



2026-2027

Graduate Program Manual

Department of English and Film Studies
University of Alberta

Introduction

Welcome to the Department of English and Film Studies! We are located on Treaty Six territory and in Region 4 of the Métis Nation of Alberta. One of the four founding departments of the University of Alberta in 1908 and today one of the largest in the Faculty of Arts, the

Department of English and Film Studies is a dynamic place to study, learn and create. We are internationally-recognized and multi-disciplinary. Our faculty members are leaders in the field, with a reputation for high-quality research, innovative teaching, and meaningful community impact.

Our graduate program is large and diverse, with internationally-recognized strengths in many fields including Canadian literature, Cultural studies, American Studies, Autobiography and Lifewriting studies, Victorian studies, Gender and Sexuality studies, and Postcolonial studies. We encourage innovative, interdisciplinary research, and we have a vibrant intellectual climate. Our department is consistently ranked as one of the top English graduate programs in Canada.

This Graduate Program Manual has been developed to serve as a resource for students (current and prospective) and faculty members. It contains information regarding the administration of our graduate programs, student resources, funding, and more.

Statement of Principles

The successful completion of a program of graduate studies requires that students, faculty, and the Department recognize that each party has expectations and responsibilities toward each other.

Faculty and students have a mutual responsibility to:

- treat one another with dignity and respect,
- maintain regular and adequate communication,
- establish, by mutual agreement, reasonable goals including dates for completion of assignments, projects and theses.

The Department has a responsibility to:

- maintain a dynamic program.
- ensure that supervisors and students are regularly informed of deadlines established by the Department, by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS), and by the University,
- apprise supervisors and students about the availability of scholarships, fellowships and other forms of financial support
- provide adequate office space and support facilities to meet students' academic needs,
- provide appropriate advice and counseling in an atmosphere which ensures treatment with respect, fair play and confidentiality.

It is the responsibility of the students to utilize all the opportunities made available to them, and to contribute to a positive atmosphere in the Department.

1. Administration of Graduate Programs

1.1 Academic schedule

The [University of Alberta Calendar](#) is the published authority on matters pertaining to graduate programs. The Academic Schedule, including critical dates, is posted in the online document. Deadlines for registration, convocation, and examinations are firm.

1.2 Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS)

Ultimate responsibility for the administration of graduate programs lies with GPS. GPS approves the admission of students, changes to programs, and the appointments of supervisors, supervisory and exam committees. GPS also sets deadlines for the payment of fees, for completion of programs, and for the meetings of some committees.

[The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#)

2-29 Triffo Hall

Monday-Friday 08:30-16:00. Their office is closed during the lunch hour (12:00-13:00).

University services are closed during holidays

GPS has developed a [Graduate Program Manual](#) that provides a general overview of the major policies and regulations applicable to all U Alberta graduate programs.

1.3 Department of English and Film Studies

This Handbook contains information specific to the graduate programs offered in the Department of English and Film Studies. If there is a discrepancy between the information presented here and that contained in the University Calendar, the Calendar takes precedence.

1.3.1 Departmental Contact Information

The Graduate Programs Director (Professor Eddy Kent, efsgrad@ualberta.ca), and the Graduate Programs Advisor (Ms. Annett Gaudig-Rueger, humgrad3@ualberta.ca) are the primary departmental contacts for graduate students.

Students should feel welcome to bring concerns regarding their program, their supervision, and their courses to the Director. It may occasionally be useful to discuss one's program with someone who is removed from the supervisory committee. In cases where the Director is involved in the teaching or supervision of a student, the student should contact the Department Chair (Professor Jill Ehnenn, chairefs@ualberta.ca)

The Graduate Programs Advisor handles a wide variety of concerns of graduate students. These include payroll, fees, awards, exam scheduling and questions, registration, program

information, procedural details, information about deadlines, and questions regarding admission; typically this includes most non-academic matters.

The Department's Executive Assistant (Dorothy Reynolds, <efsea@ualberta.ca> handles logistical and physical space arrangements. This includes office assignments, access to the photocopier, room bookings, and mailboxes.

1.3.2 Admission to the Graduate Program

Decisions regarding admission are made by the department's Graduate Admissions Committee.

All applicants should have a University of Alberta baccalaureate degree, or its equivalent from a recognized academic institution and must demonstrate English language proficiency. Applicants to the PhD program should also have a University of Alberta masters degree, or its equivalent from a recognized academic institution. To be considered for admission for any program, applicants must meet the program's minimum admission requirements, outlined on the following University of Alberta webpages:

[Master of Arts in English](#)

[Doctor of Philosophy in English](#)

For both the MA and PhD programs, we typically admit students in September. In rare and exceptional circumstances we offers a student a January entry. We begin accepting applications in October each year through the University's admissions [portal](#). (e.g. October 2026 for September 2027 entry).

2. Student Resources

The University offers a variety of support services dfor graduate students including funding, international

services, professional development, timelines, and wellness. Below are a few resources to access information, support, and services you will need to navigate your university journey.

The [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) (GPS) supports every aspect of your graduate student experience and offers essential support services throughout your grad career: admissions, funding, scholarships, teaching preparation, professional development, academic record keeping, thesis support, and convocation.

[International Student and Visitor Services](#) has many resources for international students, including immigration FAQs and a new student arrival checklist, along with information on study permits, working in Canada, and banking.

The [Graduate Students Association](#) is a non-partisan organization that represents and advocates for graduate students at the University of Alberta, and provides a wealth of services to its members that enrich the graduate student experience.

The Graduate Students of English Collective (GSEC) <gsec@ualberta.ca> is the hub of graduate student life in the Department of English and Film Studies. Through the work of the GSEC executives and volunteers, students are engaged, memories are made, and community is created. The group excels in advocacy on behalf of its graduate students on two heads: arts and academics. The group takes pride in representing its vast array of constituents to departmental, faculty, and university governing bodies, as well as to external bodies, and in its annual conference, through which GSEC members at all stages of their projects can share their work with colleagues within and beyond the department.

Visit the [Staff Service Centre](#) for employment-related inquiries (direct deposit, paycheques, tuition remission, travel/expense claims, etc.). Visit the [Student Service Centre](#) for student and student-life related inquiries (services related to your academic, financial, mental and physical well-being)

The University provides students with a range of [health and wellness support services](#).

2.1 Desks and Offices

Office space is managed by the department. Students may request office space by contacting the EFS Department Executive Assistant, Dorothy Reynolds <efsea@ualberta.ca>. All graduate students have access to desks in HC 3-5 and graduate students who are working as Graduate Teaching Assistants may be assigned a shared office space, but this is not guaranteed. If no space is available, all requests for graduate student office space will be added to a waiting list with priority given to post-candidacy PhD students.

2.2 Building Access and Keys

The department's offices are housed on the third and fourth floors of the Humanities Centre. If you have been assigned office space in the Humanities Centre building, please see the department's Executive Assistant, Dorothy Reynolds <efsea@ualberta.ca> for access information.

2.3 Personal Information

Students are responsible for the accuracy and validity of their contact information in [BearTracks](#), including mailing address, email address, and telephone number.

International students must submit a copy of their study permits to Shared Services – please include your ID number. We also ask that you submit a copy of your study permit to Annett Gaudig-Rueger, EFS Graduate Programs Advisor <humgrad3@ualberta.ca>.

International students should also obtain a Canadian Social Insurance Number (SIN). A SIN is required for all graduate students receiving financial support. Please submit the SIN number directly to Shared Services. For international students, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their study permit is current. Information on renewing a study permit can be found on the International Student and Visitor [website](#)

2.4 Mail Service

Graduate Students are assigned mailboxes in the Departmental mailroom (HC 3-5B), which is accessible via a 4-digit code available from the department's Executive Assistant, Dorothy Reynolds <efsea@ualberta.ca>. Mail not picked up within 3 months from the date received will be discarded appropriately. Personal mail should NOT be sent here.

