve it yourself.
- Schedule a preliminary technical review with Sandra Harman (Graduate School) for at least two weeks before your defense. Your life will be easier if you have been doing this correctly from the beginning. The aforementioned Formatting Workshop will save you time at this step.

- Submit [Announcement of Oral Defense](#) at least 10 working days before your defense.
- Submit your thesis to your committee at least two weeks before your defense. (No official rule, but it is a good guideline.)
- Defend your thesis. Note that even if you graduate in August, you MUST defend before the Spring semester is over. This gives you a few extra weeks, but not much.
- Celebrate!
- Submit [Record of Oral Examination](#) form to Graduate School.
- Submit electronic copy of revised and approved copy of MA thesis (April 2 for May graduation).
- Graduate!

### **POTENTIAL PITFALLS FOR MA STUDENTS**

You are in graduate school because you can write at a very high level. The actual writing of the thesis is not the hard part for students. Rather, students have trouble, and cause themselves stress, by

1. Not finding an advisor early enough.
2. Not communicating with their advisor.
3. Not staying on top of deadlines.
4. Occasionally, struggling with formatting.

Focus on these critical aspects to make the thesis process as smooth as possible for yourself, and remember that you can always ask your EGSA community for help.

### **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR MA YEARS**

The number one piece of advice for having a successful MA program: Even though you may only be planning on being here for two years, do not hesitate to get involved in the department. Go to events and get to know people because the hard work of graduate school is much more manageable when you are part of the encouraging EGSA community.

## CHAPTER 4

# PhD PRELIMINARY EXAMS & DISSERTATIONS

### PRELIMINARY EXAMS

After finishing coursework, PhD students have to pass four preliminary exams:

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

Two of these exams are long exams (3-hour written exams) and two are short (1.5-hour written exams). Students should determine the content areas of the exams and ask appropriate faculty members if they would be willing to examine them in one (or more) of the areas. It is not uncommon to have one professor, usually the student's future dissertation director, administer two of the four exams.

Once the requested faculty members have agreed, students should meet with them to set up a reading list for the exam. Some faculty members have set lists that they give to everyone, some will work with students to create one specifically for them, and some will have students propose a draft list to which the faculty members make alterations. Students should also ask about how the faculty members create the questions for the exam. The following are some examples of the sort of questions you may wish to ask.

- Do they provide the exact questions ahead of time? Do they give you general areas or guidance?
- Do you draft the question areas with them, or will the questions be total surprises?
- How many essays will they expect you to write in the time?
- Will you have choices among various prompt questions, or will they be set for you with no options?
- Can you reuse authors or texts in multiple essays, or do you have to be careful to distribute them in a certain way?

Students should be tactful when they ask these questions. Some faculty are shocked that someone would even ask and think it obvious that they will not give any hints ahead of time, while others will work with students to draft the questions or even have them write their own.

Students must take their exams over a period of no more than eight working days (within two consecutive work weeks). Most students allow a day or more between exams. Fall exams must be completed within the first four weeks of the semester. Spring exams must be completed in either the first four or last four weeks of the semester. There are no summer exams. Exams must be completed within one year of finishing coursework and may be taken in the final semester of coursework. However, you must have completed your foreign language requirements before you schedule your exams. Check the [policies and procedures document](#) on the English Department website, as there is a lot of fine print about the exams.

### **CHOOSING A DIRECTOR**

Choosing a director usually happens more or less naturally: as students develop their subject area throughout their coursework or during preliminary exams, it is likely that one faculty member will emerge as the obvious fit. Sometimes the process works in reverse: students know there is someone they want to work with, so they nudge their topic in the direction of that person's field. If students want to work on something that no one at Baylor does, they will have to ask around to see if anyone working in an adjacent field is willing to take them on.

### **DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS**

The prospectus is a 10-15 page proposed summary of the dissertation. You may divide your prospectus into sections or construct a holistic prospectus—that is, one that appears as a continuous essay without any sections. Generally, four specific sections are required for a prospectus: Opening Statement, Argument and Synopsis, Overview of Research, and Methodology. Be sure to discuss with your director the specific expectations and guidelines they want you to follow.

