

# GRADUATE HANDBOOK

*Department of English Language and  
Literatures*

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of English Language and Literatures  
Faculty of Arts

[english.ubc.ca](http://english.ubc.ca)

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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## Programs Offered

The Department of English Language and Literatures offers the following degrees:

- Master of Arts (MA) in English literature or language, with or without thesis, full-time or part-time
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English literature or language, full-time only

The department provides opportunities for research and study in all areas of literature in English, as well as in English language. The department offers approximately 20 graduate seminars per year. Students should remember, however, that faculty commitments and/or study leaves may make it impossible to cover every area in every year. Entering students should ensure that the areas in which they are interested are currently covered by the faculty.

For a list of current graduate faculty by area of specialization, click [here](#). For a list of current graduate course offerings, click [here](#). Prospective students may also wish to consult the course archive [here](#), since our offerings change frequently, according to the current research interests of our faculty.

Students concentrating in literature in English may take courses in English language, and vice versa. Students may also combine their departmental studies with some work in other departments (in recent years, these have included Geography, Philosophy, and Film Studies); however, students wishing to specialize in a related field should apply instead to the appropriate department.

Our department does not support or supervise creative or artistic projects. Graduate students enrolled in courses or writing theses and dissertations must submit their work in the form of traditional scholarly argument, method, and evidence. Students wishing to work in creative or artistic fields should apply to departments that are appropriate to these pursuits.

## English Language

Students who specialize in English Language may focus on discourse and genre analysis, history and structure of language, or history and theory of rhetoric. Language faculty teach and supervise research in the following areas: descriptive linguistics, historical linguistics, cognitive linguistics, functional grammar, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, stylistics, genre studies, and history and theory of rhetoric. Examples of recent course offerings include:

- Cognitive approaches to the language of literature
- The uses of classical rhetoric for contemporary critical practice
- Courses on reported speech and its rhetorical versatility across genres

Language students can also take a wide variety of literature courses on offer.

## English Literature

Students who specialize in English Literatures may focus on specific periods, genres, and significant figures in British, North American, and World literatures in English, or may work across disciplinary, conceptual, and historical fields. UBC's outstanding interdisciplinary programs include Medieval Studies, Canadian Studies, Indigenous Critical and Creative Studies, The Social Justice Institute, and the Graduate Program in Science and Technology Studies. Examples of current faculty research initiatives include:

- ecocriticism and Renaissance drama
- transport in Romantic poetry
- radio and modernist poetics
- the politics of post-identity in Asian American literature
- the role of war and trauma in twentieth-century Canadian, US and British literature

Literature students can also take advantage of a wide variety of language courses on offer.

## Library Resources

**UBC Libraries** hold more than 8.3 million volumes, more than 2.8 million e-books, more than 44,000 serial titles, and a huge (and growing) collection of non-book resources. The library is one of the largest research libraries in Canada and a high-ranking member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

The UBC **Rare Books and Special Collections** (RBSC) is home to outstanding research collections of rare books, pamphlets, photographs, archival records and historic maps. As the premier rare book and archival collection on Canada's west coast, RBSC has attracted significant donations from people who have settled in western Canada from around the world and includes resources such as the Chung Collection (more than 25,000 items on the exploration of the Pacific Northwest, the Chinese experience in North America and particularly in British Columbia, the history of British Columbia, and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company story); the Malcolm Lowry collection; the Victorian-Edwardian Colbeck, Penkill, and Angeli-Dennis collections; and many others.

Existing areas of strength include Canadian history (particularly western Canada), Pacific and Arctic exploration, history of cartography (RSBC has a particularly fine collection of historical maps), music, history of science and medicine, Chinese rare books, Japanese rare books and maps, fly fishing, and early children's literature. Notable author collections include Robert Burns, Ethel Wilson, Jane Rule, Doug Coupland, Joy Kogawa, Malcolm Lowry, and George Woodcock.

## Cost of Living

Living costs in Vancouver are relatively high, with housing accounting for the bulk of the expense. Incoming students should plan to allow sufficient time to secure acceptable housing. On-campus housing includes several residential, interdisciplinary graduate residences, such as [St John's College](#) and [Green College](#). The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies offers an [overview of on-campus options](#). All students, including those with fellowships and teaching assistantships, should ensure that they have sufficient supplemental funds to see them through the year. See the [Living Cost Calculator](#) for an estimate of current living costs.

## International Students

UBC welcomes applications from outstanding graduate students from all countries. Vancouver is a vibrant, multicultural city, and UBC has many resources to aid international students. UBC's International House offers an [overview of resources](#).

Our graduate program requires near-native English fluency of its students. It is a program in the study of literature, literary criticism and theory, rhetoric, discourse, and linguistics; it is not a program designed to improve the spoken and/or written English of non-native speakers of English. International students applying for admission to either the MA or the PhD program whose first language is not English are required to write the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test or International English Language Testing Service (IELTS); consult the [Admissions section](#) for more information, including required minimum test scores.

Note: If English is not your first language but your previous degree was undertaken at an institution where English is the language of instruction, a language test may not be required. Program coursework taken in English is not sufficient, English must be the university's official language of instruction to waive the language test requirement for applicants whose first language is not English.

Students from most English-language universities may apply directly to the PhD program after completing an MA in their own country. There are some exceptions; for further information on credit and degree equivalences, consult section on [Entrance Requirements](#).

International students accepted at UBC must obtain a student visa from [Citizenship and Immigration Canada](#) before entering Canada. Under current immigration policies, an international student cannot enter as a Permanent Resident. International students may seek employment outside the university, with a valid work permit, and their spouses may also do so, see "[Working Temporarily in Canada](#)."

All full-time international students are eligible for the International Tuition Award of up to \$3,200.00 per year. Click [here](#) for more information from the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

In addition to funding sources mentioned elsewhere, international students may be eligible for funding from their home countries.