2.5 Email

A Campus Computing ID (CCID) and password are issued to every student applicant upon receipt of their application for admission to the University. An email account is provided for communication between the applicant and the University. Note that your CCID is your email username. Students can access their university email account at <https://ualberta.ca/gmail>

If you need help with your CCID or password, contact Information Services and Technology (IST) <https://www.ualberta.ca/information-services-and-technology/index.html>

Note: Email is the primary mode of communication at the University of Alberta and students are responsible for checking their email regularly to ensure they do not miss important information, assignments, or requests.

3. Funding and Financial Support

The Department may provide financial support in a variety of ways, including Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs), Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowships (GRAFs), and scholarships. Please contact the Graduate Program Advisor for more information. All students who receive pay from the University must provide their Social Insurance Number (SIN) and their banking information on [BearTracks](#).

For PhD students, the Department provides guaranteed financial support through years one to four of their program, with minimum guaranteed funding of \$100,000 over four years and not less than \$25,000 in their first year. This funding will be some combination of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs), Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs), Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowships (GRAFs), and scholarships. The details of your funding are outlined in your Letter of Offer. Each year, in August, you will receive a letter from the department confirming the details of your funding package for the upcoming year.

For MA students, the Department does not provide guaranteed financial support. However, individual students may be offered financial support in the form of GTAs, GRAs, GRAFs, or scholarships. The details of your funding are outlined in your Letter of Offer. Each year, in August, you will receive a letter from the department confirming the details of your funding package for the upcoming year.

3.1 Teaching and Research Assistantships

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

GTAs provide support to the undergraduate program. This may be in the form of marking, assisting in tutorials for multisection classes (GTA), or as principal instructor (GTA-PI) of your own course. The number of hours per week ranges from 3 to 12. This number reflects the average time commitment of the assignment and not the peak time commitment in any one week. It should be noted that, while the academic term is thirteen weeks long, a student with a GTA is paid for sixteen weeks of work. The terms of a GTA are set out in the [Collective Agreement](#) between the University of Alberta and the Graduate Students Association.

Assignments

Students may be assigned to a GTA or a GTA-PI by the department, in full or partial fulfilment of its funding commitments. Twice a year (once for Fall/Winter and once for Spring/Summer), students will be asked to complete a survey indicating their interest for a GTA the upcoming session.

For English courses (coded ENGL), both PhD and MA students are assigned to GTAs. Only PhD students are assigned to GTA-PIs. These students will receive training and mentorship through the completion of Proseminar B.

For Writing Studies Courses (coded WRS), both PhD and MA students are assigned to GTAs. Students may be expected to have completed WRS 603 (or an approved equivalent) before undertaking a GTA in WRS.

The Faculty of Arts also maintains a list of courses outside the department which are in need of GTAs. This list is usually advertised in July or August for GTAs starting in Fall/Winter, so pay attention to your emails if you are interested.

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)

The duties of a GRA are primarily in support of a faculty member's academic research. Such responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, collecting/coding/analyzing data, literature reviews, library research, writing reports, designing conference presentations, and preparing materials for submission to funding agencies. Whereas GTAs are assigned on a term-by-term basis, a GRA may be assigned for an hour, a week, a month, several months, or a year. The

terms of a GRA are set out in the [Collective Agreement](#) between the University of Alberta and the Graduate Students Association.

Assignments and Support

Students may be assigned to a GRA by the department, in full or partial fulfilment of its funding commitments. Students may also be hired as GRAs directly by faculty members (using for example, a faculty member's research grant). Supervisors will ensure GRAs are trained for the duties to be performed and will include the training as part of the GRA. If the GRA needs specific skills, the Supervisor may allocate up to three hours per week of the Graduate Assistantship for training. Any costs associated with this training will be the responsibility of the Supervisor.

Graduate Research Assistant Fellowships (GRAFs)

Students may be assigned a GRAF by the department, in full or partial fulfilment of its funding commitments. GRAFs are a form of financial assistance provided to graduate students to focus on their education and training and relates to their own thesis or portfolio. The relationship between the assistantship supervisor and GRAF is not an employment relationship. The GRAF is normally funded through restricted funds (such as a supervisor's research grant) and may form part of a funding package to support graduate students in their studies. The value of the fellowship may vary by discipline and by the requirements of the funds supporting the GRAF.

3.2 Awards and Scholarships

Detailed information on many available scholarships can be found on the [GPS website](#). The Department regularly advertises upcoming scholarship opportunities and deadlines via email.

For MA (thesis) and PhD students who have been offered financial support over multiple years, a condition of funding renewal is that you apply for all major external awards for which you are eligible. This includes the [SSHRC Canada Graduate Scholarship](#), valued at \$27,000 for 12 months for MA students and \$40,000 per year for up to three years (max \$120,000) for PhD students.

NOTE: Failure to apply for SSHRC may put you in violation of the conditions of your funding package. Please consult your Letter of Offer.

3.3 Fees

The University of Alberta's fees policies and procedures are stated in the Tuition and Fees section of the Calendar. Please consult the [Tuition + Fees](#) page on the GPS website for more information and sample fee assessments. Individuals seeking fees information should email gradfees@ualberta.ca

4. Program Requirements

As a graduate student, you are responsible for ensuring that all program requirements are met on the required timeline. Please contact the Graduate Programs Advisor if anything is unclear or if you have questions about any requirements or deadlines.

4.1 Registration

Although students are ultimately responsible for the accuracy and completeness of their registration, the Department must assist the graduate student in planning the student's program (see [Responsibilities Related to Graduate Programs](#) on the GPS website).

4.2 Appointment of Supervisor(s) and Supervisory Committee

Supervisor

Every student in a thesis-based program is required to have a supervisor, who is initially assigned by the Graduate Committee following the admissions process. Every student in a course-based program relies on the Graduate Programs Director to serve this role.

Students who wish to change supervisors may do so, providing a suitable supervisor is willing and available, following the approval of the Graduate Programs Director. A change of supervisor that also entails a change of project may require the student to repeat the Candidacy process of their doctoral program. Any change of supervisor requires the Department to submit a Change of Supervisor form to GPS.

The supervisor is directly responsible for the supervision of the student's program. In this capacity, the supervisor assists the student in planning a program, ensures that the student is aware of all program requirements, degree regulations, and general regulations of the department and GPS, provides counsel on all aspects of the program, and stays informed about the student's research activities and progress.

GPS has established a set of [approved guidelines for supervisors](#) that we reproduce here:

The supervisor, with the support of the home department and the GPS:

- Provides an environment for the student that is conducive to research and in which the student can grow intellectually;
- Provides appropriate guidance to the student on the nature of research and the standard expected, and is accessible to give advice and constructive feedback; at the beginning of the supervisory relationship, the student should be made aware in writing of the expectations held by the supervisor and the department that are not already defined in the Calendar and the Graduate Program Manual;

- With the student, establishes a realistic timetable for completion of various phases of the program;
- Considers a graduate student a junior colleague;
- Ensures that there are sufficient material and supervisory resources for each graduate student under supervision;
- Works with the student to establish the supervisory committee as soon as possible after the start of the program and ensures that it maintains contact and formally meets at least once a year with the student;
- When going on leave or an extended period of absence, ensures that the student is adequately supervised by the provision of an acting supervisor. In the case of doctoral students, this should be a member of the supervisory committee;
- Ensures that the student is aware of the student's guidelines and, when necessary, assists the student in meeting these;
- Sets up committee meetings and examinations after consultation and with full knowledge of the student;
- Maintains open communication with the student concerning any problem; and in the event of a conflict in the supervisor-student relationship, discusses the issues with the student and graduate coordinator in a timely fashion (see Resolving Conflicts in Supervisor-Student Relationships in the Calendar).