**The prospectus will be approved by your dissertation committee members in an oral prospectus review.** This means you should be consulting with your director to select your dissertation committee as you are beginning your prospectus. This committee includes: the director of the dissertation (a Graduate Faculty member), a second member of the department, usually from the area of specialization (a Graduate Faculty member), and an appropriate Graduate Faculty member from outside the department.

Although the prospectus review is a formal event, it is more collaborative in tone than the final dissertation defense. A copy of the prospectus must be sent to the GPD and the Chair of the English Department.

## ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

After completing the preliminary examinations and the prospectus review, you must apply for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. You and your director must fill out the [Record of Candidacy for Doctoral Degree](#) form that should be secured from and returned to the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant. Application must be made no later than five months prior to the date on which the degree is to be conferred. The minimum GPA to be admitted to candidacy is 3.0, but be aware that a much higher GPA is expected throughout your graduate career.

## DISSERTATION

The dissertation must give evidence that the student has pursued a program of research, the results of which reveal both superior stylistic and research competence, and offer a significant contribution to knowledge within the discipline. Dissertations will ordinarily range between 250 and 350 pages, with 225 pages as the minimum acceptable length. Dissertation formatting must adhere to specific requirements, and workshops are offered to teach these requirements each semester. Watch for the sign-up emails from the graduate school.

The Dissertation Committee will work closely with the student in approving the topic and directing the research to its conclusion. Once the dissertation has been completed, students will schedule a defense with their committee. A final oral examination in defense of the dissertation is required. The [Announcement of Doctoral Oral Examination](#) form specifying the date of the defense must be filled out and sent to the Graduate School at least ten days prior to the defense; see the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant for this form. **At the defense, there must be a minimum of five examiners: the Dissertation Committee and two other Graduate Faculty members from inside the department.** A sixth Graduate Faculty member from inside the department is permitted, but not required. The director of the dissertation must take the Results of Oral Examination form to the defense and have the members present sign it at the conclusion of the defense.

## CHAPTER 5

# FUNDING AND ASSISTANTSHIPS

### PROGRAM LENGTH & FUNDING

There are two main types of funding: tuition remission and stipends (assistantships).

**MA students can expect tuition remission for two years (four semesters and two summers).**

**All PhD students, whether they have an MA or not, can expect tuition remission for five years.** If students need additional time to finish the PhD, they will usually be granted tuition remission for the remaining years, but they will have to look for graduate assistantships elsewhere on campus to obtain stipend funding. The maximum time allowed for finishing the PhD program is **eight** years.

Although **there is no stipend funding for summers**, there is tuition remission for summer courses. Students can apply for summer jobs in the Writing Center and elsewhere on campus over the summer or seek employment elsewhere.

**All graduate students, whether funded or not, are responsible for paying their own student fees.** The amount varies by semester and is charged by credit hour. As of 2020, the graduate school has begun paying for half of graduate student fees each semester. Summer student fees are still applicable, but they are less than semester fees.

### ASSISTANTSHIPS

The English Department offers three kinds of assistantship positions: Research Assistant (RA), Graduate Consultant (GC) in the University Writing Center, and Teacher of Record (TOR). Most first-year graduate students are given RA or GC positions, and it is typical to work at least one year in the University Writing Center before applying for a teaching position.

#### Research Assistant (RA)

RAs work **20 hours/week** assisting a professor or professors in the department. The type of work can range from library research to bookkeeping to serving as editorial assistant for a journal or book, depending on the professor's needs. When possible, the department will try to assign you to a professor in your primary focus area so that your work together can be mutually beneficial. You and the professor(s) to whom you are assigned will arrange your weekly work schedule. Typically, incoming international students receive RA appointments as per certain visa requirements.

First-year RAs who will have completed 18 credits of graduate coursework and who wish to teach during their second year should make this request known to the Director of First-Year Writing some

time during their first year of study. Because RAs do not have the tutoring experience of other students, they often stand at a disadvantage in consideration for TOR appointments. This is by no means a hard and fast rule in the department, but we want students to be aware that the normal path to teaching involves a year in the University Writing Center first.

### **Graduate Consultant (GC) in the University Writing Center**

GCs work **20 hours/week** in the University Writing Center (UWC), located on the second floor of Moody Library. The UWC is supervised by its director, **Dr. Kara Poe Alexander**; its assistant director, **Dr. Lauren Short**; and 2-3 Graduate Assistant Directors.