Students from China: see <http://en.csc.edu.cn/laihua/noticeen.html>

Students from Germany: see <https://www.daad.de/de/>

Students from the US: see <http://www.nortonrosefulbright.com/us/>

## The Graduate Committee

The graduate program is administered by a committee of graduate faculty. The Chair and MA Advisor serve as general advisors for PhD and MA students respectively. Three graduate students, elected by their peers, also serve as representatives on the Graduate Committee. For the current makeup of the Graduate Committee please click [here](#).

# ADMISSION

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## General Information

Students seeking admission to graduate studies in English should apply using the online system which may be accessed through the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies application portal](#).

Meeting, or exceeding, the [minimum admission requirements](#) does not guarantee admission to UBC or our program, as the number of spaces in both the MA and PhD

programs is limited. First-class grades and strong letters of reference are expected of all successful applicants.

Information sessions for prospective students are offered by [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#).

Entrance requirements and other relevant information about admission can be found on the Department website. Applicants must comply with the regulations outlined there and on the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

## Financial Support

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic grade point average (over the last three years), letters of reference, the writing sample and the proposed program of work. This last is particularly important for PhD applications.

Students are responsible for securing letters of reference and ensuring that their applications are complete.

Satisfactory progress is expected of all students holding fellowships and assistantships, whether external or internal. The normal pattern of progress for students in the PhD program is outlined in the section on [PhD Degree Requirements](#). It is especially important that students holding fellowships or teaching assistantships attend to these expectations for progress through the degree program. Recommendations for initial awards and for renewals must be based on evidence of satisfactory progress toward the degree.

### Internal Funding: TA-ships, Sessional lectureships, and RA-ships

Teaching Assistants work 12 hours per week for each 16-week term, running discussion groups once a week and marking assignments and exams. Salaries are determined by experience. A graduate student who has completed two (2) years' service as a graduate student teaching assistant currently (2021-22) receives \$6,611.96 per term for a full-time TAship (GTA I). A graduate student with less than two (2) years' service as a graduate student teaching assistant receives \$6,362.48 per term for a full-time TAship (GTA II). Once a student has been appointed as a TA, they are entitled to reappointment according to the following schedule: PhD candidates are guaranteed TAships for 10 terms, and MA students are guaranteed TAships for 4 terms. Only Year 2+ students registered in the graduate program on a full-time basis, with full standing, and progressing at the accepted rate will be eligible for teaching assistantships. Students who at any point during the session fail to maintain their full-time status will ordinarily lose their assistantships. Renewal of an assistantship depends upon satisfactory progress in the degree program in which the

student is enrolled, academic achievement, satisfactory teaching reports, and the needs of the Department. To read the CUPE contract, click [here](#).

PhD students who are advanced to Candidacy may hold partial sessional lectureships.

Some faculty members hire part-time Research Assistants to do library and database research, proofreading, editing, web design, conference planning, obtaining permissions, etc. Students interested in assisting with faculty research are encouraged to approach faculty members with overlapping interests about possible employment.

## University Fellowships

**University Funding.** UBC offers outstanding PhD students Four-Year Fellowships (4YF) at the time of entrance. These fellowships provide a stipend of \$18,200 per year for each of the first four years, and also pay tuition for each of the first four years. The Department allocates a certain number of these awards each year, and they are offered to the top recruits in the incoming PhD class. The Department also uses Graduate Student Initiative (GSI) funds to provide additional entrance scholarships and multi-year support packages to incoming PhD students. Outstanding MA students may be offered entrance scholarships. The department may top up both PhD and MA awards with stipends and/or TAs and RAships dependent upon overall university budgets (see above). All funding is allocated on the basis of merit, as determined by the application package (transcripts, letters, and research statement). All eligible applicants are automatically considered for these awards. In addition, each fall, students are eligible to compete for general and criteria-based [Affiliated Awards](#).

**Aboriginal Graduate Fellowships.** Fellowships are available via an application process and administered through the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. For detailed information, please refer to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website [here](#).

**Rick Hansen “Man in Motion” Fellowships for Disabled Students.** These awards are made available by UBC to honour the incredible determination and many personal achievements of Rick Hansen. Two awards of \$16,000 are awarded each year to students with physical disabilities who are enrolled in a full-time graduate program at UBC. For detailed information, please refer to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website [here](#).

There are many other specialized and affiliation scholarships available through the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students are encouraged to peruse the list [here](#).

## English Departmental Fellowships, Scholarships and Prizes (no application necessary)

- **William Royce Butler and Jean Campbell Butler Scholarships** have been endowed through a bequest by Jean Campbell Butler, to honour the memory of Dr. G.G. Sedgewick, for Department of English undergraduate and graduate students.
- **The Mairi Grant Campbell Fellowship in English Literature.** This award is granted to an outstanding PhD student in English. It may be renewed for a second year subject to satisfactory performance.



- **The Ann and William Messenger Scholarship in English.** This award is granted to an outstanding PhD student in English. Current and incoming students are considered.
- **The Gilean Douglas Scholarship in English.** This scholarship is awarded annually to students completing their theses.
- **The David Macaree Memorial Scholarship in English.** This scholarship is awarded to a student in Eighteenth-century English studies who is entering the PhD program or has been admitted to candidacy.
- **Gabriele Helms Memorial Graduate Scholarship.** This scholarship is awarded to a graduate student studying Canadian Literature in the Department of English, with preference given to an international student.
- **Barbara Anne Wiebe Memorial Scholarship.** This scholarship is dedicated to undergraduate or graduate students studying English language and literature.
- **Mabel Mackenzie Colbeck Scholarship in English.** This scholarship is awarded to a student in the PhD program in English.
- **The Stanley Merritt Ellery Read Scholarship in English.** This scholarship is awarded to an MA or PhD student in English who has completed the first year of graduate study.
- **Carol Coates Literary Prize.** This prize is awarded to a student in English literature.
- **Paul G. Stanwood Prize in English.** This prize is awarded annually for the best PhD dissertation in English.
- **Leslie D. G. Brooks Memorial Prize.** This prize is awarded to a graduate student with preference to a student over 30 years of age whose studies have been interrupted for a period of time.
- **Milton and Bess Narod Scholarship in English.** Scholarships are offered by the estate of Milton and Bess Narod for students who demonstrate excellence in the study of English within the Faculty of Arts.
- **Janet Narod Memorial Scholarship.** A scholarship has been made available through an endowment established by her parents and friends in memory of Janet Narod who attended UBC from 1976 to 1980. The scholarship is awarded to the outstanding graduating student in Honours English, who intends to continue study at the graduate level at this university.
- **Professor Mo Steinberg Memorial Award in English Literature.** This award is offered by friends and family in memory of Dr. Moses “Mo” Wolfe Steinberg. The award is to be given to the student who best exemplifies an amalgam of academic excellence in English literature and the attributes of good citizenship.
- **Mary Ellen Henley Memorial Prize.** This prize has been endowed through a bequest by Mary Ellen Henley. It is awarded to the graduate student who achieves the

