



BROWN
Department of
English

Graduate Student Handbook, 2025-2026

The purpose of this handbook is to explain the procedures by which you will prepare yourself to navigate the different stages of your graduate study in English, and to lay the foundation for a range of career possibilities, including but not limited to university or college teaching and the practice and work of scholarship and criticism. It is your responsibility as a student in the graduate program to read this document carefully and to consult it when questions about the program arise. Because the department faculty and profession are continually changing, these procedures are revised on a regular basis. As we discover ways of improving the Graduate Program in English, we will bring these proposals to the Graduate Committee. That committee sometimes recommends revisions that require approval of both the English Department faculty and the Graduate Council. When such changes in the Graduate Program have been approved, we will include them in the online version of the handbook at the Department of English website.

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INTRODUCTION

Brown's doctoral program in English offers professional training in literary criticism, critical theory, intellectual history, and all aspects of research and pedagogy in the humanities. We promote the analysis of imaginative forms, cultural logics, and literary and visual rhetorics across the Anglophone world. Our students are encouraged to think outside traditional conceptions of the discipline of literary studies, and often work with a diverse range of faculty, departments, and intellectual centers at Brown. These include the Cogut Institute for the Humanities, the Pembroke Center, the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, the Center for Contemporary South Asia, the Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America, the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, and the Departments of Modern Culture and Media, Comparative Literature, History, American Studies, Africana Studies, Literary Arts, French Studies, German Studies, Hispanic Studies, Brazilian and Portuguese Studies, the History of Art and Architecture, and Music.

COURSEWORK AND SCHOLARSHIP

When You Arrive on Campus

Your first and principal contacts in the English Department are the Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Director of Graduate Studies. You also have the support of the English Department Student Affairs Manager, Sarah Madsen, who works closely with both the DGS and Associate DGS.

DGS

- Academic Advising
- Dean's Faculty Fellowship
- DEP Applications
- EGO Liaison
- Evaluation Letters
- Fellowship and Funding Opportunities: Ios, Proctorships, Travel Funding
- Leaves of Absence/Parental Relief
- Milestones: End of First Year Meeting & Focused Summer Reading, Qualifying Exam, Dissertation Committee, Transitional MA
- Open Graduate Program
- Orientation
- Teaching Assignments
- Transfer Credits
- Travel
- Working Groups

Associate DGS

- Admissions
- Faculty Mentors and Assignments
- Graduate Student Digital CV

- Language Exams
- Recruitment Effort
- Recruitment Lecture

Student Affairs Manager

- Appointments and stipends
- Coordination of Language Exams, Qualifying Exams, Dissertation Defenses
- Event Support
- General Inquiries
- Graduate School Liaison
- Language Exams
- Location Updates
- Milestone Deadlines
- Office Assignments
- Reimbursements
- Student Records
- Travel Notifications

A week or so before classes begin, you will make an appointment with the DGS to plan your coursework and to discuss any other issues related to your first year of graduate study.

We encourage you to approach your first year of coursework with an open and inquisitive mind. Chances are that the resources at Brown differ significantly from those of your undergraduate or M.A. granting institution. Ask yourself how graduate work requires you to change the way of reading, the kind of writing, and the research methods you practiced at that institution. Consider what kinds of scholarship and criticism we do particularly well at Brown. Then imagine how you want to fill the following course requirements:

Course Requirements for the Ph.D.

1. Candidates for the Ph.D. are required to take at least 13 courses for a grade. These courses will ideally be distributed as follows: 6 in the first year, 5 in the second year, and 2 in the third year. The 2 courses taken in the third year may be independent studies designed to help students prepare for the qualifying exam.
2. Candidates for the Ph.D. are required to take at least one course in each of the following areas: Area I: Medieval and Early Modern Literatures and Cultures, Area II: Enlightenment and the Rise of National Literatures and Cultures, Area III: Modern and Contemporary Literatures and Cultures.
3. Incoming graduate students are required to take ENGL2210: Proseminar during the first semester of the first year. This Proseminar aims to familiarize students with contemporary critical debates and stances in the wider discipline, and to engage with current methodologies, theories, and analytical tensions. It will also address issues of professionalization as they relate to the first years of graduate work. (The grade option for this seminar is mandatory S/NC.)

4. During the first year of study, candidates for the Ph.D. are required to take one course that focuses on the study of race and empire, which may also satisfy one of the three area requirements listed above.
5. Candidates for the Ph.D. will be required to take ENGL 2950: Seminar in Pedagogy and Composition Theory as one of their 13 courses in the fall semester of the second year. ENGL 2950 prepares graduate students to teach ENGL 0900: Critical Reading and Writing I: The Academic Essay and ENGL 0200: Seminars in Writing, Literatures, and Cultures, and to assist faculty in larger literature classes. It also prepares graduate students for teaching by examining methods of critical reading and writing, by investigating the differences and relations between process-oriented writing and rhetoric-oriented writing, and by reference to current debates in pedagogy theory.
6. Independent Studies should not be taken during the first two years of graduate study except under extraordinary circumstances and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.
7. Lectures held in the Department of English are considered part of your professional training. Our expectation is that graduate students will view themselves as part of the intellectual community of the English Department and the university, and attending these events is an integral part of fostering and sustaining this community.
8. Students who have earned an M.A. at another institution may request to transfer up to a year's worth of courses. This request can be made either after the completion of the first year or during the second year. Students wishing to do so should schedule an appointment with the DGS. They should bring to that meeting a copy of their transcript and any additional material— syllabi, for instance—that will help the DGS to determine the appropriateness of the course(s) they wish to transfer and which requirements they may satisfy.

First-Year Review

During your first year and in preparation for your review, we urge you to explore the major areas in which you might want to work. Your first-year review consists of a brief meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies and two other faculty members during which you will describe the area of study that interests you most and how you see yourself pursuing a course of study that will lead to a dissertation in that area. This meeting is also an occasion for you to ask about courses to take and faculty to seek out for help in that area. The student will need to provide the DGS with a paragraph outlining their areas of interest and intellectual preoccupations as well as a sense of the primary field in which they plan to specialize. The objective is to give you a sense of Brown's resources in the area you choose and to make sure your plans will indeed prepare you for an academic career. First-year meetings usually take place in the spring semester.

Guided by the first-year review, you should spend the second and third years of course work acquiring breadth and depth in your chosen field. Each of the three areas listed under course requirements (Area I: Medieval and Early Modern Literatures and Cultures, Area II: Enlightenment and the Rise of National Literatures and Cultures,

Area III: Modern and Contemporary Literatures and Cultures) includes both English and American literatures and, in some cases, other national literatures written in English, as well as the cultural-historical and critical-theoretical discourses required of a specialist in these literatures. Each therefore extends a very broad umbrella, and no one can hope to become an expert in all the materials and issues belonging to any one of them. While we ask you to become familiar with an entire area, we also ask you to identify a literary or cultural topic or problem that makes that area intellectually coherent for you. You have considerable freedom in defining your field of specialization, provided that it fits within one or crosses between two of the general areas of the department, and that it is an area that the profession at large recognizes as important to the discipline.