The supervisor must prepare a program of studies for the student, arrange for and attend all supervisory committee meetings and examinations, ensuring that these are scheduled and held in accordance with GPS regulations, and must review the thesis both in draft and in final form.

Co-Supervisors

The decision to opt for co-supervision should be based on the nature of the student's dissertation project. A student engaged in interdisciplinary work that cuts across one or more disciplinary boundaries, and who intends to privilege two (or possibly more) disciplines equally rather than working primarily in one well-defined field, will often be well served by a co-supervision arrangement if two appropriate co-supervisors can be found. One of the two must be in the Department of EFS; the other need not be. The co-supervisors must agree that they will establish an equitable working relationship where they will both contribute to the student's needs equally, though in different domains. A sense of hierarchy or dominance, with one co-supervisor playing a larger role, is not ideal for co-supervision.

Supervisor on Leave

If a supervisor's leave exceeds two months, they are required to make adequate provision for supervision of their graduate students during their leave. They should submit a written statement to the Department and the student, describing arrangements for satisfactory supervision during leave.

If a supervisor retires or otherwise leaves their position permanently, the student shall meet with the Graduate Programs Director and the remaining supervisory committee members to discuss

options. In most cases, the current supervisor can continue either through an Adjunct or Emeritus role. The Department will make strenuous efforts to ensure the student can continue in their program. However, in the event that no qualified and suitable alternative is available, the student may be required to change their program of study or be recommended to withdraw from the program altogether.

Supervisory Committee

Students in thesis-based programs require a supervisory committee. Students and their supervisor may recommend committee members, but the formal assignment of committee members is the responsibility of the Department. Typically, this comprises:

MA (thesis-based): Supervisor(s) + One Committee Member
PhD: Supervisor(s) + Two Committee Members

Committee members will not necessarily have the subject expertise of the supervisor, but they must be qualified to provide mentorship and training in some area of the thesis. In situations where the project requires further expertise, a student may add one additional member to their committee with the approval of the Graduate Programs Director.

The supervisory committee is typically formed by the end of the first year of the student's program. At this point, the committee should meet collectively with the student to discuss the working relationship. A common model, though by no means the only one, is for the supervisor(s) to provide feedback chapter-by-chapter, with several feedback rounds on each chapter/section being common and expected, while committee members read through the entire completed dissertation once and provide feedback once. Another model is for at least one committee member to read each chapter as drafts are done – this is particularly true for specialized areas such as methodology.

We recommend that supervisory committee members be drawn from faculty within the department, but we recognize that certain projects can benefit from expertise outside our department. Despite their less central roles, committee members should be involved with the student's research throughout the entire research and writing process. At a minimum, the supervisory committee must meet with the student once annually, to assess the student's progress and to set expectations for the coming year. The supervisory committee will also participate fully as members of final examination committees and, in the case of PhD students, of candidacy examination committees.

Students who wish to change committee members may do so, providing a suitable person is willing and available, following the approval of the Supervisor and the Graduate Programs Director.

4.3 Completion of the Supervisor-Student Guidelines

Students registered in an MA (thesis) or PhD program must meet with their supervisor and complete the “Supervisor– Student Guidelines” form in the first term of their program, as detailed in Section 8.1 of the GPS Graduate Program Manual.

4.4 Progress Report

Students registered in an MA (thesis) or PhD program are required to report their progress to GPS annually, using the standardized “Progress Report” form, as described in [Section 8.1 of the GPS Graduate Program Manual](#). In instances where the progress report is not submitted at least once within 12 months, the student’s registration in subsequent terms will be restricted as a last resort and temporarily to determine a plan for completion.

Each year, you and your supervisor(s) will receive an email prompt from GPS when it is time to complete the report. A student who receives two consecutive evaluations of “in need of improvement” or one “unsatisfactory” rating will usually be required to withdraw from their program on the recommendation of the Associate Dean—Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and/or the Department Chair.

4.5 Ethics, Academic Citizenship, and Academic Integrity

4.5.1 Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement

Graduate students are expected to conduct their education, research, workplace behaviour, and professional activities in an ethical manner. As such, the Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement ensures that all graduate students have equal access to information about academic integrity, understand what it means to act with integrity, and are equipped to conduct themselves in ways that uphold the values of the University of Alberta. Full details can be found in the Calendar. Briefly, graduate students should complete the following by the end of the first term of registration in their degree program:

For MA (course-based) and MA (thesis-based) students

- The six-hour, online, non-credit course INT D 710—Ethics and Academic Citizenship

For PhD students

- The six-hour, online, non-credit course INT D 710—Ethics and Academic Citizenship
- The two-hour, online, non-credit course INT D 720—Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship

Students will automatically be registered in their respective courses by GPS at the start of each term. PhD students who completed their Master’s degree at the University of Alberta and previously passed INT D 710 Ethics and Academic Citizenship are only required to take INT D 720—Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship.

Note: The Department will not schedule candidacy or final examinations for students who have not yet completed their Ethics and Academic Citizenship requirement.

4.5.2 Academic Integrity

All graduate students are expected to adhere to the University of Alberta's [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#). If you have questions concerning what is acceptable or not acceptable in a specific course, consult with the instructor. If you have questions about what is acceptable in your thesis project, consult your supervisor.

4.6 Professional Development Requirement

All graduate students at the University of Alberta are required to meet the [Professional Development Requirement](#) to complete their program, as described in the Calendar. The requirement includes an individualized career plan document called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and the completion of eight hours of Professional Development activities inspired by your career plan. Further information can be found on the GPS website, under Professional Development Requirement.

Note: The Department will not schedule final examinations for students who have not yet completed their Professional Development Requirement.

4.7 Degrees Offered

4.7.1 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English

The PhD is a research-based degree with a minimum period of residence of two academic years of full-time attendance at the University of Alberta, where an academic year is defined as the eight-month period from September through April. Residency requirements provide students with exposure to university life and interaction with faculty members and other graduate students. Through coursework, seminar participation, teaching, faculty interaction and faculty-directed research, students learn to be independent researchers and scholars in an academic discipline.

Timeline

The time required to complete the PhD will vary with the individual candidate; however, a minimum of two years of study and research is normally required. The maximum time to complete the PhD program as set by GPS is six years. The PhD consists of:

Year 1

- 5 courses at the graduate level
- 2 Proseminars (A and B)
- GPS Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement

- GPS Professional Development Requirement
- Statement of Research Plan and Constitution of Supervisory Committee
- Language Requirement

Year 2

- PhD Colloquium
- Long Thesis Proposal
- Oral Candidacy Exam
- Language Requirement if not completed in year 1

Years 3 and 4

- Thesis
- Appointment of Examining Committee and Oral Defence

Coursework

Students are advised to complete coursework in their first year. Current [graduate course descriptions](#) are posted on the departmental website. Students can take up to 2 courses in another department or at another institution but only with permission from the Graduate Programs Director.

Proseminars

Proseminar A is a requirement for all students and is taken in the Fall Term of Year 1. Conducted by the Graduate Programs Director and meeting bi-weekly, Proseminar A orients student to the conduct and practice of graduate study at the University of Alberta. Topics include:

- Using the library and on-line library resources
- Conceiving of a research project & crafting a short proposal
- Supervision: the supervisory relationship and assembling a committee
- Research ethics
- Academic Integrity
- Preparing applications for grants, scholarships, and fellowships
- Professional development opportunities
- Conferences and other research dissemination

Proseminar B is a requirement for all PhD students and is normally taken in the Winter Term of Year 1. Conducted by the department's GTA Supervisor and meeting bi-weekly, Proseminar B mentors students in the practice of teaching at the postsecondary level. Topics include:

- The first-year curriculum
- Marking and grading
- Teaching literature
- Teaching writing
- Classroom management

- Syllabi and assignment development
- Microteaching sessions

Note: The Department will not schedule candidacy or final examinations for students who have not yet completed Proseminars A & B.