highest academic standing in one of the following seminars: ENGL 514, Studies in the Renaissance; ENGL 515, Shakespeare; ENGL 519, Studies in the Sixteenth Century; and ENGL 520, Studies in the Seventeenth Century.

- **Sherrill E. Grace Graduate Scholarship in English.** A scholarship has been endowed in honour of Dr. Sherrill E. Grace by her husband, Dr. John R. Grace, for graduate students in the Department of English who are conducting original research in the literary and/or cultural study of Canada that promises to advance understanding of the country and has potential for publication.
- **DESAI Graduate Scholarship in English Literature.** A scholarship is offered annually to a Masters of Arts, English Literature student in loving memory of Mr. J.V. Desai, who was a humble and brilliant man whose first love was for the English language. The ideal candidate would demonstrate an interest in travel and may be an international student or someone whose thesis investigates global issues.
- **Stanley M GRANT Scholarship in English.** Scholarships have been made available through an endowment established by the Estate of Dr. Stanley M Grant for students enrolled in the Department of English who have completed their first year.
- **Shakespeare Research Travel Fund.** The travel fund supports student doing advanced research at libraries and other research institutions around the world. The fund is made possible by a generous donation to the UBC English Department. Only PhD students in English are eligible. Students can claim flight, accommodation, per diem, and other travel expenses. There is an application form and process required for this fund.

## Travel Funding

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Graduate Student Travel Fund provides travel support of a maximum of \$500 once in the course of a graduate program to graduate students who present a paper or poster at an official conference or symposium (student workshops are excluded). For detailed information on this fund, please refer to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website [here](#).

The Department of English Graduate Students' Travel Fund provides travel support up to \$500 once in the course of a graduate program to support a student presenting a paper at a conference or travelling for research purposes (for example, to a library or other archive). To be eligible, students should have already applied for the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' travel funding. The English department travel funding form is available from the Graduate Office.

## External Funding

- **SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) Scholarships.** Department of English graduate students who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada have a very strong success rate with SSHRC and are encouraged to apply for funding. Canadian students applying to or enrolled in our MA program can apply for a CGS-MA Scholarship worth \$17,500. Canadian students applying to or enrolled in our PhD program can apply for Doctoral Fellowships worth \$20,000 to \$35,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years. MA and PhD SSHRC recipients are also eligible to apply for a CGS Foreign Study supplement of up to \$6000 to support research outside of Canada. International and Canadian PhD applicants and candidates are also eligible to be nominated for the Vanier CGS worth \$50,000 for up to 3 years. The Department deadline is normally in early Fall. See the SSHRC website for details [here](#).
- **Sir James Lougheed Awards of Distinction.** Available for up to two years for Albertan students. Click [here](#) for information.
- **Mackenzie King Open Fellowship.** Open to graduates of Canadian universities who pursue graduate study in any discipline, in Canada or elsewhere. Click [here](#) for information.
- **IODE Canada scholarships.** Click [here](#) for information.
- **Minerva Foundation Award for BC women.** Click [here](#) for information.
- **Canadian Federation of University Women awards,** particularly the Margaret Dale Phelp Award. Click [here](#) for information.
- **Stewart Reid Fellowship.** Awarded to a Canadian (or landed immigrant) PhD student whose prospectus has been accepted by April 30th. Click [here](#) for information.

For information on loans, visit the [University's Student Services Finance section](#).

# MA PROGRAM

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## Overview

Our Master of Arts in English (MA) allows you to pursue studies in many of the topics, methods, and theories that characterize research in the disciplines of English Literature and Language.

The Graduate Program offers more than 20 graduate seminars per year. Please review the [seminar descriptions](#) to make sure that we are currently offering courses in your areas of interest.

The MA allows you to specialize in Literature or Language. Students specializing in Literature may take courses in Language and vice versa. Students may take a number of courses in other departments as well.

The Graduate Program offers the MA either with or without a thesis. Either degree qualifies the student to apply for PhD programs.

## Entrance Requirements

Please see the Department Website for information about entrance requirements for both Literature and Language streams of the MA Program.

## Program Completion Time

Students may enroll in either full-time or part-time studies leading to an MA. Part-time studies must be applied for and constitute a [fee schedule only](#).

Full-time students must be in residence in the Lower Mainland for at least one winter session. Students who are planning on taking an MA degree on a part-time basis must obtain approval of the Graduate Program Advisor and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to the beginning of the degree program. Part-time students are deemed ineligible for TAs or awards. All part-time students must show evidence of continuing progress each year they are enrolled in the program; that is, they must complete a minimum of 6 credits of work during each calendar year. For a full account of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies policies regarding part-time studies, click [here](#).

Most full-time students require 16-24 months to complete the degree.

Whether full-time or part-time, all MA students must complete their programs within five years of initial registration. Under exceptional circumstances, the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies may grant a leave of absence and/or an extension of up to one year.

All students are required to maintain their registration continuously, whether taking courses or not. Students who fail to register for two consecutive terms may be required to withdraw. Status may be reinstated only if an application for reinstatement is approved by both the graduate committee and the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies.

For information on part-time studies policies, click [here](#).

For information on leave of absence, click [here](#).

For information on readmission, click [here](#).