In selecting an area, bear in mind that we encourage students to enrich their course work in the Department of English with courses in such departments as American Studies, Comparative Literature, History, Modern Culture and Media, and Theatre Arts and Performance Studies as well as the Cogut Institute, Pembroke Center, and programs in Medieval Studies and Renaissance Studies. Several members of the faculty are affiliated with these departments.

Incompletes

In exceptional circumstances, you may request to receive an “I” as a letter grade for a course, denoting an incomplete. Incompletes can only be taken with the prior consent of the faculty member teaching the course. We advise you to avoid accumulating incompletes: they can greatly impede your progress through the program and can have a significant impact on your annual evaluation (see below). The deadlines for making up incompletes are as follows: for courses taken in Semester I, by mid semester of Semester II; for Semester II, by the first day of the following semester. These can be extended only at the request of the instructor. However, any incomplete that remains one calendar year after the end of the semester in which the course was taken turns into an “NC,” or “no credit,” and you will have to make up that credit by taking another course.

Evaluation

The DGS convenes the department faculty twice each year—usually during the winter intercession and in May—for the purpose of evaluating every graduate student. We make these evaluations on the basis of written evaluations and commentary of those faculty who have been responsible for teaching, examining, or directing respective students during the preceding semester. Faculty commentary during meetings is confidential.

Following the spring evaluation meeting, you will receive a letter from the DGS indicating your academic standing. You will also receive copies of the written evaluations from those faculty members who have supervised your coursework, exams, teaching, or dissertation. This letter may also mention any concerns about your adaptation to academic life that if not rectified might limit your ability to secure an academic position. The letter of evaluation typically concludes with an assessment of your progress toward the Ph.D., which is evaluated with reference to the following milestones:

Year One: 6 Courses

Semester I: 3 Courses - Proseminar (ENGL 2210) Required

Semester II: 3 Courses

Satisfactory first-year review

Focused reading requirement completed over the summer

Year Two: 5 Courses

Semester I: 3 Courses - Seminar in Pedagogy & Composition (ENGL 2950) required
TA in lecture course; good execution of teaching responsibilities

Semester II: 2 Courses

TA in lecture course; good execution of teaching responsibilities

Language exam passed by the end of summer

Agreement of a faculty member to serve as chair of qualifying exam
committee (by May 31st)

Year Three: 2 Courses

Semester I: 1 Course (typically an independent study with qualifying exam committee
chair)
TF in ENGL 0900 (composition) or ENGL 0200 (seminar); good execution of
teaching responsibilities
Formation of qualifying exam committee - **finalized by September 1**
Reading lists due to qualifying exam committee members - **by October 15**

Semester II: 1 Course (typically an independent study with qualifying exam committee
chair)
TF in ENGL 0900 (composition) or ENGL 0200 (seminar); good execution of
teaching responsibilities
The field essay that comprises the framework for your qualifying exam due to
committee members - **at least one week prior to your scheduled exam**
Completion of qualifying exam - **by April 15**

Year Four:

Semester I: Formation of dissertation committee - **by September 15**
One-page statement of accomplishments over the summer - **by September
15**
Completion of the dissertation proposal and first chapter - **by December 15**
Dissertation Fellowship

Semester II: First chapter and prospectus colloquium with full dissertation committee
- **by February 15**
Completion of draft of second chapter - **by June 15**
Dissertation Fellowship
Substantial progress on the dissertation, certified by dissertation advisor

Year Five:

Semester I: TA
Expectation of article submission
Substantial progress on the dissertation, certified by dissertation advisor

Semester II: TA
Substantial progress on the dissertation, certified by dissertation advisor

Year Six:

Semester I: TA or Interdisciplinary Opportunity
Substantial progress on the dissertation, certified by dissertation advisor

Semester II: TA or Interdisciplinary Opportunity
Substantial progress on the dissertation, certified by dissertation advisor

You should bear in mind that you must complete the milestones in a timely fashion. Failure to do so will automatically lead to the department submitting a change of status to the Graduate School, i.e., satisfactory or warning, or even termination from the program. Please consult the Graduate School's guidelines regarding Academic Standing and Warning Policy.

[Review the Graduate School Handbook.](#)

Letter of Evaluation

On the basis of the faculty's assessment of your progress toward the Ph.D., the DGS will make one of several recommendations:

1. As a result of your successful progress toward the degree, you are approved to continue in the program, and will continue to receive financial support in the following year, either through a TA'ship or a fellowship.
2. If the faculty review indicates a deficiency in any aspect of your work, you will be asked to take steps to correct the problem before your next review. In most cases, it is meant to ensure your success in the program. However, in cases where the faculty has serious reservations about a student's progress toward the Ph.D., they may ask the DGS to issue a warning that, unless progress is demonstrated by the

next review, the student's standing in the program and funding may be seriously jeopardized.

3. If faculty reservations about the quality of your work are especially serious, the DGS may be obliged to recommend that you complete requirements for the transitional M.A. and not proceed further toward the Ph.D.
4. If you accumulate too many incompletes, the DGS may be obliged to recommend that you take a leave until the problem is resolved and the work completed.

You are entitled to receive your letter from the DGS in a timely fashion after the faculty evaluation meeting. As a first-year student, you will receive a letter of evaluation after each of your first two semesters. After that, you receive a letter only at the end of the year unless there is some specific and immediate cause for concern. It is not uncommon for the DGS to ask you to make an appointment to discuss your evaluation in some detail. Of course, you are also welcome to request such an appointment yourself.

Language Requirement

The language requirement needs to be completed by the end of the second year. Under some circumstances it may be completed during the third year but must be completed before taking the qualifying exam. The Graduate Program in English requires Ph.D. candidates to fulfill the language requirement by taking a translation exam in one language other than English. We do not require you to speak or write this language, but we do require you to know how to locate research material pertinent to your graduate coursework and dissertation and to be able to read that material at a level that will allow you to make good use of it in your scholarly work.

Language examinations that test for this reading competence are usually administered by the English Department faculty, although sometimes by other Brown faculty. If you present a language as pertinent to your scholarship that no Brown faculty member can examine, we will do our best to arrange for an outside examiner.

The Department of English offers language competency exams twice a year: during orientation week, and during the winter intercession. The exam consists of two passages up to but no more than 500 words per passage, one literary and one scholarly (if appropriate to the language), which you must translate within a two-hour period. Dictionaries can be used. On the basis of this translation, the examiner will determine if you can use texts in the relevant language to conduct your scholarship. Should your examination be passed by the examiner, no second opinion is required. Should your examiner decide you failed your exam will be read by a second examiner; if the two disagree a third reader will decide the matter. You cannot pass one part of the exam and retake the other at a later date. If you fail either part of the exam, you must take and pass both parts again. You may take a language competency exam as many times as necessary.