The mission of the UWC is to collaborate with members of the Baylor University community—students, faculty, or staff, from any discipline—to improve as writers: not only to improve the final product, but to work together with writers to be effective, confident, and ethically-aware communicators. To this end, GCs collaborate with Baylor writers on a variety of projects, help lead UWC research and initiatives, and participate in regular training and staff meetings.

The UWC also employs undergraduate peer tutors from all disciplines, so GCs have the unique opportunity to work closely with undergraduates as colleagues, mentors, and friends.

### **Teacher of Record (TOR)**

TORs teach undergraduate courses as the sole instructor of record. TORs in English typically teach two sections of English classes each semester; The GPD has been working to reduce this, but for now the expected teaching load remains a 2:2 (two semesters of two sections each). TORs are supervised by **Dr. Danielle M. Williams**, Interim Director of First-Year Writing (FYW), and her assistant, **Sarah Tharp**.

Like any other member of the teaching staff, TORs are responsible for planning and conducting class meetings, creating and evaluating assignments, holding office hours, conferencing with students, and attending required FYW meetings. New TORs are assigned a teaching mentor and are required to attend orientation (before fall classes begin) and regular meetings (throughout the year), facilitated by the Director of FYW.

After passing doctoral examinations, advanced graduate students are eligible to teach a literature survey course (ENG 2301, 2304, or 2306). In rare circumstances, TORs may have the opportunity to teach advanced writing courses such as technical writing (ENG 3300 or 3303). Graduate students are invited to apply to serve as the Graduate Assistant to the Director of FYW after they have passed their exams.

## PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

Graduate students wear several hats. If we have assistantships, we work for Baylor University and are members of its student body as well. We are concerned with our present—studying, writing, taking classes—but also with our future as professionals in a highly competitive job market. Thus, the development of professional attitudes and skills is a significant goal to be pursued alongside our development as scholars.

Reproduced below is the segment of Baylor’s Personnel Policies outlining general conduct guidelines for all Baylor employees. **We feel that our acceptance of a stipend from Baylor constitutes our agreement to abide by these guidelines for the duration of our employment.** The handbook you will receive as a TA or GA will include additional guidelines for professionalism as you work with undergraduate students.

### Standards of Personal Conduct:

Personal and Professional Conduct Baylor University places a high value on human relations and human rights. Therefore, the University strives to maintain a work environment that is based on mutual respect for all employees. In turn, the University expects each individual to diligently perform the job for which he or she is employed. In addition to compliance with all approved policies and procedures, attention to work-related duties and customer service is of utmost importance. Professionalism in communications and behavior is the expected form of interaction in all of the University’s work-related settings. When differences of opinion occur, only constructive and respectful forms of communication are considered appropriate.

### Code of Ethics:

Members of the Baylor University community (including regents, faculty, staff, students, and administration) are expected to conduct themselves and the affairs of the University in an ethical and lawful manner. This expectation is a foundation for Baylor University’s mission of educating “men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community.”

Members of the Baylor University community are expected to act in a way that builds a distinctive sense of caring, kindness, mutual respect, collegiality, and fairness. The idea that the Baylor community is a family has always been vital in our historical traditions, and we here reaffirm our commitment to that idea. Out of respect for this community, we do not slander or defame.

All other BU Personnel Policies can be found on [their website](#).

## OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

**Other programs on campus provide employment opportunities for graduate students.** Some of these positions can be held in addition to your English department assistantship and some would be in lieu of work for the English department. Occasionally, grad students get similar assistantships during the summer in order to pay for summer expenses. The most frequent external assistantships awarded to English graduate students, over the summer or during the semester, include **The Graduate Writing Center, Armstrong Browning Library, The Honors College, Baylor University Press, and The Institute for Oral History.** Should you be interested in one of these alternative assistantships for following semesters, speak to your fellow graduate students who have held these positions or the GPD. It should be noted that Teachers of Record are **strongly** discouraged from pursuing an additional job during the school year.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Baylor will cover 80% of the insurance premium for Baylor's Student Health Insurance Plan (through Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Texas) for **all three levels of graduate assistants** in addition to their stipends. Make sure you fulfill the basic criteria listed [here](#). Students also have the option to purchase unsubsidized coverage for family members. For more information about this insurance coverage and the current annual rates, see the [Costs and Benefits page](#) on the Graduate School's website. Graduate students not serving as graduate assistants also have access to Baylor insurance, though Baylor does not subsidize this insurance. Most importantly, pay attention to emails and other communications concerning insurance coverage, as the details and procedures for obtaining coverage change frequently.