## Program Advising

All MA students must seek program approval before registering each year. New MA students should communicate with the MA Advisor ([English.MA\\_advisor@ubc.ca](mailto:English.MA_advisor@ubc.ca)) before classes begin in order to discuss their course work and other aspects of the program. Continuing students should seek program approval in the spring before registering. Language students are encouraged to seek course selection advice from a faculty member in the Language program.

Each candidate for the MA with Thesis should choose a thesis supervisor as soon as possible, preferably during the first year in full standing.

Any changes in a graduate student's program (for example, switching from a thesis to non-thesis program; switching from literature to language) must be approved by either the MA Advisor or the Chair of the Graduate Program. With the approval of the Graduate Committee, a student may transfer from the MA program in literature to the MA program in language or vice versa, provided that area requirements are fulfilled. A student who fails in one program may not transfer to another.

In advising students, the MA Advisor makes every effort to ensure that each student has satisfied all the requirements for the degree. However, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that, at the time of applying for the degree, all requirements have been met.

## Course Work

All MA students are required to take ENGL 500 "Research Tools and Methods" and to complete either:

- 27 credits of additional coursework (coursework option) OR
- 18 credits of additional coursework and write a 9-credit thesis (thesis option).

MA students are automatically registered in ENGL 500 as a program requirement.

## Coursework for MA in Language

Students are encouraged to take the following Language seminars whenever they are offered:

- ENGL 507 - Studies in English Historical Linguistics
- ENGL 508 - Linguistic Studies in Contemporary English
- ENGL 509 - Studies in Rhetoric

Students in Language are also encouraged to take relevant Literature seminars. For example:

- History of English students whose focus is the Medieval period should enroll in ENGL 510, 511, and/or 512
- History of English students whose focus is the Early Modern period should enroll in ENGL 515, 519, and/or 520
- Students studying English dialects should enroll in the appropriate Canadian, British, and/or American literature seminars
- Students whose focus is Rhetoric should enroll in ENGL 553

## Electives

MA students may count toward their degree a **maximum of 12 credits** taken outside the English Graduate Program seminar offerings. Those 12 credits may be from the following:

1. Up to six credits of upper-level (300 or 400) ENGL undergraduate courses (except for ENGL 301, 302, and 303). These courses must be taught by graduate English department faculty and must not be distance education courses.
  - Please note, under some circumstances an incoming MA student may transfer up to six credits of upper-level English undergraduate courses that were not used toward the undergraduate degree. These will count toward the six-credit maximum of undergraduate courses. Please see the MA Advisor for details.
2. Up to six credits of graduate courses in fields outside the department which should be related to the student's study program
3. Up to six credits of graduate courses in English at other western universities (i.e. Athabasca, Alberta, Brandon, Calgary, Lethbridge, Manitoba, Northern British Columbia, Regina, Saskatchewan, Simon Fraser, and Victoria) pursued through the Western Deans' Agreement. Students must provide two official transcripts to the English graduate office to have the credits counted.
4. Students may pursue a Directed Reading (ENGL 547) with an instructor. Usually, students take such a course of study in their second year of the program. ENGL 547 is usually three credits, although a six-credit course may be approved in exceptional cases. In special circumstances, an MA student in Language may take two directed readings to a maximum of six credits.

**Note:** students may take additional courses from any of the categories above, but only **12 credits** (with a maximum of six credits from each category) count toward the degree.

## MA without Thesis and MA with Thesis

The Graduate Program gives students the choice to pursue the MA either with or without a thesis. Either degree qualifies the student to apply for PhD programs. Approximately one-third of any given MA cohort in the department is working on a thesis-based MA.

For the MA in Literature or Language without thesis, students must complete 30 credits of coursework, of which not more than six credits may be 300 or 400 level courses.

For the MA in Literature or Language with thesis, students must complete 21 credits of coursework, of which not more than six credits may be 300 or 400 level courses, as well as nine credits for the MA thesis and oral examination.

## MA Thesis

MA students wishing to write a thesis must apply to the Graduate Committee with a prospectus. As soon as the student has decided upon an area of specialization, preferably by the end of the first year with full standing, the student should formulate a topic and strike up a supervisory committee. This committee includes a primary supervisor and at least one reader (or at most two readers) selected in consultation with the supervisor. The student must then submit a prospectus electronically for approval to the Graduate Program office.

The MA thesis prospectus offers a preliminary description of the proposed argument of the thesis and locates the argument within the broader parameters of the field of study. It also sets out the major steps through which the student plans to proceed in researching, writing, and structuring the thesis. The prospectus includes a bibliography, which should provide a comprehensive list of the required primary sources for the proposed research, and a list of the most relevant and influential secondary readings on or around the topic. The text of the prospectus, excluding the bibliography, is limited to 1500 words in length. A prospectus that exceeds the 1500-word length will be returned to the student to be shortened.

The prospectus is read first by the Supervisory Committee and, if found satisfactory, by the Graduate Committee. Thus, it seeks both to convince readers who are specialists in the proposed research subject and to explain the proposed research to non-specialist academic readers. The Graduate Committee may request changes, additions, or clarification, or it may approve the prospectus outright. The student should not begin formal writing of their project until both the Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Committee have formally approved the prospectus.

The kind and amount of thesis supervision will be dictated by the needs of the individual student and the preferred methods of the Supervisor. Preliminary drafts, either of individual chapters or of the whole thesis, should be submitted to the Supervisor as the student proceeds. The student is encouraged to meet with all members of the committee. The entire

Supervisory Committee evaluates the prospectus and the final draft of the thesis before each is submitted for examination. In consultation with the Supervisor, the student should revise the thesis in accordance with the committee's suggestions. The committee members will not act as copy-editors.

The final thesis should be no more than 60 pages in length, excluding bibliography, endnotes, tables, figures, and other appendices. It should be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font, it should be double-spaced, and it should have one-inch margins. The final form of the thesis must be prepared in accordance with the regulations set down by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and with the formal approval of all committee members. Students can consult the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' thesis preparation page [here](#). Theses which do not meet the specified standards may be rejected.