If you already possess competency in a language other than English, you may present a written petition to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will decide whether to accept your petition or recommend some other course of action for filling the language requirement.

Qualifying Exam in English (Revised May 2024)

The Qualifying Exam in English is a critical part of graduate training that takes place in the spring semester of your third year. It comprises an oral exam that lasts two to two-and-a-half hours, which will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your familiarity and fluency with three fields of study (one primary and two secondary). Reading lists as well as a written field essay comprise the written framework for the questions you will be asked. These documents will assist the committee in formulating their questions, identifying for them the issues and problematics that are important to you. As such they provide you with an opportunity to set the agenda, to some degree, for the exam itself, which is oral. It is intended to provide you with a formal opportunity to present yourself as a qualified scholar of the fields you've chosen as evidenced by your ability to discuss substantively the material you have studied over the past year. You will prepare for the exam by familiarizing yourself with and deepening your knowledge of the literary works central to each of your fields, along with the literary-historical, theoretical, critical, and methodological arguments that have shaped their formation.

We recommend that your primary field be constituted in relation to the academic job market, which is typically organized by historical period and/or geographical area: i.e. Early Modern, Post-1945 US Literature, etc. Your second and third fields may be constructed along similar lines (that is, additional periods or areas). Alternatively, these other fields may represent adjacent matters of theory, genre, approach, etc. They might also be devoted to broad topical or conceptual problems and approaches. The primary field list will consist of 40 works. The two secondary field lists will consist of 30 works each. These lists should comprise a balance of literary, critical, and theoretical texts. Note: you can expect the composition of these lists to shift as you study for the exam and meet with the members of your committee.

You will begin planning for the Qualifying Exam during the spring semester of your second year. By **May 31st**, you should have in place the faculty member who will serve as the chair of your exam committee. The chair presides over the exam and is typically the faculty member with whom you will work most closely leading up to the examination. The composition of the entire examination committee should be finalized by **September 1st** of your third year and reported to the DGS and the Student Affairs Manager.

The two courses that you take during the third year should be aligned with your preparation for the Qualifying Examination and selected in consultation with both the chair of your examination committee and the DGS. You may take relevant graduate seminars. You may also devise independent studies or supervised readings under the direction of a member of your exam committee. At any rate, you should be meeting regularly (i.e. at least three times) with each of the members of the committee during your third year.

The deadline for taking the Qualifying Examination is **April 15th** of your third year in the program. The foreign language requirement must be fulfilled before this date. It is your responsibility by **April 1st** to schedule a date and time for the exam and then notify the DGS and the Student Affairs Manager. You may retake the Qualifying Examination a second time (by **May 31**) if you do not pass it the first time.

Fields Lists:

1. The primary field list will consist of 40 works.
2. The two secondary field lists will consist of 30 works each.
(These field lists may include literary, critical, and theoretical texts.)

Field Essay:

You will write an essay (2,500 words maximum) explaining how you see your three fields fitting together and identifying the problematics and questions that have emerged as your primary points of interest. This essay shouldn't be a comprehensive summary of the works on your lists. Instead, it should reveal your ability to synthesize various clusters of literary, critical and/or theoretical works into coherent groupings and to put those groupings into productive conversation with one another. It should ultimately convey the particular vantage points from which you, as a scholar of these fields, conceptualize them and their relationship to one another.

The field lists and especially the field essay will allow you to help set the terms for the exam itself, during which you will be asked to discuss works on your lists directly as well as your framing of the works on your lists in your essays. It is likely that over the year of exam preparation, you will produce writing that will help you synthesize your thinking as it develops, some of which may well anticipate the field essay itself. Do keep in mind, however, that the aim of the field essay and field lists is to provide a framework for the questions that will be asked during the exam itself.

You will submit the finalized individual field lists and the field essay to your committee at least one week before the Qualifying Exam itself. Reading lists should also be submitted to the Student Affairs Manager at this time. These materials will be made available to later cohorts to assist them with their exam prep.

Dissertation Proposal and First Chapter

After you have passed your language exam and qualifying examination you write a dissertation proposal and first chapter while on fellowship support. In addition to internal fellowships, a number of national granting agencies offer highly competitive fellowships for dissertation research, and we strongly urge our graduate students to apply (see Outside Fellowships).

During the summer following your qualifying examination, you should finalize your dissertation committee at the latest by September 15th. In addition, you must also submit to the supervisor and the Director of Graduate Studies a one-page statement of your accomplishments over the summer by September 15th. (For example, the latter may include article writing, reading and research undertaken, written progress on the proposal and first chapter, conferences or workshops attended.) Once you have established the faculty members on your committee, you should seek their advice as early as possible after your Qualifying Examination to help you formulate your dissertation proposal and chapter. The dissertation committee is usually composed of three members of the faculty selected for their competence in your area of specialization, and compatibility with your approach to that material. It may, but does not have to, comprise the same faculty members as your examination committee. It is your responsibility to determine, with a

director of your choice, the scope and objective of your dissertation, as well as the other faculty members who should serve on your dissertation committee.

The dissertation proposal is a written statement that explains the set of problems you will discuss in your dissertation, and what is at stake in addressing these issues. It should also set out how you plan to investigate these issues, including detailing a preliminary range of primary materials to be examined. The document should include chapter descriptions, which will indicate both primary sources to be addressed and the issues to be taken up. This is not to say that your object of analysis must only be verbal. Some students produce dissertations that include visual media. Indeed, it is not uncommon for dissertations to cross disciplinary divides and deal with several media, just as dissertations often deal with works from various national literatures. The dissertation proposal is 5-6 pages long, and is not an introduction to a dissertation. It is also not meant to be the definitive statement on the scope of your project. Indeed, your arguments and texts of study will shift as you develop your dissertation. The proposal's role is not to demonstrate mastery over the project, but to aid and focus your own thinking towards developing that argument. Its format consists of 1-2 introductory paragraphs that summarize the arc of your dissertation, and state the critical interventions you wish to make in your field. You will then follow with paragraph-length descriptions of each of your projected chapters, along with provisional titles. Finally, you must include a bibliography with your proposal that combines both primary and secondary materials, and consists of roughly 25-35 texts that have helped you to formulate your arguments.

Your chapter, however, should be the most significant focus of your work immediately after the Qualifying Examination. In fact, it may emerge in transformed fashion out of one of your graduate seminar papers. Hopefully, it will serve as a launching pad for your initial research. The chapter should be at least 25 pages in length, adhere to MLA style guidelines with proper footnotes, and submitted (with your proposal) as a polished and completed piece of writing to your dissertation committee by December 15th. In other words, the chapter is not a rough draft, but a full-fledged example of your critical writing. As you continue to research your project, the location of the chapter in the larger plan of your dissertation may change, as will many of your critical positions. But it should be submitted as a clear incarnation of one of the chapters described in your proposal.