## STUDENT LOANS

In addition to departmental assistantships, you may want to apply for a student loan. To do so, you must complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA). The FAFSA is available by January of the year for which you are applying. You should submit this form as early as possible, since Baylor's Financial Aid office cannot figure your eligibility for a loan until the Federal Student Aid Program has processed your FAFSA.

Once your FAFSA is completed, the Financial Aid Office will adjust your available financial award (i.e., the amount of subsidized or unsubsidized Direct Loans you may request) in BearWeb. You can manually input the loan amount you would like to accept. The loan money is then refunded to your personal bank account after fees have been deducted (you can set up direct deposit of funds via BearWeb).

## TRAVEL FUNDING

Both MA and PhD students may apply for funding for conference travel (listed as "professional travel") from both the Graduate School and the English Department. The English Department's funding policy has changed, allowing MA students to apply for funding to travel to conferences (but not for research). **NOTE: These policies were current as of the 2019-2020 year, but the switch**

**to Ignite may have changed them. Ask in the English Department Office or contact the Peer Advisor for help navigating current travel funding procedures.**

1. At least four weeks before travel, apply to the [Graduate School](#) for funding. The Graduate School may fund up to \$400 twice a year, although there are exceptions.
  - a. Fill out a [travel award application](#) form. A “brief outline of expenses” would look something like this: Plane flight (\$300), Conference Fee (\$110), Hotel (\$350), Meals (\$100)
  - b. Attach your conference acceptance letter/conference schedule as proof that you are accepted.
  - c. Attach the abstract of your presentation.
  - d. Attach a brief statement of support from an appropriate faculty member. (Alternately, the faculty member can submit the statement on your behalf)
  - e. Email these materials to [GSTA@baylor.edu](mailto:GSTA@baylor.edu).
2. Once you have been approved by the Graduate School, you can then request funding from the English department as well. You may only receive funding from the English Department if you have been approved by the Graduate School and exhausted your maximum funds (\$400).
  - a. Attach your approval from Graduate School, your acceptance email from the conference, and the application that you sent to the GSA.
  - b. Email these materials to the Department Chair and to the GPD.
3. While you are at the conference, keep track of all receipts.
4. Within 30 days of your return to campus, submit an online expense report to [this website](#). You will only fill out one expense report even if you are being funded by both the Graduate School and the English Department.
  - a. The “initial reviewer” is Lois Avey, the lead Departmental Administrative Assistant.
  - b. Under “Add Distribution,” give the English Department details:
    - i. Dept ID: 0321309
    - ii. Account: 938980
  - c. Details of your funding from the Graduate School should be listed under “External Reimbursement.”
5. If your request is approved, the English Department will disburse funding to you. Whether or not you are receiving funding from English, they will pass along the form to the Graduate School to disburse funding, which will be mailed to you as a check.

For students seeking to attend the annual **MLA conference**, the MLA offers a travel grant of \$200 for “advanced graduate students” who are members of MLA as partial reimbursement of

expenses for travel to or attendance in pre-convention workshops, sessions, or interviews. For additional information or details on how to apply, refer to the MLA's [website](#).

Many other conferences will offer competitive funding for grad students, particularly if it can be shown that this conference relates back to dissertation work.

### **PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES**

Baylor offers competitive parental leave policies, with up to a full semester of leave. See the Graduate School's [Childbirth and Adoption page](#) for more information.

## CHAPTER 6

# ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) is open for membership to any Baylor University graduate student in English. EGSA promotes fellowship among graduate students; advances the professional interests of both Master's and Doctoral students; and, perhaps most importantly, advocates for the graduate student body to the English Department faculty and administration.