Statement of Research Plan and Constitution of Supervisory Committee (Due 1 March of Year 1)

During the first year, a PhD student begins to work with a supervisor on a Statement of Research Plan, which they must submit to the Graduate Committee for approval by March 1.

This document is a record of the student's thinking about the project at this stage in the program. To this end, it might outline the field or fields relevant to the project and present a series of research questions on which the proposed dissertation will focus. Every SoRP will include a Works Cited, and a preliminary reading list of materials foundational to the early stages of the project that forms the student's program of reading for the upcoming spring and summer.

The SoRP is also the occasion for the formal confirmation of the student's Supervisory Committee. The document will include the nomination of a first reader, identified by the supervisor in consultation with the student. The document will also invite suggestions for the second reader, which the Graduate Committee shall duly consider. Ultimately, the Department has responsibility for appointing the supervisory committee and in EFS, the Department has delegated this authority to the Graduate Committee.

Language Requirement

PhD students must demonstrate either basic proficiency in two languages other than English, or advanced knowledge of one. Often students have satisfied proficiency requirements during their undergraduate program or through their lived experience (e.g., a student whose first language is not English).

Basic proficiency can be demonstrated as follows:

- a minimum grade of 2.7 in a full-year intermediate level language course. Two half courses at the 200 level will satisfy the requirement. Often students have satisfied basic proficiency requirements during their undergraduate program.
- a challenge exam in the language requested. Only do the challenge exam if you do not have or will not acquire a full year of language courses at the 200 level on your transcript.

Advanced knowledge may be demonstrated by passing a full-year (or 2 half-year), upper-level (300-level or equivalent) language course with a minimum grade of 2.7 or by providing evidence of fluency.

If you do not or will not have on your transcript the required courses, to prove proficiency, please contact the Graduate Director at efsgrad@ualberta.ca.

Computer Languages: If a student is working in a research area that involves computing, the demonstration of proficiency in a computer language may be used to fulfill one (but not both) of the language requirements. Basic proficiency in a computer programming language will be considered to have been achieved after one full year of study. Students may take courses in computer programming languages from the Department of Computing Science at the University of Alberta, or from another institution. Computer languages that can fulfil the requirement include Python, Perl or Java. GIS design courses cannot be used to fulfil the language requirement.

Note: The Department will not schedule candidacy or final examinations for students who have not yet completed their Language Requirement.

Note: Your regular PhD tuition fees pays for language courses only during the Fall and Winter terms. If you take a language course in the spring term, you will be responsible for that expense.

Long Thesis Proposal

Following the approval of the SoRP, students are required to prepare and submit a Long Thesis Proposal (LTP) to their supervisory committee. Typically students submit their LTP in the Winter semester of Year 2 or the Fall of Year 3. The LTP forms the basis for the oral candidacy examination and is intended to establish the student's readiness to begin work on the dissertation. **The LTP will have been approved by the full supervisory committee before the student can proceed to the candidacy examination.**

The LTP is a 25-40 page document (double-spaced), plus works cited and proposed reading bibliography, in which the student outlines in detail the doctoral research project. As a whole, this proposal presents the material the student must know in order to begin writing the dissertation and to position themselves in relation to the critical debates in which the project intervenes. Each proposed thesis project is unique but the department has built three possible models to help guide conversations between students and their supervisory committees

Model I

- Statement of the Project's Questions, Goals, and Key Texts (1-4 pages).
- Statement of the Project's Plan of Research and Methodology (1-5 pages).
 - The Plan of Research can include some close reading of texts, or can focus on the theoretical, historical or methodological problems posed by the project. "Methodology" refers to how the work will be undertaken, and what the plan for that work will be.
- Situation within Fields: (these sections will be written as narrative bibliographies) (15-30 pages total)

- Discussion of the project's position within the larger field(s) with which the student identifies: how are these fields defined historically, formally, politically, intellectually, ethically, and in terms of scholarly methods? How and why does this project participate in those conversations? In short, who is the project's broadest audience and what do they care about? Questions to be considered could include: what work has been done in this area before, both in terms of primary and secondary materials? What are its methods and findings? What will this project add to the scholarly conversation already taking place? Who is the project's specific audience?
- Discussion of critical methods: outside of field definitions, how is this project defined intellectually? With whom does it share methods, and intellectual or ideological commitments?
- Chapter Summaries, including key texts, methods, questions, and, if appropriate, preliminary arguments (3-7 pages).
- Works Cited list.
- Reading Bibliographies: organized as appropriate to the project, perhaps divided by: primary and secondary texts, theoretical/methodological inspirations, chapters, etc.

Model II

- Introduction of the project's problem or question, including description of the topic and area (2-10).
- Description of Archive: Provide an overview of the main cultural or literary texts that engage your topic. Some of these texts will be included in your dissertation and some of them will not. In other words, delineate the broadest possible archive for your project, summarize the ways you see these texts in dialogue with each other and with your project, and justify your choices of what to put in and leave out (2-10 pp.).
- Field Placement or Literature Review(s): Overview the major secondary critical scholarship and/or theoretical debates that your project engages and describe what you see as your own contribution. What are the scholarly and intellectual conversations that your project will add to? What work has been done in your area before? Who is the project's specific audience? (2-10 pp)
- Methodology and/or Chapter Breakdown: What is your method of analysis, reading, research and/or interpretation? How will you be approaching the work for your project and what are your major theoretical assumptions? A description of proposed chapter breakdowns could be useful to explain your methodology and/or your organizing principle (2-10 pp).
- Works Cited.
- Reading Bibliographies: organized as appropriate to the project, perhaps divided by: primary and secondary texts, theoretical/methodological inspirations, chapters, etc.

Model III

An LTP for a research creation project should address most of the below components. Each can take whatever length it needs in contributing toward the 30-45 page total and appear in whatever sequence is most generative for the project.

- Question / Focus / Topic: Describe the research question or problem that inspires your project. How would you articulate the project's topic, focus, and/or goal?
- Situation within / across / against / beyond Fields: What are the coordinates of your project? What fields does your project address? How are these fields defined historically, formally, politically, intellectually, ethically, and in terms of scholarly methods? What audiences and communities does your project engage? How and why does this project participate in the conversations it takes up? While research creation resists disciplinarity, it is helpful to ground that position so that it is legible within an academic institutional context or from more conventional scholarly perspectives (for example, if you are interested in applying for an academic job, what field would be appropriate?).
- Form / Method: What specific creative and critical practices and methods will you use? What forms are necessary for your subject(s) and why? How are theory and practice, or research and creation, intertwined and mutually animating? How will you combine academic and creative research methods? What intervention(s) will this combination make? What is at stake in doing so?
- Process: What process will you follow in undertaking your project? Are there logistical or practical concerns? What are the stages that will allow you to make it accessible to its audience?
- Samples or a prototype: You may wish to include a sample of an output or a prototype of your approach along with a reflection on how it is representative of your project.
- Works Cited: Identify all works you reference in the LTP.
- Reading Bibliographies: Organized as appropriate to the project, perhaps separated into fields, or rubrics, or paradigms, or concepts.

Candidacy Exam

Timing

GPS requires that **candidacy examinations must be held within three years** from the student's start date of the PhD program. Until April 2026, the Department of English and Film Studies had an exception to this rule. This exception is still in place for students who commenced their program prior to April 2026.

Examining Committee

Every examining committee must have a chair who is not the supervisor and is a faculty member with experience supervising graduate students. The chair should have sufficient experience of graduate examinations to be able to allow the examination to be conducted in a fair manner. The chair is responsible for moderating the discussion and directing questions. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that departmental and GPS regulations relating to the final examination are followed. If the chair is not an examiner, then the chair does not vote. The chair is not an examiner for doctoral examinations.

The Candidacy Examining Committee consists of the supervisor, supervisory committee, and **either 1 university examiner or 1 specialized knowledge examiner**.