While the proposal serves to plan out the broad direction of your project, the chapter is an in-depth exploration of an issue or cluster of issues that form a structural part of the dissertation. The chapter is an important initial document that will show your committee that the project has a coherent objective, the critical means of reaching that objective, and the potential to make a contribution to the discipline. It should reveal the particular objectives that are relevant for that chapter, and develop arguments that emerge out of the governing thesis of your dissertation. You might also think of the chapter as the source out of which you could draw a future journal article, although this is by no means a requirement.

Your entire dissertation committee must submit a signed approval form for the proposal and chapter before the documents can be accepted by the DGS. It is essential that both documents indicate the contours of an argument. We want your work to gain recognition as important, quality work by colleagues in the profession who might hire an entry-level Ph.D. in your field. Approved proposals (not chapters) are considered public documents

and are on file for you to consult as examples. See the Student Affairs Manager for approved dissertation proposals.

By February 15 of the fourth year, students must schedule a first chapter and proposal colloquium with the full dissertation committee. The aim of the colloquium is threefold: 1) to allow an opportunity for each faculty member's feedback on the dissertation proposal and first chapter to be heard by the student as well as the other members of the committee; 2) to clarify the role that each faculty member of the committee will play; and 3) to facilitate a sense of alignment between the committee and the student about the direction and shape of the dissertation project.

Second Chapter

Students submit to their entire committee a complete draft of a second chapter from their dissertation by June 15 of their 4th year. It is the committee's responsibility to specify to the students their expectations about the state of that chapter. The dissertation director must confirm approval via email. The confirmation approval email should be sent to the Student Affairs Manager by the deadline.

Article Publication

By the first semester of their fifth year, we recommend that students have an article sent out for review in a journal. The article doesn't have to be from their dissertation, nor does it have to emerge out of their particular field of expertise. While the department does not emphasize this as a milestone, students should think seriously about article writing and publication as a component of their professionalization.

Your dissertation is the basis on which other colleges and universities will want to interview you for a faculty position. For at least the first five years of your professional life, your dissertation research will supply much of the material for the courses you teach and the material you publish. Your chances of doing well professionally depend on your interest in your research as well as the quality of work you do. It is of course important that critics and scholars at other universities understand the value of your intellectual work, but it is equally important that you like it too.

Completing the Ph.D.

Beginning in Fall 2019, graduate students are eligible to have degrees conferred and to receive their diploma in October and February as well as in May.

Visit the Graduate School's website for detailed information on graduate degree conferrals and associated deadlines. A final copy of your dissertation using Brown's electronic theses and dissertation (ETD) system and all documents and surveys must be submitted by the associated deadlines for each degree conferral date.

[Review Graduate Degree Conferral Dates.](#)
[Review Dissertation Guidelines.](#)

You should consult with your dissertation committee to arrange a time for the defense in accordance with the relevant deadlines. When the defense is arranged, you should submit to the Student Affairs Manager appropriate dissertation defense information (dissertation title, committee members, previous degrees, and date/time of defense). A Dissertation

Defense Information Form will be completed by the Student Affairs Manager and submitted to the Graduate School. The DGS will issue a public notice of the defense, extend invitations to fellow students and faculty you may wish to include, and explain to you the procedures of the defense itself.

The defense generally takes the form of questions, first by the members of your dissertation committee and then by the others present. This is your opportunity to find out what you need to do to transform your dissertation into a book manuscript and what other projects might develop from the project you have just completed. If traveling to Brown for a defense constitutes a hardship, or in cases where students have had an opportunity to ask and answer most of the questions about the future of their manuscript, the dissertation director, DGS, and Associate Dean of the Graduate School may conduct the defense over Zoom or, if this proves to be unfeasible, endorse waiving the dissertation defense.

Going on the Academic and Non-Academic Job Market

Students have a much better chance of securing a job if they have completed, or nearly completed, the dissertation and, in the case of academic positions, published at least one article in a prominent journal in their field. "Trying out" the academic job market before you have these accomplishments on your c.v. is not a good idea. The job search demands a tremendous amount of work from you, your dissertation committee, and the Careers Committee. Without proper preparation, you are likely to spend a lot of potentially productive time and energy demoralizing yourself. You should discuss with the chair of your dissertation committee whether or not you are ready for the job market.

In addition to a nearly completed dissertation and evidence of your ability to publish, a successful search requires a professional c.v., a brief but compelling description of your dissertation, and, for academic positions, a refined writing sample from your dissertation. The Careers Committee will help you prepare your credentials and letter of application, review the Modern Language Association Job Information List for openings appropriate for you, arrange mock interviews, rehearse your job talk when you are invited to an on-campus interview, and help you through negotiations. Sample CVs, letters of application and dissertation abstracts are shared with job candidates via Google Drive.

TEACHING

Teaching Assistantships

Brown's Ph.D. program trains graduate students to become teachers as well as researchers. Thus, we require that, with some exceptions, our students teach for three years as assistants to members of the department faculty and as instructors of sections of expository writing and Seminars in English Literatures and Cultures (ENGL 0200). This teaching begins in the second year of the program. As part of the requisite course work, all students are required to take the Seminar in Pedagogy and Composition Theory (ENGL 2950). This course is taken during the first semester of the second year. To facilitate the development of their teaching skills, we assign students to positions ranging from assistant in a large course to instructor of their own small course. Convinced of the intellectual relationship between teaching and research, we try to establish this relationship early on by assigning graduate students, whenever possible, to teach courses related to their general area of research and thus to work with faculty who may

serve as appropriate mentors.

The sequence of teaching assignments will usually follow this pattern:

1. **2nd-year students (Teaching Assistant)** lead discussion sections of large lecture courses under the direction of one or possibly two members of the English Department faculty. To the degree that enrollments permit, we try to match you to a lecture course in the area you have designated as your specialization at your first-year review. [Class size of discussion sections should be no more than 25 students].
2. **3rd-year students (Teaching Fellow)** design and teach their own sections of ENGL 0900 Critical Reading and Writing I: The Academic Essay and ENGL 0200 Seminars in Writing, Literatures, and Cultures. ENGL 2950 is designed to prepare you to teach our undergraduates how to think critically and to write college-level expository prose, both as a section leader and as a teacher of a course in composition and literature. [Class size of ENGL0900 and ENGL0200 should be no more than 17 students].
3. **4th-year students** who are making good progress on their dissertations will receive fellowship support and therefore do not teach.
4. **5th-year students (Teaching Assistant)** lead discussion sections of large lecture courses under the direction of one or possibly two members of the English Department faculty. [Class size of discussion sections should be no more than 25 students]. You may also apply for an interdisciplinary opportunity. Both teaching assistantships and Interdisciplinary Opportunities require that you are in residence (or on campus) during your fifth year.
5. **6th-year students:** Beginning in 2022, the Graduate School guarantees 6th year funding. You may be assigned a teaching assistantship, or apply for an interdisciplinary opportunity. Both teaching assistantships and Interdisciplinary Opportunities require that you are in residence (or on campus) during your sixth year.
6. The Graduate School has limited financial funds for tuition scholarships and support for health insurance and the health services fee for 7th-year students. To seek such an award, students can, in their sixth year, apply by submitting a Dissertation Extension Proposal.