Serving with EGSA—on a committee or as an elected officer—is one of the best ways for MA and PhD students to develop professionally while in the graduate program. Besides making your fellow graduate students' lives easier and richer, such experience will look good on your *curriculum vitae* (CV). Serving in the following positions might assist you in future job interviews, where you may be asked: “So, what kind of committee work have you done?”

### EGSA OFFICERS

*Unless otherwise noted, all of the following positions are for 1-year terms.*

#### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. President
  - Determines the year's goals and agendas with advice from the executive council and by soliciting graduate student input; acts as a liaison between graduate students and the department, the Graduate School, and elsewhere as needed; meets with the GPD and Department Chair regularly (usually monthly) to communicate student needs and concerns and to gather information about departmental events and concerns; calls general and executive meetings and presides over meetings (approximately 3 times/semester, depending on perceived need); schedules the first meeting of the semester, a welcome and agenda-setting meeting, during the first week of classes.
  - Should have served as Vice President in the previous year. If this is not possible, the President should be a graduate student in English who has been at Baylor for two years or more.
2. Vice President (*one-year term, but usually then becomes President the following year*)
  - Assists the president and the secretary in their duties as needed; along with the President, meets regularly with the GPD and department chair; promotes departmental and campus events (e.g., graduate faculty/student mixers, Beall Poetry

Festival, Scholar's Week); assists Professional Development Coordinators in developing events as needed; updates the EGSA calendar on the website.

- After fulfilling the one-year term, becomes President upon approval of EGSA.
3. Secretary
    - Records and distributes minutes of EGSA meetings; publishes an EGSA Digest (via email) with announcements from EGSA, GPD, Department Chair, or other groups or individuals to graduate students on a weekly or bi-weekly basis; sends and collects emails, ballots for open positions, or other proposals as needed; gathers signatures for "Thank You" cards to secretaries, GPD, Department Chair, director of the first-year writing program, Writing Center director, and EGSA's faculty advisors at the end of each year for their support of graduate students; and keeps a list of current English graduate students.
  4. Treasurer and Fundraising Chair
    - Collects membership dues (\$10) at the beginning of each year; confers with Lois Avey on the EGSA account and keeps financial reports and receipts for EGSA; assists with the biannual EGSA Conference Financial Committee; and plans and publicizes the annual book sale and other fundraisers as needed.
  5. Peer Advisor
    - Serves as the contact person for graduate students who have questions about their specific English graduate programs of study; makes available and explains the worksheets for the MA program and the PhD program; and sends reminders about deadlines and dissertation and thesis workshops for the graduate program.

\*Nominations and elections for open positions on the EGSA council or other EGSA Positions (see below) are held by email toward the end of each academic year (with the exception of the Orientation Chairs, which must be elected at the end of the fall semester or the very beginning of the spring semester in order to plan the preview weekend for prospective students). If only one nomination is received by the close of nominations, that student (upon acceptance) will be appointed to the open position.

\*\*To be a full member of EGSA with voting rights and privileges, graduate students must have paid their membership dues to the treasurer. Graduate students in English who have not paid their dues are associate (non-voting) members of EGSA.

### **OTHER POSITIONS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

1. Professional Development Coordinators (2): These officers offer at least one professional development event per semester, soliciting advice from EGSA faculty advisors and Vice President as needed. Examples of successful past events include CV writing workshops,

publication/research agenda roundtables with professors, how-to sessions with graduate professors.

2. GSA Representative: “This person should have been at Baylor for at least one year, with exceptions for those programs that are only one year long. The representative attends monthly GSA meetings, works with one of the standing committees (Academic, Social, or Policy), and exercises a vote on behalf of the graduate students in their department” (GSA description).
3. GSA Alternate: “An alternate may be a new student; usually one who is interested in ‘learning the ropes’ and serving as your department’s Representative the following year. The Alternate preferably attends all meetings with the representative, would be introduced to the activities and issues of GSA, and would have the proxy vote if the Representative is not in attendance.”
4. Technology Chair: The technology chair maintains and updates the [EGSA website](#) and the Baylor EGSA team in Microsoft Teams and provides technical assistance to the members of the EGSA executive council.
5. Social Chairs (2): The two social chairs organize and promote events such as, but not limited to, a fall picnic, a holiday party, a spring Welcome Back Party, Bad Wine/Bad Poetry Night, etc. The fall picnic and Welcome Back party will be held on the first Saturday of the fall and spring semesters, respectively, and other events will be decided at the first EGSA meeting of the year and added to the EGSA calendar on the website.
6. Orientation/Handbook Chair(s): The main duties of the orientation chairs are coordinating and planning the preview weekend, which usually happens in early February. The orientation chairs will be given a list of incoming graduate students, and will coordinate travel details, food and lodging, and orientation activities. They will also be available to provide information and answer questions during the remainder of the spring semester. The chair(s) also revises or supervises the revision of the EGSA handbook over the summer as needed, with help from volunteers who serve on either the handbook committee or the orientation committee. The chair(s) organizes the date and time for the EGSA orientation in the fall, avoiding conflict with the schedules of GSA orientation and coordinating with the writing center director’s and freshman writing director’s training schedules for incoming students with assistantships.