A **university examiner** is a member of the University of Alberta community who is knowledgeable in the field and comes fresh to the examination. They must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. The examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s). Eligible University of Alberta community members include current or retired Academic Staff members, Academic Colleagues, Postdoctoral Fellows, or Executive Members/Academic Administrators who will be appointed or re-appointed as Academic Faculty members on the conclusion of their term (current or retired categories A, B, C, D, and E, as defined in the University of Alberta's Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues).

A **specialized knowledge examiner** is a person who has knowledge or professional expertise that is relevant to the thesis research (such as a health practitioner or an Indigenous community member) and does not have a full-time academic appointment at a university that confers graduate degrees. A specialized knowledge examiner comes fresh to the examination. They must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in any way. The examiner should not have a close personal association with the student or the supervisor.

When deemed necessary by the supervisor, 1 additional university examiner or specialized knowledge examiner may be appointed to the examining committee. In such cases, the examining committee consists of the supervisor, supervisory committee and either 2 university examiners or 1 university examiner and 1 specialized knowledge examiner. The examining committee does not normally include an examiner from outside of the University of Alberta. However, when deemed necessary by the supervisor, an external examiner may be appointed to the committee. In this case, the external examiner replaces a university examiner or a specialized knowledge examiner.

Preparing for the Candidacy Exam

Once the supervisor determines that the LTP document is ready to be approved by the committee for the candidacy examination process, the following steps are taken.

1. The student sends the LTP document to the other members of the supervisory committee.
2. The supervisor asks the supervisory committee members to determine if the student is ready to go to candidacy. There may be revisions at this stage if the committee members ask for them.
3. Once the LTP document is approved for Candidacy by the committee, the student sends the final version of the LTP to the Graduate Programs Administrator <humgrad3@ualberta.ca>. There should be at least a 4 week period until the exam takes place.

4. The supervisor provides the Graduate Program Administrator with the following information: the date, time and location of the Candidacy Exam; the names of the Candidacy Exam Chair, the department examiner (internal external) and the name and department of the arms-length examiner (who is not from the department). The Graduate Program Administrator will distribute the LTP to the examining committee members and the examining committee chair.

5. The Candidacy Examination takes place.

Oral Candidacy Exam:

The oral examination follows GPS regulations and requirements, according to which **students must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the examining committee, that they possess an adequate knowledge of the discipline and of the subject matter relevant to the thesis, and the ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level.**

Each committee will retain the right to establish its examination processes. However, because the arm's length examiners have priority in deciding the outcome of an exam, questions generally begin with any external examiner and move from there through the internal examiner and then the supervisory committee, ending with the supervisor. Typically, two rounds of questions are asked, but the committee retains the right to ask as many questions as necessary to satisfy their need for information about the candidate's preparation for writing the thesis. The exam typically runs about 2 hours, but it may run longer as needed.

PhD Thesis

The object of writing a PhD thesis is to enable the student to master and contribute to the literature of a given subject, and to digest, order, and present their findings more comprehensively than in essays or in an MA thesis. The work should be of a high caliber and advance knowledge in the student's major field of study. Since it is an extensive piece of work and likely to be the basis of further endeavors, it should be genuinely interesting and important. Since it demands professional competence, it should be well researched, well thought out, and well written. It need not be lengthy: two hundred pages may well be enough to demonstrate intellectual vitality.

The [Calendar](#) describes the minimum requirements for a passable thesis:

A doctoral thesis, at a minimum, must embody the results of original investigations and analyses. It must demonstrate that the program's learning outcomes have been achieved and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study.

Further information about the Thesis Regulations can be found in the [Calendar](#). The GPS website contains [Instructions for Thesis Preparation and Formatting](#).

All EFS students are required to submit one bound paper copy with blue cover to the department, which we will hold on the shelves of the Salter Reading Room.

Thesis Defence

Examining Committee

Every examining committee must have a chair who is not the supervisor and is a faculty member with experience supervising graduate students. The chair should have sufficient experience of graduate examinations to be able to allow the examination to be conducted in a fair manner. The chair is responsible for moderating the discussion and directing questions. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that departmental and GPS regulations relating to the final examination are followed. If the chair is not an examiner, then the chair does not vote. The chair is not an examiner for doctoral examinations.

The examining committee consists of the supervisor, the supervisory committee, one external examiner, and either one university examiner or one specialized knowledge examiner. The authority for the appointment of final examining committees rests with the Dean of Arts.

External Examiner

It is the responsibility of the Department to recommend an external examiner and to submit the name to the Dean of Arts for approval. The supervisor may contact potential examiners to ascertain their availability and willingness to participate, but must have no further contact with the external examiner after the thesis has been distributed to the examining committee. Any messages received after distribution of the thesis should be referred to the Graduate Programs Director <efsgrad@ualberta.ca>.

Normally, the external examiner should be submitted for approval at least two months in advance of the examination date. The external examiner:

- Will be a tenure-track, tenured, or retired faculty member of a university that confers graduate degrees;
- Will be a recognized authority in the specific field of research of the student's thesis;
- Will be experienced in supervising doctoral students to completion; and
- Must be in a position to review the thesis objectively and to provide a critical analysis of the work and the presentation.

It is essential that the external examiner not have an association with the student, the supervisor, or the department as this could hinder objective analysis. Associations that normally will preclude participation as an external examiner include:

- Having co-authored or performed collaborative research with the student or the supervisor within the preceding six years;

- Having overseen an edited volume that includes the work of the student or supervisor, or having published work in an edited volume overseen by the student or supervisor within the preceding six years;
- Having a financial interest in an entity that could benefit from the thesis research;
- Having read or evaluated the thesis, in whole or in part, prior to appointment as external examiner;
- Having examined or been examined by the student's supervisor within the preceding six years;
- Having engaged in discussions/negotiations with the student or the supervisor related to future employment or supervision, or intending to do so;
- Having a personal or financial relationship with the student or the supervisor that could appear to result in a conflict of interest (for example, past or present domestic or romantic partnerships, family relationships, and past or present business partnerships);
- Having a former (within the preceding six years) or pending affiliation with the student's department;
- Having had an academic appointment at the University of Alberta within the preceding six years.

Under normal circumstances an individual will not be used as an external examiner at the University of Alberta if they have served in the same capacity in the same department at this University within the preceding two years; this does not preclude service in another department. Once the external examiner has been approved an official letter of invitation is issued to the external examiner by the department.

Conduct of the Oral Examination

Examinations follow all GPS procedures, as explained in the [Calendar](#).

PhD defences in EFS have a **public component** and are scheduled to take place before a small audience. Two weeks prior to the date, the Department advertises the upcoming event. Those interested in attending are asked to notify the Exam Chair (via the Grad Administrator) at least 3 days in advance of the defence. Requests to attend may be denied, but the overriding ethos would be that people with an academic interest in the topic will be approved to attend.

Immediately before the exam, the examining committee will confer briefly to establish the process and order of questions. This will be arranged by the examination chair. The Defence begins with the Candidate offering a summary presentation of their research, directed at the audience rather than the committee of expert examiners. This presentation introduces the candidate's research subject, describes the research questions, and presents their findings with some comment upon their significance. This presentation should last around 15-20 minutes, after which audience members are given the opportunity to leave the room if they would like. They also have the option to stay for the examination.

Following this, the examining committee commences their examination. Each committee will retain the right to establish its examination processes. However, because the arm's length

examiners have priority in deciding the outcome of an exam, questions generally begin with the external examiner and move from there through the internal examiner and then the supervisory committee, ending with the supervisor. Typically, two rounds of questions are asked, but the committee retains the right to ask as many questions as necessary to satisfy their need for information about the thesis. This part of the exam typically runs about 1.5-2 hours, but it may run longer as needed. When the Chair is satisfied that the committee has asked sufficient questions, they may decide, time permitting, to receive a question or two from the audience members still in attendance. To protect the candidate's interests, the Chair will strictly moderate these questions and will, where necessary, deem a question as not relevant to this venue.