Students must consult with the DGS and submit a UFunds application by March 1 in order to be considered for 7th-year funding. (The Graduate School does not provide stipend support to students beyond their sixth year unless they have received a COVID-19 Appointment Extension.)

[View Dissertation Extension Proposal Instructions.](#)

Teaching opportunities on an adjunct-basis are sometimes available in a number of English departments at universities and colleges in Rhode Island and Southern Massachusetts. These include the University of Rhode Island (Kingston), Salve Regina University (Newport), Bryant University (Smithfield), Providence College (Providence), Curry College (Milton, MA), Wheaton College (Norton, MA), Rhode

Island College (Providence), and Roger Williams University (Bristol).

Course Feedback Form

Course feedback forms serve several purposes: to monitor the quality of teaching at Brown, to help the department make staffing decisions, and to help you improve your teaching. In this respect, you are no different from faculty, who are required to collect confidential student evaluations near the end of each course. The department utilizes the University's online Course Feedback System. Students receive notification from the Dean of the College's office at the start of the evaluation period for the fall and spring semesters. It is important that you encourage your students to complete their online course evaluations before the evaluation period closes. Student evaluations will be available for review via EvaluationKit after all grades have been submitted. You should let your students know that you do not have access to their evaluations until you have turned in your final grades for the course.

At some point during your graduate career, you should have a member of the faculty, or the faculty member lecturing the course you are assisting, observe one of your classes and write an evaluation. Prepare them with copies of your syllabus or a good description of what you have been doing in discussion section and your teaching objectives in both cases. Toward the end of your graduate career, you might also benefit from inviting a faculty member to visit your class and write a teaching letter for your dossier in preparation for your venture into the job market.

English 0200 Evaluators

Since they are part of the English Department's teaching staff, instructors for ENGL 0200 are evaluated by the department. Each graduate student making proposals for sections of ENGL 0200 must select a faculty evaluator before drafts of the proposals are submitted to the English Department Curriculum Committee. The name of the faculty evaluator must be submitted by the student to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Student Affairs Manager. The Director of Graduate Studies will contact the faculty members who have been selected to obtain their agreement to serve as course evaluators. The evaluator must visit each section of ENGL 0200 offered by the graduate student at least once, and complete a written assessment of the course. The assessment may be shared with the student immediately following the classroom visit, if the evaluator chooses, but is also retained in the student's department file. The role of the evaluator extends beyond this. Before the ENGL 0200 proposals are sent to the Curriculum Committee in the fall, the evaluator and the prospective instructor should meet to discuss the content of the proposed course and develop the course description. There might be another discussion before the syllabus is finalized for each semester and book orders are due. In addition, if any problems or questions arise while the course is being taught, the evaluator will discuss them. However, in the case of student grievances against the instructor of ENGL 0200 such grievances will be handled in the usual way and not by the ENGL 0200 evaluator. All department evaluations of ENGL 0200 are subject to the normal rules of confidentiality. Any grievances should be addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Guidelines for Faculty Use of Teaching Assistants

The Graduate School's policy is that Teaching Assistants spend an average of 20 hours

a week on teaching.

1. While you may have to do a lot more work in some weeks than in others, the average hours you put in over the semester should not exceed this limit. It is your responsibility to ask the faculty member running the course when the heavy-duty periods of the semester come and to plan your work accordingly.
2. You are not expected to do all the grading of papers and exams. This work should be divided equitably between you and the faculty member in charge.
3. You are not expected to lead more than one section.
4. In keeping with your training as a teacher, you may be asked to deliver a lecture or two, help plan the syllabus, or develop some new material for the course.
5. The final grades are ultimately the faculty member's responsibility, and there should be a clear understanding between you and the faculty member as to how your authority is supposed to interact with his or hers.

Exceptions to the Teaching Requirement

On rare occasions, a student is supported by an outside source that prefers that he or she finish the degree program as quickly as possible and take a degree without training in teaching. In such instances, the department will not waive the teaching requirement, but may consider reducing it. You may be supported by the armed forces, religious orders, or foreign governments. Under this category fall those supported by the Mellon Foundation or by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), which offer full-time support for part of the time required to complete the degree. Mellon and SSHRC recipients teach during the rest of their training and in no case for less than one year.

You may, for a limited time during your period of study, hold a teaching assistantship in another department or program. Even where teaching in other fields is important to your training, we ask you to do a significant portion of your teaching in the English Department.

Teaching Resources and Opportunities

Students interested in further pedagogical training and independent teaching experiences may want to explore the following resources and programs:

1. [Sheridan Center Workshops, Certificate Programs and Teaching & Learning Resources](#)
2. [Summer@Brown teaching opportunities in the School of Professional Studies](#)
3. [Deans' Faculty Fellows program](#)
4. [Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program](#)
5. [Brown/Tougaloo Graduate Teaching Exchange](#)

RESOURCES

Library Resources

The main humanities library at Brown is the John D. Rockefeller Library. Tours of the library can be arranged upon request. Other resources at Brown include:

1. The John Hay Library, which houses an eclectic selection of rare and interesting materials, including the Harris Collection of American Poetry and Drama, a selection of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century aesthetic tracts, and an extensive collection of American extremist literature.
2. The John Carter Brown Library, internationally known for its collection of early American texts and other historical sources pertaining to both North and South America.
3. The Science Library with holdings of important documents in the history of science such as nineteenth-century medical texts and early works of psychoanalysis.

When you are ready to start work on your dissertation, you can sign up for a carrel in the library and for thesis loan privileges (which allow you to check out a book for a semester). Applications are available at the main circulation desk.

Computer Services

We recommend that you activate your Brown Gmail account once you receive the Graduate School's "Getting Ready for Graduate School" email.

[Activate your Brown Gmail account.](#)

If you wish to forward your Brown email to another email address, you can do it immediately after activating your Brown Gmail account. Be sure to take note of your Brown username and password. You will need them for the secure wifi, online grades, course websites, and accessing the Brown library from off campus.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) provides technical support for specific software. Software programs are available for free download for students.

[Visit the OIT Software Catalog.](#)

All active students have access to the MyPrint Pro network and receive instructions for networking their personal computer. There is no charge for printing.

The Diversity and Inclusion Officer

The Diversity and Inclusion Officer (DIO) is a faculty member who is responsible for overseeing the department's initiatives in support of Brown University's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Any suggestions or concerns that graduate students may have about matters of diversity and inclusion can be directed to the DIO, who serves as an ex-officio member of the English Department Graduate Committee and as a

liaison to the Vice President for Academic Development, Diversity and Inclusion.

The DIO for AY26 is Rolland Murray.

Grievance Procedures

Students' concerns regarding a faculty member should be brought to the DGS and Chair. The Graduate School has adopted a university-wide grievance procedure, to which you may turn if these less formal and local measures fail. These procedures are available here. If you want to discuss your situation with someone outside the department, contact the Dean of the Graduate School.