Once the thesis is approved by the Supervisory Committee, a final oral examination on the thesis and its background is held. Students must not submit theses for oral examinations until all other requirements for the degree have been fulfilled. A final oral may be held at any time of the year, provided the approved committee can be assembled- students should take into account that it can be more difficult to assemble the committee during the summer months. After the oral examination, a pass/ fail is assigned to the thesis. An outstanding thesis may be awarded the grade of Distinction (H). Revisions made after the oral examination will not alter the pass/ fail allocated to the work.

Students residing more than 800 kilometers from the university may request exemption from the oral when submitting the thesis. Where substantial revisions to the thesis are not required, such a request may be granted at the discretion of both the Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Committee. Skype or equivalent defenses may be coordinated with approval from the MA Advisor.

After the oral defense has been held and any requested revisions have been made, the candidate should submit one electronic copy of the final version of the thesis via iCircle to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, along with the [final thesis forms](#). The thesis will not be approved and an iCircle account will not be created until all required forms have been received. One hardcopy of the final version of the thesis submitted to iCircle is required for the Department of English Reading Room and should be submitted electronically to the Graduate Office, one hard copy for the Supervisor if requested, and one hardcopy for the candidate if desired.



# PH.D. PROGRAMS

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## Overview

Our Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English allows you to structure a course of study that aligns with your specific research interests in English Language or Literatures.

The PhD degree requirements in English at UBC Vancouver are based on residency and coursework, the candidacy process, and a dissertation. We expect students to complete the degree within six years.

## Entrance Requirements

[UBC's general requirements for admission to the PhD](#) are laid out on the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

The Department of English expects applicants for the PhD program to hold a first-class MA degree in English language or literature. Advanced degrees in closely-related disciplines (for example, other literatures) may, particularly when combined with an undergraduate English degree, constitute sufficient preparation for the PhD; students are urged to seek advising as to the suitability of their backgrounds and project for the PhD in English.

While there are no formal area requirements for the PhD, students should expect either to demonstrate or, in the course of their PhD coursework, to develop, broad experience of literatures in English, and/or English language, appropriate to support both their research projects and their future careers as researchers and teachers.

In exceptional cases, students accepted into the MA program with a first-class Honours BA may apply to transfer into the PhD program at the end of the first year, provided that they have completed at least 18 credits of the MA program with a first-class average and can supply two letters of support giving evidence of research ability. The Graduate Committee will determine the additional number of credits to be completed.

In extraordinary cases, students may be allowed to enter the PhD program following a first-class Honours BA. The Graduate Committee will determine if extra course work is to be required, on a case-by-case basis.

## Program Completion Time

All PhD students are considered full-time. PhD students are not eligible to undertake their degree on a part-time basis.

Students who enter the PhD program having already earned an MA must remain in residence in the Lower Mainland (Vancouver area) for two winter sessions of PhD study (roughly two years).

Students who have been permitted to transfer via fast track from the UBC English MA's program to the UBC English PhD program require at least one winter session of residence in the Lower Mainland following the transfer.

Under normal circumstances, the PhD should be completed in four to five years, although UBC allows up to six years for completion. Under exceptional circumstances, requests for a leave of absence, normally limited to 24 months for PhD students, and/ or an extension of up to one year may be granted. All students are required to maintain continuous registration throughout their program of study. Students who fail to register for two consecutive terms may be required to withdraw. Status may be reinstated only if an application for reinstatement is approved by both the Graduate Committee and the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Students should note that, in accordance with the guidelines of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, undertaking the PhD is considered the equivalent of full-time employment. If the student is receiving scholarship funding from the university or government [either in the form of SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) funding or UBC's 4YF (Four-Year Doctoral Fellowship) or scholarships and TA-ships], employment is limited to 12 hours per week and students are not permitted to seek full-time employment, except under special circumstances. All employment beyond the student's initial funding package must be discussed with and approved by the Graduate Advisor.

Students receive 15 working days of vacation each year. For university policy on vacations see <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/graduate-student-vacation-policy>.

## Program Advising

All students are required to seek program approval before registering. New PhD students should communicate with the Chair of the Graduate Program before classes begin in order to establish the parameters of their individual programs. The Graduate Chair serves as PhD Advisor and will monitor each student's program to completion. Any changes in a PhD student's program must be approved by the Chair of the Graduate Program.

With the full consultation of the Graduate Committee the student is assigned a Pro tem Supervisor from his/her point of entry into the program. By the end of the first year, the full Pro tem Committee will be in place, chosen in consultation with the Graduate Chair, the Pro

tem Supervisor, and the student [**CANDIDACY FORM 1**]. The Pro tem Committee consists of one specialist in the student's chosen area and two colleagues. One committee member may be chosen from outside the English Department. The committee members will guide the student through the qualifying process, beginning in the first year with the field examination. They also serve as academic mentors on all aspects of the program and the department. The Pro tem Committee is dissolved after the candidacy paper is passed and a new Thesis Supervisory Committee is then constituted that can (but need not) include members of the Pro tem Committee. Thesis Supervisory Committee members from outside UBC must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

**Please Note: The PhD Advisor and the Graduate Committee make every effort to ensure that students have satisfied all the requirements for the degree (second-language requirement, coursework, etc.). However, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to assure that all requirements have been met.**

## Course Work

Students entering the PhD program with first-class MA degrees in English will normally take 15 credits of course work at the 500 level. Students transferring from the MA to the PhD or entering the PhD directly from an Honours BA will be asked to take a minimum number of credits determined by the Graduate Committee.

As of January 2017, all PhD students in Years 1 or 2 will be required to take the Research Methods course, ENGL 500B. This pass/fail course will introduce students to the forms and protocols of PhD research. It will count toward the 15 credits required for admission to candidacy.

PhD programs are individually planned in consultation with the Chair of the Graduate Program. The student's prior work is assessed in order to ensure appropriate coverage and preparation.

Students are permitted, under the Western Deans' Agreement, to take up to 12 graduate credits at another western university (Athabasca, Alberta, Brandon, Calgary, Lethbridge, Manitoba, Northern British Columbia, Regina, Saskatchewan, Simon Fraser, and Victoria) towards their PhD degree. More information about the program and procedures is available through the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; click [here](#) to visit the Western Deans' Agreement page. Students interested in pursuing this option should, as with every aspect of PhD program planning, consult with the Graduate Chair.