After this, remaining audience members—and the candidate—are asked to leave the room to allow the committee to deliberate privately. Following the deliberations, the candidate alone will be invited back into the room to hear the committee's verdict and to receive any feedback.

Decision of the Doctoral Final Examining Committee

The [Calendar](#) describes that the decision will be based both on the content of the thesis and on the student's ability to defend it. The final examination may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Adjourned
- Pass
- Pass subject to revisions
- Fail

There is no provision for a final examination to be “passed subject to major revisions” If the Examining Committee fails to reach a decision, the department will refer the matter to the Dean, GPS, who will determine an appropriate course of action.

Adjourned: An adjourned examination is one that has been abandoned officially. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The final examination should be adjourned in the following situations:

- The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial that it will require further research or experimentation or major reworking of sections, or if the committee is so dissatisfied with the general presentation of the thesis that it will require a reconvening of the examining committee. In such circumstances the committee cannot pass the student, and must adjourn the examination.
- The committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defence of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable with or without minor revisions.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination.
- Discovery of possible offences under the [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#) after the examination has started.

If the examination is adjourned, the committee should:

- Specify in writing to the student, with as much precision as possible, the nature of the deficiencies and, in the case of revisions to the thesis, the extent of the revisions required. Where the oral defence is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to arrange some discussion periods with the student prior to reconvening the examination.
- Decide upon a date to reconvene. If the date of the reconvened examination depends upon the completion of a research task or a series of discussions, it should be made clear which committee members will decide on the appropriate date to reconvene. The final date set for reconvening shall be no later than six months from the date of the examination. This new examination must be held within six months of the initial examination.
- Make it clear to the student what will be required by way of approval before the examination is reconvened (e.g., approval of the committee chair or supervisor, approval of the entire committee, or of select members of the committee).
- Specify the supervision and assistance the student may expect from the committee members in meeting the necessary revisions.
- Advise the Dean of the department's Faculty following the procedures established for this purpose.
- Advise GPS in writing of the adjournment and the conditions.
- When the date is set for the adjourned final examination, the department will notify the Dean of the department's Faculty and GPS. Normally a Pro Dean attends the examination.

Pass: Pass is the decision given when the only revisions required are typographical or minor editorial changes. All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass. If the student passes the examination, the department should submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS. If one of the examiners fails the student, that examiner does not have to sign this form.

Pass Subject to Revisions: All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass Subject to Revisions. The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but the revisions to the thesis will not require a reconvening of the examining committee. If the examining committee agrees to a "Pass subject to revisions" for the student, the chair of the examining committee must provide in writing, within five working days of the examination, to the student, the graduate coordinator, and GPS:

- the reasons for this outcome,
- the details of the required revisions,
- the approval mechanism for meeting the requirement for revisions (e.g., approval of the examining committee chair or supervisor, or approval of the entire examining committee, or select members of the committee), and the supervision and assistance the student can expect to receive from committee members.
- a date for the revisions to be resubmitted, as negotiated with the student, but which should be no less than six weeks and no more than six months.

The student must make the revisions within six months of the date of the final examination. Once the required revisions have been made and approved, the department shall submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS indicating the committee decision was “pass subject to revisions”. If one of the examiners fails the student that examiner does not have to sign the form. If the required revisions have not been made and approved by the end of the six months deadline, the student will be required to withdraw.

Fail: All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail. If the examination result is a Fail, no member of the examining committee signs the Thesis Approval/Completion form. When the outcome is a Fail, the committee chair will provide the reasons for this decision to the graduate coordinator. The department will then provide this report, together with its recommendation for the student's program, to the Dean of the department's Faculty, GPS, and to the student. The department may recommend that the student be allowed to repeat the thesis examination within six months, that they be transferred to a master's program, or that they be required to withdraw. Repeating the thesis examination is not an option after a second failed examination. Transfer to a master's program may have financial implications. If the department recommends that a first failed exam be repeated, the student and graduate coordinator are to be notified in writing of the student's exam deficiencies by the chair of the examining committee. It may also recommend that the student be required to complete additional work in preparation for the second thesis examination (e.g., coursework, literature review, upgrading of writing skills).

An Associate Dean, GPS will normally arrange to meet with the student and with the graduate coordinator before acting upon any department recommendation that affects the student's academic standing.

4.7.2 Master of Arts (MA) in English, Thesis-Based

The MA (Thesis-Based) is a research-based degree with a minimum period of residence of two full-time academic terms at the University of Alberta. The two terms need not be consecutive. Residency requirements provide students with exposure to university life and interaction with faculty members and other graduate students. Through coursework, seminar participation, teaching, faculty interaction and faculty-directed research, students learn to be independent researchers and scholars in an academic discipline.

Requirements

The MA consists of:

- 6 courses at the graduate level
- Proseminar A
- GPS Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement
- GPS Professional Development Requirement
- Thesis Proposal and Constitution of Supervisory Committee
- Thesis
- Appointment of Examining Committee and Oral Defence

Coursework

Students are advised to complete coursework in their first year. Current [graduate course descriptions](#) are posted on the departmental website. Students can take up to 2 courses in another department or at another institution but only with permission from the Graduate Programs Director.

Proseminar A

Proseminar A is a requirement for all students and is taken in the Fall Term of Year 1. Conducted by the Graduate Programs Director and meeting bi-weekly, Proseminar A orients student to the conduct and practice of graduate study at the University of Alberta. Topics include:

- Using the library and on-line library resources
- Conceiving of a research project & crafting a short proposal
- Supervision: the supervisory relationship and assembling a committee
- Research ethics
- Academic Integrity
- Preparing applications for grants, scholarships, and fellowships
- Professional development opportunities
- Conferences and other research dissemination

Note: The Department will not schedule final examinations for students who have not yet completed Proseminar A.

Thesis Proposal and Constitution of Supervisory Committee (Due 15 March of Year 1)

During the first year, the student begins to work with a supervisor on a Thesis Proposal, which they must submit to the Graduate Committee for approval by March 1. Approximately two pages (double-spaced) in length, the proposal outlines the field or fields relevant to the project and presents a series of research questions on which the proposed thesis will focus. Every Proposal will include a Works Cited, and a preliminary reading list of materials foundational to the early stages of the project that forms the student's program of reading for the upcoming spring and summer.

The Proposal is also the occasion for the formal confirmation of the student's Supervisory Committee. The document will be signed by the supervisor and will include their suggestions for the Reader, which the Graduate Committee shall duly consider. Ultimately, the Department has responsibility for appointing the supervisory committee and in EFS, the Department has delegated this authority to the Graduate Committee.

MA Thesis

The object of writing a MA thesis is to enable the student to contribute to the literature of a given subject. Since it demands professional competence, it should be well researched, well thought

out, and well written. It need not be lengthy: 60-100 pages may well be enough to demonstrate intellectual vitality.

The [Calendar](#) describes the minimum requirements for a passable thesis:

For students in a master's degree program, the thesis, at a minimum, should demonstrate that the program's learning outcomes have been achieved and that the student is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis. As far as possible, it should be an original contribution.

Further information about the Thesis Regulations can be found in the [Calendar](#). The GPS website contains [Instructions for Thesis Preparation and Formatting](#). All EFS students are required to submit one bound paper copy with blue cover to the department, which we will hold on the shelves of the Salter Reading Room.

Thesis Defence

Examining Committee

Every examining committee must have a chair who is not the supervisor and is a faculty member with experience supervising graduate students. The chair should have sufficient experience of graduate examinations to be able to allow the examination to be conducted in a fair manner. The chair is responsible for moderating the discussion and directing questions. It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that departmental and GPS regulations relating to the final examination are followed. If the chair is not an examiner, then the chair does not vote. The chair is not an examiner for doctoral examinations.