If one of your own students complains about your teaching and you cannot resolve the problem yourself, you should consult with the course supervisor or faculty evaluator. If the issue cannot be resolved at that point, you should take the matter to the DGS. In cases where there is some disagreement between you and the faculty member or between you and the DGS, the Chair will review the evidence, discuss the matter with everyone involved, and report his or her conclusions in writing to you. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this process, you may pursue the Graduate School's grievance procedures.

Grievance Procedures for Sexual Harassment, Discrimination

Brown University does not tolerate any form of harassment and discrimination. These issues are taken very seriously. Students should be aware of their professional responsibilities and follow the University's Codes of Academic and Student Conduct.

The Graduate School has strict policies in place, and offers information and resources for students in the Sexual Harassment Resource Guide for Graduate Students.

[Visit the Sexual Harassment Resource Guide for Graduate Students.](#)

The English Department has set procedures for dealing with these matters: students should meet with the Chair of the Department or the Director of Graduate Studies. Students may also contact the Associate Dean of Student Support and Deputy Title IX Officer at the Graduate School.

[Contact Maria Suarez, Associate Dean of Student Support and Deputy Title IX Officer at the Graduate School.](#)

Additional Resources:

- [Health Services](#)
- [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [University Ombuds](#)

All are equipped to help advise students on how to proceed.

FUNDING

The Tuition Requirement

Brown counts “tuition units” as well as academic credits: A full year’s tuition equals 8 tuition units. For 2025-26, this amount is \$71,000. It is important to note that tuition units are not the same as academic units. As a Ph.D. student, you are required to enroll in and complete 13 courses for academic credit.

Incoming doctoral students in the humanities receive six years of guaranteed financial support, including summers, a stipend, tuition remission, a health-services fee, and health and dental insurance.

Candidates for the Ph.D. must pay tuition fees for the equivalent of three years of full-time study (24 tuition units) unless they receive credit for work done at another institution. Fellowship support and teaching assistantships pay for 4 tuition units per semester or 8 per year. A Ph.D. candidate may transfer up to one year’s coursework at the discretion of the DGS.

External Funding

If external fellowships do not pay for 8 units of tuition credit for each year awarded, the Graduate School generally does. You will find information on external fellowship opportunities on the graduate school website.

[Review External Funding Opportunities and Guidelines.](#)

The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) assists graduate students who are seeking external support for research, education, and development projects.

[Review the Sponsored Projects website.](#)

The English department circulates information about fellowships via email.

Additional information is available in a yearly publication of the MLA (shelved with volumes of the PMLA in the library).

Summer Support

Funding is distributed across all twelve months. (Refer to your letter of admission for the number of years and the amount of support.)

[Review Graduate Student Stipend Information.](#)

Activities Outside of Stipended Appointments

Doctoral students receiving a fellowship, teaching assistantship, research

assistantship, or proctorship stipend should review the policy regarding the pursuit of compensated activities outside of the stipended appointment (not to exceed 12 hours per week), which was approved by the Graduate Council in March 2013.

[Review Activities Outside of Stipended Appointments.](#)

Taxes

Graduate students should be aware that teaching assistantships as well as other forms of employment at Brown are taxable. The University does not withhold taxes from fellowship awards. Students who receive fellowships are responsible for reporting their income accordingly.

[Visit the Payroll Office's website.](#)

Rebecca Summerhays Essay Prize

The Rebecca Summerhays Essay Prize is awarded annually to the best graduate student paper on any subject in literature and critical theory. The piece should be on the level of a publishable article, and no more than 35 double-spaced pages. It should conform to either MLA or Chicago styles. Papers already accepted for publication by journals at the time of the prize deadline are ineligible. Essays may be submitted using a Google form, which will be circulated by the department, in advance of the April deadline. A faculty committee will review submissions and award a prize of \$500. Graduate students must be actively enrolled in the Ph.D. program in English in order to be eligible to receive this award.

Graduate School Conference Travel

Graduate students in their first through sixth years who present papers at professional/academic conferences can apply to the Graduate School's Conference Travel Fund each fiscal year (June 1-May 31). Given funding limitations, application does not guarantee support. Funding will not be granted for merely attending a conference.

Instructions for completion and submission of a UFUNDS online conference travel application and the travel reimbursement process is available on the Graduate School's website.

[Read about Travel Reimbursement Guidelines.](#)

Separate applications are available in UFunds for in person and virtual conferences.

Note: Applications must be received by the Graduate School 30 days prior to travel to be eligible for funding. Questions related to conference travel should be submitted to graduate_travel@brown.edu.

On a case-by-case basis, the Graduate School will consider conference travel applications from sixth-year doctoral students or students who are beyond the fifth-year and on a COVID Appointment Extension, which will require DGS approval through UFunds.

Graduate students may submit a request for reimbursement prior to travel to the English Department's Student Affairs Manager Sarah Madsen for any expense paid for in advance and as long as the receipt indicates a zero balance. Expenses not fully paid for can be submitted once the student returns from travel. All reimbursement requests must be submitted to the Student Affairs Manager within 2 weeks after completion of travel.

Graduate School International Travel Fund

The Graduate School's International Travel Fund provides funding for graduate student conference presentations and research studies abroad. Funding decisions are based on the distance of the international conference from the continental United States, the budget requested, and the availability of funding at the time the request is received by the Graduate School.

Doctoral students in years 1 through 6 of their studies and master's students are automatically eligible to apply for the international travel fund award. Doctoral students in the sixth-year or students beyond the fifth-year and on a COVID Appointment Extension are also eligible but are required to have a signed DGS approval form to be completed in UFunds. All applications require proof of presentation at a conference or research summary for research travel and a brief budget summary, along with an approved Travel Safety Plan.

[Submit your Travel Safety Plan.](#)

The Graduate School must receive completed applications at least 30 days prior to travel. Only one award will be made per student within an award cycle (June 1 through May 31) determined by the end date of travel. These awards may be used in combination with other Graduate School travel awards, but are treated as funding internal to the Graduate School and therefore do not satisfy external award matching requirements that other travel awards may require.

[Apply for International Travel Grants.](#)

Applications are submitted through UFunds.

Graduate Student Council Conference and External Travel Funding

The Graduate Student Council offers additional conference and dissertation/field work related travel funding to cover costs for graduate students who have exceeded their eligibility for other means of funding.

[Apply for Graduate Student Council Funding.](#)

Doctoral Research Travel Grant

The Doctoral Research Travel Grant provides supplemental funding for scholarly research travel that occurs June 1 through May 31. Students in their first through fifth years of study are eligible to apply for a travel grant. Applications from sixth-year students will be considered if accompanied by a brief letter from the student's director of

graduate study or research advisor regarding how the research will assist the student in the completion of doctoral studies.