Please note: Students undertaking coursework through the Western Deans' Agreement must provide two official transcripts to the Department of English Graduate Program Office

in order to have the credits officially counted. Western Deans' courses/external credits are not be applied to UBC official transcripts.

While there are no formal area requirements for the PhD, students should consider that future employers often look to course work and qualifying areas for evidence of range and versatility in teaching.

A Directed Reading (English 547) is a course of study undertaken by an individual student with an instructor. It is usually taken for 3 credits, though 6 credit directed readings may also be approved. Faculty regulations prohibit any student from applying more than 6 credits of Directed Reading toward the credit requirements for a degree.

Should a PhD student wish to pursue a Directed Reading, s/he should discuss the feasibility of the planned course with the Graduate Chair. Any student wishing to apply for a Directed Reading should, after consulting the appropriate advisor, work with the proposed supervisor to prepare a brief but detailed outline of the proposed course. This outline, brief rationale for the course, a bibliography, and a schedule of meetings and proposed assignments, should be submitted, with the signature of the supervisor, to the Graduate Office by the second Friday of the term in which the course will be taken. Forms are available in the Graduate Office. Late applications are not considered. The Graduate Committee approves applications for English 547 courses only if the student can establish that no course is being offered in that particular area during the current academic year, and if the Directed Reading is essential to the student's academic development.

The student must provide both an electronic copy (to be circulated for approval) and a hard copy with the Supervisor's signature for the records.

Students who have met all English requirements may take up to 6 credits in related fields outside the Department.

## Second Language Requirement

All new PhD students are required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a second language relevant to their particular area of research. The Graduate Chair, in consultation with the Pro tem Supervisor, will determine whether a student, upon entering the PhD program, has already met the second-language requirement. Students who have not met the requirement may do so by completing an approved language or literature course (it may be possible to do this as an auditor), or by passing an examination, provided that an examiner acceptable to the Department is available.

While only one language is required, students should of course consider the scholarly and professional requirements of their chosen area when developing their language skills.

## Doctoral Progress Report

Each May beginning in the student's second year in the doctoral program, both the student and his or her supervisor will be asked to write a brief report indicating the nature and extent of work completed on the candidacy process or thesis and any circumstances impeding progress on either.

## The Doctoral Candidacy Process

*AMENDED AND APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, UBC SEPTEMBER 17, 2014.*

**\*Please see the end of this section for a convenient summary of the candidacy timetable for both students and supervisors.**

Students who need to consult the old candidacy process, which is currently being phased out, can find it [here](#).

## Field List and Oral Examination

In addition to course work in the first year of the program and in consultation with the Pro tem Committee, the student will prepare a general field list of primary and secondary material designed to assure that the student has sufficient knowledge of his or her field of interest.

This field should be the field in which the candidate plans to teach. If the proposed thesis topic will intersect with more than one field, then this list should be adjusted to reflect the student's cross-field interests.

The list will include approximately 75 book-length items (or, for article-driven fields, the equivalent in articles and papers) that constitute the field. Modification to the requirement can be made if the student and his/her committee can make a good case to the Graduate Chair that the requirement, in its details, is unsuitable to the student's field.

It is assumed that students will rely heavily on the expertise of their committees in the preparation of these lists.

It is assumed that the balance between primary and secondary material will vary from field to field and will, therefore, be determined by the Pro tem Committee.

The field list will be submitted, no later than **June 15 of Year 1**, to the Graduate Committee for the record (but not for approval) and a copy of the field list will be placed in the student's file [**CANDIDACY FORM 2**].

Knowledge of this field list will be examined in a two-hour oral examination. All students in Year 2 of the program will sit the examination **no later than December 15 of Year 2**.

The oral exam should proceed in the following manner (the exam is modelled on a standard oral defense in the humanities): the student begins the exam with an oral presentation of 20-30 minutes, summarizing their major findings. The student may use slides or hand-outs. This part of the exam should consist of a *PRESENTATION* mounted by the student and *NOT* a formal essay that the student reads. The presentation should touch on the major discoveries and ideas the student encountered in their reading. It should begin to theorize or speculate on phenomena useful to the upcoming research. Following this presentation, each faculty member takes their turn asking the student questions. These questions can range from requests for expansion of the students' major ideas or detailed inquiries about any of the materials on the field list. The student is being tested on their knowledge and familiarity with the field list materials and on their grasp of the field or fields in which these materials are situated. Following the question period, the student will be asked to leave the room briefly while the Committee deliberates.

Students will be informed of the results of their examination at the end of the examination following a brief meeting of the examiners and the Graduate Committee member.

While the committee is discussing the student's performance at the end of the oral exam, the student's supervisor will compile a brief record of the deliberations and use them to fill out the report: [**CANDIDACY FORM 3**] All committee members and the Graduate Committee representative must sign this report at the end of the exam. The report will then be submitted to the Chair of the Graduate Program within a week of the oral examination. The performance will be ranked "unsatisfactory" or "satisfactory" by each member of the committee. This report will be made available to the student and will go on file.

In cases where students have two or more "Unsatisfactory" votes from the committee members and the Graduate Committee representative, students will be asked to retake the oral exam, which they must do before **January 15 of Year 2**. A second report must be filled out on this occasion with a vote tally and all signatures of those present. [**CANDIDACY FORM 3**]

If the student's performance is again deemed "Unsatisfactory" by two or more members of the committee and the Graduate Committee representative, the student and the student's supervisor will meet with the Chair of the Graduate Program. While no student will be asked to leave the program at this stage, no student can advance to candidacy without attempting the field examination.

## Candidacy Paper

After the field examination, the student will begin working with the Pro tem Committee to develop an individually focused research topic or question that allows the student to begin to conceptualize the thesis.

This topic (consisting of a question, similar to the question on an exam) should be submitted **no later than two weeks after the date of the Oral Exam** to the Graduate Committee for the record [[CANDIDACY FORM 4](#)] and a copy of the topic will be placed in the student's file. (Note: the Graduate Committee does not discuss, vote on, or approve the topic).