The Candidacy Examining Committee consists of the supervisor, supervisory committee, and **either 1 university examiner or 1 specialized knowledge examiner**.

A **university examiner** is a member of the University of Alberta community who is knowledgeable in the field and comes fresh to the examination. They must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. The examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s). Eligible University of Alberta community members include current or retired Academic Staff members, Academic Colleagues, Postdoctoral Fellows, or Executive Members/Academic Administrators who will be appointed or re-appointed as Academic Faculty members on the conclusion of their term (current or retired categories A, B, C, D, and E, as defined in the University of Alberta's Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definition and Categories of Academic Staff and Colleagues).

A **specialized knowledge examiner** is a person who has knowledge or professional expertise that is relevant to the thesis research (such as a health practitioner or an Indigenous community

member) and does not have a full-time academic appointment at a university that confers graduate degrees. A specialized knowledge examiner comes fresh to the examination. They must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in any way. The examiner should not have a close personal association with the student or the supervisor.

When deemed necessary by the supervisor, 1 additional university examiner or specialized knowledge examiner may be appointed to the examining committee. In such cases, the examining committee consists of the supervisor, supervisory committee and either 2 university examiners or 1 university examiner and 1 specialized knowledge examiner. The examining committee does not normally include an examiner from outside of the University of Alberta. However, when deemed necessary by the supervisor, an external examiner may be appointed to the committee. In this case, the external examiner replaces a university examiner or a specialized knowledge examiner.

Preparing for the Exam

Once the supervisor determines that the thesis is ready, the following steps are taken:

1. The student sends the thesis to the other member of the supervisory committee.
2. The committee determines whether the thesis is ready for defence. There may be revisions at this stage if the committee members ask for them.
3. The student sends the final approved version of the thesis to the Graduate Programs Administrator <humgrad3@ualberta.ca>.
4. The Graduate Programs Director, in consultation with the supervisor, selects the university examiner (or specialized knowledge keeper) and the exam chair.
5. The supervisor provides the Graduate Programs Administrator with the following information: the date, time and location of the Exam; the names of the Exam Chair, and the name and department of the university examiner (or specialized knowledge keeper). The Graduate Programs Administrator will distribute the thesis to the examining committee members and the examining committee chair.
6. The Examination takes place.

Conduct of the Examination

Examinations follow all GPS procedures, as explained in the [Calendar](#).

Immediately before the exam, the examining committee will confer briefly to establish the process and order of questions. This will be arranged by the examination chair. The Defence begins with the Candidate offering a summary presentation of their research. This presentation

introduces the candidate's research subject, describes the research questions, and presents their findings with some comment upon their significance. This presentation should last around 10-15 minutes.

Following this, the examining committee commences their examination. Each committee will retain the right to establish its examination processes. However, questions generally begin with the university examiner (or specialized knowledge keeper) and move to the supervisory committee, ending with the supervisor. Typically, two rounds of questions are asked, but the committee retains the right to ask as many questions as necessary to satisfy their need for information about the thesis. This part of the exam typically runs about 1-1.5 hours, but it may run longer as needed. When the Chair is satisfied that the committee has asked sufficient questions, they will ask the candidate to leave the room to allow the committee to deliberate privately. Following the deliberations, the candidate will be invited back into the room to hear the committee's verdict and to receive any feedback.

Decision of the Masters Final Examining Committee

The [Calendar](#) describes that the decision will be based both on the content of the thesis and on the student's ability to defend it. The final examination may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Adjourned
- Pass
- Pass subject to revisions
- Fail

There is no provision for a final examination to be "passed subject to major revisions". If the Examining Committee fails to reach a decision, the department will refer the matter to the Dean, GPS, who will determine an appropriate course of action.

Adjourned: An adjourned examination is one that has been abandoned officially. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The final examination should be adjourned in the following situations:

- The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial that it will require further research or experimentation or major reworking of sections, or if the committee is so dissatisfied with the general presentation of the thesis that it will require a reconvening of the examining committee. In such circumstances the committee cannot pass the student, and must adjourn the examination.
- The committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defence of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable with or without minor revisions.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination.
- Discovery of possible offences under the Student Academic Integrity Policy after the examination has started.

If the examination is adjourned, the committee should:

- Specify in writing to the student, with as much precision as possible, the nature of the deficiencies and, in the case of revisions to the thesis, the extent of the revisions required. Where the oral defence is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to arrange some discussion periods with the student prior to reconvening the examination.
- Decide upon a date to reconvene. If the date of the reconvened examination depends upon the completion of a research task or a series of discussions, it should be made clear which committee members will decide on the appropriate date to reconvene. This new examination must be held within six months of the initial examination.
- Make it clear to the student what will be required by way of approval before the examination is reconvened (e.g., approval of the committee chair or supervisor, approval of the entire committee, or of select members of the committee).
- Specify the supervision and assistance the student may expect from the committee members in meeting the necessary revisions.
- Advise the Dean, GPS, in writing of the adjournment and the conditions.

When the date is set for the adjourned final examination, the department will notify GPS. Normally a Pro Dean attends the examination. The Pro Dean should be included on all correspondence for the rescheduling of the examination.

Pass: Pass is the decision given when the only revisions required are typographical or minor editorial changes. All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass. If the student passes the examination, the department should submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS. If one of the examiners fails the student, that examiner does not have to sign this form.

Pass subject to revisions: All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass subject to revisions. The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but the revisions to the thesis will not require a reconvening of the examining committee. If the examining committee agrees to a "Pass subject to revisions" for the student, the chair of the examining committee must provide in writing, within five working days of the examination, to the student, the graduate coordinator, and GPS:

- the reasons for this outcome,
- the details of the required revisions,
- the approval mechanism for meeting the requirement for revisions (e.g., approval of the examining committee chair or supervisor, or approval of the entire examining committee, or select members of the committee), and
- the supervision and assistance the student can expect to receive from committee members.

The student must make the revisions within six months of the date of the final examination. Once the required revisions have been made and approved, the department shall submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS indicating the committee decision

was “pass subject to revisions”. If one of the examiners fails the student that examiner does not have to sign the form. If the required revisions have not been made and approved by the end of the six months deadline, the student will be required to withdraw.

Fail: All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail. If the examination result is a Fail, no member of the examining committee signs the Thesis Approval/Completion form. When the outcome is a Fail, the committee chair will provide the reasons for this decision to the department. The department will then provide this report, together with its recommendation for the student’s program, to the Dean, GPS, and to the student. The department may recommend that the student be allowed to repeat the thesis examination within six months, that they be transferred to a course-based master’s program, or that they be required to withdraw. Repeating the thesis examination is not an option after a second failed examination. Transfer to a course-based master’s program may have financial implications. If the department recommends that a first failed exam be repeated, the student and graduate coordinator are to be notified in writing of the student’s exam deficiencies by the chair of the examining committee. It may also recommend that the student be required to complete additional work in preparation for the second thesis examination (e.g., coursework, literature review, upgrading of writing skills).

An Associate Dean, GPS will normally arrange to meet with the student, the graduate coordinator, and others if needed, before acting upon any departmental recommendation that affects the student’s academic standing.

4.7.3 Master of Arts (MA) in English, Course-Based

The MA (Course-Based) is a course-based degree with a minimum period of residence of two full-time academic terms at the University of Alberta. The two terms need not be consecutive. Residency requirements provide students with exposure to university life and interaction with faculty members and other graduate students. Through coursework, seminar participation, teaching, faculty interaction and faculty-directed research, students learn to be independent researchers and scholars in an academic discipline.

Requirements

The MA consists of:

- 7 courses at the graduate level
- Proseminar A
- GPS Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement
- GPS Professional Development Requirement
- MA Portfolio (ENGL 900)

Coursework

Current [graduate course descriptions](#) are posted on the departmental website. Students can take up to 2 courses in another department or at another institution but only with permission from the Graduate Programs Director.