[Apply for Doctoral Research Travel Grants.](#)

Joukowsky Summer Research Award Program

The Joukowsky Summer Research Award Program provides funding for scholarly activities outside of Brown during the summer months. Students conducting research or traveling for other academic purposes (language programs, summer workshops, etc.) during the summer months (typically May – August) may be eligible for this award. Doctoral students beyond the fifth year of study are eligible to apply for this award. The application period each year is from January 1 through the last day in February.

[Apply for a Joukowsky Summer Research Award.](#)

Research Mobility Program

The Research Mobility Program funds current research projects of exceptional value that require sustained research activity in a given international or domestic location.

[Apply for a Research Mobility Fellowship.](#)

The Annual Graduate Student Lecture

Each year, depending upon available funds, the department will provide funding to graduate students to invite a guest speaker of their choice. The graduate students shall meet each spring as a group to discuss whom they would like to bring to campus. This effort is typically spearheaded and hosted by EGO. However, all active graduate students participate in the proposal process and visit. The department recommends students consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and other faculty before submitting the final. The lecture should be scheduled for the fall semester, typically by the beginning of November. The event includes a lecture and Q&A, followed by a light reception and dinner for four guests, including the speaker. Event hosts are strongly encouraged to work closely with the DGS on the speaker's introduction and rehearse beforehand.

CHANGES IN STATUS

Requests for a leave of absence should be sent in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies or a meeting with the DGS should be scheduled to discuss the request. The student will need to submit a leave form in UFunds. Once submitted, the DGS and Chair will receive notification for their approvals. More detailed information on leaves of absence, readmission, and parental relief can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook.

[Download the Graduate School Handbook.](#)

Leave Policy:

The Graduate School grants the following kinds of leave to our graduate students.

Family Leave of Absence:

A student in a graduate program at Brown may take an unpaid family leave of absence for the birth or adoption of a child, for childcare, or for care of an immediate family member (spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent) with a serious health condition. Students may take a family leave of absence for one or two semesters.

Medical or Psychological Leaves of Absence:

A student experiencing a serious physical or psychological problem that affects his or her academic performance may be granted a leave for treatment and recovery. A student experiencing difficulty in this realm should consult with the Graduate Associate Dean in the Office of Student Life (as well as University Health Services and/or Counseling and Psychological Services).

Professional Development Leave of Absence:

A graduate student may take a one or two semester leave for an approved educational or professional development opportunity that advances the student's pedagogic goals. Examples of reasons for a professional leave include full time professional internships or short-term teaching or research appointments at another institution.

Academic Probationary Leave of Absence:

A graduate student may take a one or two semester academic leave at the recommendation of his/her graduate program for problems related to academic performance. Probationary leaves must be accompanied by a plan of action that describes what the student needs to accomplish during the leave in order to be considered for reenrollment in the program.

Personal Leave of Absence:

A graduate student may take a one or two semester leave for personal reasons, with the possibility of extension for up to one additional year.

Readmission

To return to active status and to be eligible for funding in the next academic term, students must notify the Dean of the Graduate School and the Director of Graduate Studies in writing by May 1 for a Fall semester return or November 1 for a Spring semester return. If the DGS agrees, he or she will write a letter to the Graduate School in support of the request. You should keep in mind that there is a limit of five years between the date you pass your qualifying examination and when you complete your dissertation. A leave of absence counts as part of that time. If you pass the time limit and still wish to finish your dissertation, you will need to get the support of the DGS and your dissertation director to have the time limit waived.

Parental Relief

Recognizing the academic and professional demands on graduate student parents who are primary caregivers of newly born or adopted children, the parental relief policy provides stipended graduate students with an additional semester, or a summer, of

stipended support.

EXCHANGE SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Brown participates in an Exchange Scholar Program that enables advanced graduate students to study for one or two semesters in the graduate school of participating institutions, including the University of California at Berkeley, Brown, the University of Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. The exchange provides graduate students with the opportunity to draw upon the particular strengths of the exchange institution and to explore their discipline from a different perspective. Courses taken and research conducted with faculty members at one of the institutions above will be registered on the academic record and official transcript at Brown. Students are eligible to be Exchange Scholars only after completing an academic year of study in a doctoral degree program at Brown.

To participate in this program, you must pay tuition for full enrollment at your home institution and remain an active student while studying as an exchange scholar at the host institution. The host institution will charge for student health services if that is not included as part of tuition; the student may purchase either school's student health insurance. Students with external fellowships can continue that support away from Brown; students may hold a TA position at Brown while studying at a proximate university such as Harvard. Other students who are within the 6-year guaranteed funding window will either have to use their year of dissertation fellowship funding (with the approval of the program DGS and the Graduate School) or they may elect to forego stipend support for a year by taking advantage of the deferred funding under the Advanced Student Status option.

The program has also benefited students whose advisors are on sabbatical or have taken a new position at one of the participating institutions.

CROSS-REGISTRATION AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

There are agreements in place between Harvard University Faculty of Arts & Sciences and Brown and the Rhode Island School of Design to allow cross-registration of graduate students in courses without paying tuition to the host institution. To do this, you must get the appropriate cross registration form from the Registrar's Office and obtain the signatures of the DGS of each graduate program and a Dean from each Graduate School. If the student wants to take an entire semester's course work at Harvard, he or she should enroll in the Exchange Scholar program. Ordinarily, this option is only recommended for more advanced students.

[Visit the Cross-Registration page.](#)

ADDENDUM

Academic Advising

The DGS is ultimately responsible for all matters concerning advising. Throughout your time at Brown, you should feel free to consult with the DGS about any issues or questions you have concerning your experiences in the program.

The DGS will serve as your primary advisor during your first and second year, although you will also be assigned a faculty mentor who serves in a more informal capacity. (Mentors are usually in your research field and you should meet with them once or twice each semester to let them know how your course of study is going.) The DGS will arrange to meet with you at least twice each semester during these two years to discuss: your performance in the seminars you are taking; how your study plans are evolving; how various faculty and courses might help you meet those goals; and anything else related to your intellectual development and well-being as you progress through the program.

The DGS usually teaches the required proseminar (which you take during your first semester) and the Associate DGS co-teaches the pedagogy seminar, which you take during the first semester of your second year. Both courses include advising sessions related to your research and teaching. Some sessions will be conducted as one-on-one advising appointments while others may include additional members of your cohort. In the pedagogy seminar, you will also receive additional guidance and advising on teaching from the faculty member who co-teaches that seminar (currently Jonathan Readey), both individually and collectively.

Beginning in year 3, primary advising duties will shift to the faculty member who serves as the chair of your preliminary examination committee and/or dissertation committee. By that point in the program, you will have connected with a faculty member whose research interests harmonize best with your own (see p. 11 of the handbook for details), and they will serve as your principal mentor and will help you to: prepare your fields for the preliminary exam; strengthen your expertise in your chosen area(s) of specialization; identify and develop a compelling dissertation topic; provide you feedback as you write your dissertation; help you to prepare for the academic job market or for whatever professional field you choose to enter, to the best of their ability. This primary advisor supervises the preliminary exam and the dissertation defense. Typically the same person chairs both the exam and dissertation committees. However, your research interests might evolve in ways where it would make more sense to have a different faculty member direct the dissertation and/or revisit the makeup of the committee overall. You should formalize any changes between the qualifying exam and dissertation committees with all faculty members involved. In years 3 onward, you and your primary advisor should arrange to meet at least two times each semester.