The student will then write a 20-25 page (12 point Times New Roman font) paper based on this topic. Papers that exceed 25 pages excluding bibliography will not be considered.

The paper need not be considered a thesis chapter or article-like intervention (though it could be); it might more closely resemble the literature review of the thesis (and may indeed become such a survey); it could also represent the student's early engagement with scholarship important to the dissertation.

While the candidate may consult with the Pro tem Committee and may receive their suggestions while pursuing his/her reading and writing, the committee should not review drafts of the paper. In this sense, the paper resembles more of a take-home exam than a draft of a chapter. This paper should be handed in **no later than May 1 of Year 2**.

The Pro tem Committee will read the qualifying paper and then meet to discuss it. One member of the Graduate Committee will be given a copy of the qualifying paper and will attend this meeting to oversee the process (meetings can happen through electronic means). During the meeting, while all members are present, the student's supervisor will write a quick summary of the deliberations using: [[CANDIDACY FORM 5](#)]. All committee members and the Graduate Committee representative must record their votes and must sign this report. The report will then be submitted to the Chair of the Graduate Program within a week of the meeting. The performance will be ranked "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory," or "distinction" by each member of the committee. This report will be made available to the student and will go on file.

Criteria for success will be clear evidence of wide reading, sophisticated critical and interpretive skills, and the capacity to conceptualize issues and arguments independently. The committee will normally take up to two weeks to return the results of the paper.

In case of two or more "Unsatisfactory" rankings among the Pro tem Committee and the Graduate Committee representative, students will be asked to re-write the paper. The revised attempt must be submitted within **two weeks** of the committee's response to the

first attempt. Any second attempt should respond to the comments and criticisms provided by the committee on the first version of the paper (that is, students should not write a whole new paper but should take the advice of the committee in revising the existing one).

This second version will be read by the Pro tem Committee and the Graduate Committee representative. A second meeting of the Pro tem Committee and Graduate Committee representative will be called to assess the paper. Once again, the student's supervisor will write a quick summary of the deliberations using [**CANDIDACY FORM 5**]. All committee members and the Graduate Committee representative must sign this report and record their ranking of the paper. The supervisor will then submit the signed report to the Chair of the Graduate Program within one week of the meeting. Performance will be ranked "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory" or "outstanding" by each member of the committee. This report will be made available to the student and it will go on file.

If the student's second performance is deemed "Unsatisfactory" by two or more members of the Pro tem Committee and Graduate Committee representative, the student and the student's supervisor will meet with the Chair of the Graduate Program. While no student will be asked to leave the program at this stage, no student can advance to candidacy without attempting the candidacy paper.

Outstanding achievement in the examination is marked by the award of Distinction. The recommendation for Distinction may be made by any member of the committee other than the Pro tem Supervisor. If a recommendation for Distinction is made, a vote is taken, which must be unanimous for Distinction to be granted.

## The Prospectus

With the completion of the field examination and qualifying paper, the Pro tem Committee is dissolved. Then the student, in consultation with the Graduate Chair, invites an appropriate faculty member to supervise his or her prospectus and thesis. Student and supervisor together then establish the full committee, which normally consists of the candidate's supervisor and two other members of the Department of English. The names of all supervisory committee members are submitted to the graduate program [**CANDIDACY FORM 6**]. The supervisory committee will likely (but not necessarily) include some or all of the original Pro tem Committee. It may include a faculty member from another department and/or another institution. External committee members must be approved by the **Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies**. Development of the prospectus should involve those committee members who will be overseeing the thesis to its conclusion.

The Faculty of Graduate and Post Graduate Studies has a page with [links to policies and procedures relating to supervision and examination](#).



The thesis prospectus, prepared in consultation with the Supervisory Committee, should be submitted to the Graduate Committee with the full approval and the signatures of all three members of the supervisory committee [**CANDIDACY FORM 7**] **no later than October 15th of Year 3**. Addressed to the Graduate Committee, the prospectus must make good sense to academics outside the area of specialization and should focus on the thesis's tentative argument and originality. The prospectus should be no more than 2,500 words in length, excluding bibliography. Prospectuses should be submitted in 12-point Times New Roman font. Prospectuses that are longer than 2,500 words will not be read and will be returned for revision. The prospectus should contain four components:

**Description and Justification:** The prospectus begins by describing the student's target of research for non-experts in the field. What are you planning to investigate? This stage should articulate as clearly as possible the "what" as well as the "why" of the thesis. The prospectus should situate the thesis in its field, showing how it develops or departs from previous research and what the writer hopes it will contribute. The prospectus should also spell out the theoretical or methodological framework of the thesis. The components of the prospectus are: 1) general description of the phenomenon the student will be researching; 2) a literature review relevant to this phenomenon: What have scholars already said about this subject?  
3) Where is the flaw or research deficit in this existing scholarship?  
4) How will your dissertation correct this deficit? What will you argue instead? What methodology will you use to make your case? What will your original contribution to the scholarship be?  
5) The prospectus should then offer an outline of your chapters, giving readers a map of the evidence you will marshal to prove your hypothesis.

**Plan:** The prospectus is not necessarily a detailed blueprint, and it allows for changes of direction. Precise conclusions to inquiries not yet fully entered into need not be anticipated. However, the prospectus is to make clear the overall organization of the thesis as envisaged at this point in terms of its main stages of inquiry and its argumentative structure. Conventionally, the prospectus includes chapter summaries.

**Thesis Bibliography:** This document should contain the essential reading for the dissertation. It should be no longer than 10 pages and should comply with standard formatting procedures (MLA or Chicago style; 12-point, Time New Roman font).

The entire Graduate Committee will read and comment on the originality and value of the project. Should the Graduate Committee decide at this stage that the program of research has not yet been adequately conceived, it may invite the student, in consultation with his/her supervisory committee, to revise the relevant portions of the Prospectus for a second delivery within **four weeks** of notice of the Graduate Committee's decision.