## **HIERARCHY**

Students should work with the student and institutional hierarchy to address their questions or concerns. The hierarchy is structured as follows: Peer Advisor/EGSA Council → GPD → Department Chair → Graduate School → University Administration.

## **EGSA WEBSITE**

The EGSA Website, [bayloregsa.org](http://bayloregsa.org), is a resource hub for links, calendars, member bios, forms, and other resources. It also contains more detailed advice from current and former students for navigating graduate English studies at Baylor.

## **BAYLOR GSA**

All Baylor graduate students are members of the Baylor Graduate Student Association (GSA). Our GSA representatives keep us up-to-date with academic or administrative issues and policies that affect graduate students. They also facilitate interaction with graduate students from other departments by organizing GSA events such as picnics and intramural opportunities. You may also want to serve on a standing committee. See our departmental representative or visit the [GSA website](#) for more information.

## **RESEARCH SEMINARS**

Currently, there are three interdisciplinary graduate research seminars at Baylor. Each research is chaired by a committee of faculty and graduate students to promote activities, lectures, and contests in their respective fields. Ask around or look for emails to see how to get involved in each:

1. The Medieval-Renaissance Research Seminar (MRRS)
2. The 19th Century Research Seminar
3. The Mod/Con (modern and contemporary) Research Seminar

## CHAPTER 7

# BAYLOR RESOURCES

### THE GRADUATE WRITING CENTER

The Graduate Writing Center is a resource for graduate student writers who desire to improve their writing skills. Our consultants, all advanced-stage doctoral students from across the disciplines, are trained to help with a variety of writing projects including academic papers, reports, personal statements and applications, papers intended for publication, theses and dissertations, and grant proposals. Consultants will not proofread papers, but they are available to help with any stage of the writing process—brainstorming, drafting, or revision.

To make an appointment with a Graduate Writing Consultant, send an email to [gwc@baylor.edu](mailto:gwc@baylor.edu) along with the paper you would like the consultant to review. In the initial email, indicate any issues you hope to address (e.g., organization, transitions, clarity). A consultant will contact you that day to arrange a one-hour appointment at a location convenient for you. Consultants need at least 24 hours to read your work before they can meet with you.

### COUNSELING CENTER

Graduate school can be a stressful time, even to the extent that some have declared a mental health crisis in graduate education. According to a [2018 study in \*Nature Biotechnology\*](#), graduate students are six times more likely to experience depression and anxiety compared to the rest of the population. Given this, remember to take care of yourselves during graduate school. Baylor offers [the counseling center](#), online counseling, and the spiritual life center. The counseling center offers free services for individuals, couples, and groups. For more information about the mental health services provided by Baylor, check out [this page from the Graduate School](#). You can also just visit the counselling center in the SLC: They take walk-ins during most open hours.

### THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Baylor Graduate School maintains an [invaluable website](#) for current students, with resources on timelines to graduation, student housing, job opportunities, and more.

### HEALTH CENTER

The Baylor Health Center, located in the SLC, offers a variety of basic primary care services, listed on [their website](#).

## **GSA**

Baylor's Graduate Student Association is always putting on events and workshops. You will receive frequent emails from the GSA and from EGSA's GSA representative. The Baylor GSA Facebook page is also a good way to stay on top of all of the most recent details. We also have multiple English Department students serving on their leadership team, so do your best to support the GSA.