Your secondary advisors from year 3 onward are the two other faculty members who serve on your preliminary exam and dissertation committee. They will play a supportive role in relation to the qualifying exam/dissertation committee chair, often in terms of developing a secondary subfield of expertise. You should arrange to meet with your secondary advisors at least once each semester.

If you have structural or procedural concerns about the Ph.D. program (i.e. with the curriculum, programming, milestones, procedures, etc.), contact the DGS or Associate DGS. You may instead contact the EGO reps and your year-cohort's representative to the English Graduate Committee. They will bring these to the attention of the DGS and the Graduate Committee.

If individual conflicts arise at any point with your advisor(s), you should consult with the DGS and they will help you arrive at a solution. If your issues involve the DGS, you should consult with the Department Chair. If your conflict involves both the Chair and the DGS, please consult either the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or the Associate Dean of Student Support.

The Advisor/Advisee Relationship

Student Responsibilities

- Make sufficient annual progress in the program in regards to coursework, teaching, qualifying exam preparation, prospectus, research and writing, and producing the dissertation in accordance with the departmental milestones;
- Solicit and be responsive to the advisor's input on course selection, intellectual directions, knowledge of the field, qualifying exam preparation, and dissertation writing and research;
- Establish an understanding with their advisor about their progress in the program each year and, after year three, the timing and nature of dissertation chapter delivery and feedback;
- Request letters of support well in advance of deadlines (preferably a month), and provide accompanying materials as early as possible.

DGS and Primary Advisor Responsibilities

- Support their graduate advisees;
- Maintain contact throughout the student's program, including regular meetings when on campus and regular email contact while off campus;
 - The DGS should arrange two meetings each semester during the first two years;
 - In the remaining years, the chair of the qualifying exam/dissertation committees should check in with their advisees every couple of months;
- Remain familiar with the program's structure, requirements, and deadlines, and be in conversation with the student about such dates;
- Consider the full range of professional development for their advisees and help

- identify opportunities that contribute to their professional development;
- Produce timely feedback on submitted writing (4 weeks is the standard turnaround time unless the student and advisor discuss and agree on a different time frame);
- Write letters of recommendation and support in a timely manner;
- Conduct themselves with the highest level of integrity and according to the best practices of the university and the profession;
- Continue their responsibilities to their advisees even while on leave;
- Be available to students during the summers;
- Inform the advisee and the DGS if they are no longer able to discharge any of these duties;
- [Review the Graduate School's Advising and Mentoring Resources for Faculty website.](#)
- [Review Best Practices for Faculty Advising.](#)

The TA/Supervising Faculty Relationship: Best Practices and Responsibilities

As noted on the Graduate School's website, the duties of a Teaching Assistant vary across courses and departments, and the ones that are the most relevant to ours are:

- Leading discussion sections
- Holding office hours
- Grading papers, quizzes, and examinations

As they further note:

Departments make every effort to assign graduate students to courses according to their interests, broadly defined; however, the need to cover courses and to broaden student teaching experiences may also affect teaching assignments. A full appointment usually requires at least 18 hours of work per week, but should not exceed a maximum of 20 hours per week in any given week.

TAs in English are not expected to do all the grading of papers and exams, and each discussion section (including the one led by the faculty), should have roughly the same number of students. Enrollment for each discussion section is capped at 25. No TA will be expected to lead more than one section. Final grades are ultimately the faculty member's responsibility, and there should be a clear understanding between faculty and TAs as to how the TAs' authority should interact with that of the faculty supervisor.

TA Responsibilities

- TAs are to attend all lectures (barring health issues, personal and family emergencies, professional travel schedule, and unforeseen circumstances). It is important to inform the faculty supervisor of one's absence in advance, whenever possible.
- TAs are to hold discussion sections each week they are scheduled. If a TA is unable to hold their section, they are responsible for informing the faculty supervisor as

soon as possible and for rescheduling the missed section.

- Setting an example for undergraduate students during lectures is also important, so TAs should model such habits as attentiveness and thorough note-taking.
- TAs also are responsible for attending meetings about the course organized by the faculty supervisor. These meetings concern such important matters as formulating essay topics and exam questions, managing discussion sections, discussing current issues in the course (i.e., reading and writing assignments, student reception and discussion of literary texts, pedagogy, and standards for grading and evaluation of undergraduate written work).
- To that end, it is important for TAs to see themselves in a collaborative role: their input on course assignments, evaluation of essays and exams, and pedagogical strategies for discussing weekly readings is crucial to the success of the course.
- During the semester, unexpected difficulties may arise with particular students who are falling behind or are particularly difficult to engage productively. Each TA is responsible for trying to manage and support these students, while also informing the faculty supervisor of those who do not turn in written work, or chronically struggle with the material, or fail to conduct themselves in a reasonable manner.

Faculty Supervisor (FS) Responsibilities

- The FS provides TAs with syllabi in advance.
- The FS orders TAs desk copies of course books in advance and provides access to other course materials. If the FS runs into issues with publishers regarding desk copies, they should contact the office for assistance.
- At the start of the semester, the FS communicates clearly the relationship between their authority and that of the TA(s).
 - Issues to discuss might include how to handle: grading disputes, late papers, attendance, students wishing to switch sections or attend multiple people's office hours.
 - The FS and TA(s) might also discuss the possibility of guest-lectures by the TAs.
- The FS are to provide clear guidelines on grading standards for papers and other assignments. (This may involve establishing rubrics, grading sample papers with TAs, or reviewing TA-graded papers). They should also discuss the timeline for giving student feedback, making sure TAs have appropriate time to grade assignments.
- The FS schedules meetings as needed with their TAs over the course of the semester: for instance, at the start of term, around the writing assignments, to discuss grading guidelines, and in advance of any lecture(s) a TA may give.
- The FS provides TAs with the opportunity to run their own discussion sections for MWF classes. For TTh and online courses, where this may not be feasible, the FS

works with TAs to develop strategies that involve them in the teaching, i.e. giving lectures and/or leading discussion.

- The FS must observe student teaching at least once during the semester and provide feedback on their development as teachers afterward.
- At the end of the semester, the FS provides individual TAs with written feedback on their work in the course. This feedback may take the form of a version of the written assessment sent to the DGS, a separate written evaluation, and/or an in-person meeting.

If issues in the FS/TA relationship arise, please contact the DGS. Both faculty and graduate students should acquaint themselves with Article X-XI of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and the Graduate Labor Organization for an explanation for the various ways in which conflicts can be addressed.