Performance will be ranked “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” by the Graduate Committee. Graduate Committee deliberations on the prospectus become a matter of record [**CANDIDACY FORM 8**] and will be consulted in the Candidacy Review.

If the student’s performance is deemed unsatisfactory, the student and the student’s supervisor will meet with the Chair of the Graduate Program. While no student will be asked to leave the program at this stage, no student will advance to candidacy without attempting the prospectus.

**Note: Students who substantively change direction in their dissertation topics following the candidacy review process (that is, who entertain substantive changes in methodology, primary research, or general topic) may be asked to submit a new prospectus for approval by the Graduate Committee. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the supervisor and at the discretion of the Graduate Committee.**

**The PhD Graduate Program in English Language and Literatures does not currently support artistic or creative methodologies. Students must produce approximately 200 pages of argumentative text to qualify for the PhD degree in our program.**

## Candidacy Review

Students who achieve a minimum of 85% GPA in their courses at UBC and who pass all stages of their candidacy exams will automatically be recommended for advancement to candidacy. For other students, a conference on their progress may be deemed necessary by the Graduate Chair in consultation with the Supervisor. In these cases, following completion of the candidacy examination, paper, and prospectus, the Supervisor and Graduate Chair will meet, **no later than December 15 of Year 3** to discuss advancement to candidacy. The student’s performance in course work, the field examination, the candidacy paper and the prospectus will be reviewed and advancement to candidacy will be decided upon. In cases of dispute, the student’s file will be presented to the Graduate Committee and a vote taken. Students who do not advance to candidacy at this point will be asked to leave the program.

No student will advance to candidacy without attempting the field examination, the candidacy paper, and the prospectus.

If it is determined, by a majority vote, that the student’s overall progress to date is unsatisfactory, the student will be informed in writing that he/she is to be dismissed from the program or that he/she will be asked to voluntarily withdraw from the program.

Students wishing to appeal this decision can do so through the [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies appeal process](#).

## Candidacy Process Year by Year

### FOR STUDENTS

#### Year One

- course work (12-15 credits); meet with Graduate Chair
- establish a Pro tem Committee [[CANDIDACY FORM 1](#)]; preparation of field list
- SUBMISSION OF FIELD LIST (June 15) [[CANDIDACY FORM 2](#)]
- begin reading for field list exam

#### Year Two

- reading for field list exam (continues)
- take the FIELD LIST ORAL EXAM (before December 15; retake exam before January 15)
- field exam report [[CANDIDACY FORM 3](#)]
- SUBMISSION OF CANDIDACY PAPER TOPIC (no more than two weeks after oral) [[CANDIDACY FORM 4](#)]
- reading for candidacy paper / writing candidacy paper
- SUBMISSION OF CANDIDACY PAPER (May 1)
- candidacy paper report [[CANDIDACY FORM 5](#)]
- dissolution of Pro tem Committee / constitution of new Supervisory Committee [[CANDIDACY FORM 6](#)]
- preparation of prospectus and thesis bibliography

#### Year Three

- SUBMISSION OF PROSPECTUS (October 15) [[CANDIDACY FORM 7](#)]
- Graduate Committee reports on thesis prospectus [[CANDIDACY FORM 8](#)]
- If necessary, candidacy review / candidacy review meeting with Graduate Committee and Supervisory team (no later than December 15)
- dissertation writing

#### Year Four

- dissertation writing

- completion of penultimate draft

### Year Five (if needed)

- appointment of external examiner (November) [[EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPROVAL FORM](#)]
- dissertation submitted to G&PS (January)
- dissertation examination (Spring)

**Personalized Candidacy Schedule** - Off-cycle\* students please use this [PERSONALIZED CANDIDACY SCHEDULE FORM](#)

## FOR SUPERVISORS

### Year One

- student establishes Pro tem Committee [[CANDIDACY FORM 1](#)];
- Pro tem Committee prepares field list of 75 book-length items
- SUBMISSION OF FIELD LIST to Graduate Committee (henceforth GC) by **June 15** [[CANDIDACY FORM 2](#)]

### Year Two

- FIELD LIST ORAL EXAM (before **December 15**)
- FIELD EXAM REPORT to be filled out at the oral exam during committee deliberations and signed by all present; submit to GC [[CANDIDACY FORM 3](#)]
- Should the Oral be deemed "Unsatisfactory" by two or more of those present, including GC rep, the student must retake the oral exam before **January 15**. Second FIELD EXAM REPORT to be filled out during deliberations and signed by all present at second oral exam; submit to GC [[CANDIDACY FORM 3](#)]
- Student submits CANDIDACY PAPER TOPIC to GC no more than two weeks after oral exam [[CANDIDACY FORM 4](#)]
- Student submits 25-page candidacy paper to Pro tem Committee (no later than **May 1**)
- Pro tem Committee and one GC rep meet to discuss Candidacy Paper (electronic meetings are fine). Paper will be ranked "Satisfactory," "Unsatisfactory," or "Distinction" by each voting member. Report written during meeting, signed by all present, and submitted to GC within one week of meeting [[CANDIDACY FORM 5](#)]
- Should the Candidacy Paper be deemed "Unsatisfactory" by two or more of those present, including GC rep, it must be revised and handed in again within **TWO**

**WEEKS** of the committee's notice to the student. Pro tem Committee and one GC rep meet to discuss second Candidacy Paper; report written during meeting, signed by all present [[CANDIDACY FORM 5](#)]; and submitted to GC within one week of the meeting

- Dissolution of Pro tem Committee

### THESIS SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

- Constitution of Thesis Supervisory Committee [[CANDIDACY FORM 6](#)]
- Preparation of Prospectus and Thesis Bibliography

### Year Three

- SUBMISSION OF PROSPECTUS TO GC (**October 15**) [[CANDIDACY FORM 7](#)]
- Graduate Committee reports on thesis prospectus [[CANDIDACY FORM 8](#)]
- Candidacy review/ candidacy review meeting with Graduate Committee and Supervisory team (no later than **December 15**)

### Subsequent Years

- [[EXTERNAL EXAMINER APPROVAL FORM](#)]