Proseminar A

Proseminar A is a requirement for all students and is taken in the Fall Term of Year 1. Conducted by the Graduate Programs Director and meeting bi-weekly, Proseminar A orients student to the conduct and practice of graduate study at the University of Alberta. Topics include:

- Using the library and on-line library resources
- Conceiving of a research project & crafting a short proposal
- Supervision: the supervisory relationship and assembling a committee
- Research ethics
- Academic Integrity
- Preparing applications for grants, scholarships, and fellowships
- Professional development opportunities
- Conferences and other research dissemination

Note: Proseminar A is a program requirement and a student cannot convocate without its completion.

MA Portfolio (ENGL 900)

The capping exercise for the course-based MA is either an Academic Portfolio or a Creative Portfolio.

The portfolio will be supervised by a tenure-track or tenured faculty member with whom a student has taken a course most closely related to the portfolio work. The supervisor suggests, and the Graduate Committee approves, a faculty member to serve as the Reader (examiner) of the project. Proposals for MA portfolios must be submitted to the Graduate Chair for approval by May 1st.

The MA portfolio may either be an Academic Portfolio or a Creative Portfolio. In either case, the portfolio is a capping exercise for the course-based MA that emphasizes synthesis, revision, and contextualization for specific audiences. The portfolio's writing will be developed from coursework but revised with attention to an audience larger than that of the original course. The portfolio totals 25-35 pages of written work, including introduction. The portfolio introduction indicates why the chosen writing has been included; it outlines the theory and research that has shaped that work; and it reflects upon how the training gained in the MA bears on the student's proposed future endeavors. Typically, introductions will be 3-10 pages in length.

Portfolios are due to the assigned reader no later than August 15th. This deadline is firm in order to enable students to convocate and avoid paying fees for the fall term. The reader will assess the completed portfolio and provide a 250-500 word written report, indicating whether the portfolio is a pass, pass with revisions or fail. In the event of a fail, the Graduate Chair will appoint a second reader. These assessments will be submitted to the Graduate Chair no later than August 31st for Fall convocation.

Academic Portfolio

The academic portfolio may include one of the following choices or a combination thereof, for example a conference paper and a book review, but must in every case amount to 20-30 pages of written work (with intro, 25-35 pages total):

- 1) a revised, article-length seminar paper (20-30 pages)
- 2) one or several book reviews or a book review essay outlining the contribution to scholarship in that field
- 3) a conference paper and a conference paper proposal; here this might be in response to an actual call for papers, or to the student's creation of an imagined panel for a conference
- 4) an encyclopedia entry or entries, such as a substantial biographical essay, or a critical survey of a field, movement, method, or concept
- 5) a scholarly annotation of a primary text of manageable length, including explanatory footnotes; for example, a Victorian periodical piece, a poem, a short story, a single installment of a serial periodical publication, a pamphlet
- 6) an analysis, from a pedagogical perspective, of a text or texts for students at first-year undergraduate level. The analysis may include reflection on how that text or texts would be taught, with what rationale, and with what resources. A student choosing this option may wish to sit in on introductory classes offered by his or her supervisor in order to become familiar with pedagogical approaches at that level.

Creative Portfolio

The course-based MA may generate a portfolio of creative writing. This would consist of unpublished work, and would not include material written before the commencement of the MA. The work would arise from the student's program of study and be related to that program by the introduction to the portfolio. The creative portfolio may include, but must in every case amount to 20-30 pages of written work (with intro, 25-35 pages total):

- 1) a single piece of verse or prose, including creative non-fiction
- 2) several shorter pieces of verse or prose, including creative non-fiction.

4.8 Program Progress, Interruptions, and Extensions

The [Calendar](#) describes the following maximum program timelines

	<u>Maximum</u>
MA (Course)	72 months
MA (Thesis)	48 months
PhD	72 months

Program Extensions

Students who exceed the maximum timeline for their program must apply for a [Program Extension](#). The first request for a program extension is considered and approved at the department level. Supporting documents required from the student:

- a summary of progress to date;
- a timeline for completion preferably approved by the supervisor and/or supervisory Committee;

Additional requirements:

- A supervisory committee meeting must be held if there has not been one in the twelve months before the request for extension. The supervisory committee must meet with the student and decide whether or not to recommend an extension.

The Faculty of GPS considers requests for SECOND and SUBSEQUENT program extensions. As per section 7 of the GPS Grad Manual, the department must submit a Request for a Program Extension form and attach the following information:

- a summary of the student's progress to date;
- the timetable for completion approved by the supervisor and/or supervisory committee;
- an explanatory letter from the supervisor;
- a recommendation from the supervisory committee;
- an explanatory letter from the student with the expected date of completion;
- written departmental recommendation.

Leaves

Students are expected to maintain full-time enrollment in their programs, which means they are expected to be working full time on their projects. We understand, of course, that life's circumstances sometimes interpose. Wherever possible, students must maintain clear and consistent communication with their supervisors (both their academic supervisor and any GRA/GTA supervisor). This communication should suffice to manage short term interruptions.

However, with circumstances or opportunities that temporarily impede a student's ability to make progress toward program completion, the student should apply for a formal Leave of Absence.

Such circumstances may include but are not limited to family or community obligations, physical or mental health challenges, bereavement, short-term professional or educational opportunities, and political, religious, or military service. The time during which a student is on leave will not be included in the time allowed for the completion of the student's program of study.

Because leaves of absence are intended for scenarios in which a student is temporarily unable to participate in their program, students on leave are not permitted to work on their program of study or engage in thesis research/activities. In instances where a student is found to be working on their program while on leave, GPS may rescind the leave, add appropriate registration and fees, and update time in program to include this period. This would result in the student having to pay full fees and would cost time in program.

Eligibility, Duration, and Timing of Leave of Absence

An eligible student may request a leave of absence for up to one year at a time, renewable as specified below. To be eligible for a leave of absence, a student must have completed at least one full term of registration in their program. Eligibility of students holding GRA, GTA, and GRAF appointments to receive pay while on leave is governed by the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement. Students who hold external awards and scholarships should consult the granting agency for information on how leaves of absence affect these forms of funding. International students should consult International Education and Enrolment (IEE) to learn how a leave of absence may affect their student status in Canada.

Students should request a leave of absence promptly when the need arises. When possible, leaves of absence should begin and end at the same time as academic terms. Circumstances including but not limited to childbirth may require a leave of absence to begin or end while a term is in progress. The impact of a mid-term leave of absence on course grades and fees will be determined by the student's last date of participation in the program, the add/drop deadlines, and the refund schedule.

Unless an extension has been granted as outlined below, a student must return from an approved leave of absence by the date agreed to by the department in order to continue in the program of studies. The student's place in the program of studies is maintained during an approved leave of absence. Readmission to the program will not be required.

Students in thesis-based programs must register in the term in which they return from the leave. Students in course-based programs must register in and successfully complete a minimum of 3 units of course weight in coursework in at least one term in the portion of the September to August period that immediately follows their return from leave.

The total length of time a student is on leave over the course of their program normally may not exceed four years, regardless of how many individual periods of leave are taken. Students who require time away beyond this limit will normally be required to withdraw and seek readmission when ready to resume their program.

Approval of Leave of Absence

Requests for leaves of up to four weeks to accommodate short-term opportunities or obligations are normally received and approved by the coordinator of the student's program, with input from the supervisor if applicable.

Leaves of absence of more than four weeks require a change in registration status and are requested using the Leave of Absence form. When such a leave will begin at the start of a term, a student's request is normally received and approved by the coordinator of the student's program, with input from the supervisor if applicable, and must be communicated to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Requests for leaves of absence that will begin or end when a term is already in progress may require complex adjustments to registration, and therefore must be forwarded to GPS for approval.

Regardless of the length of a requested leave of absence, a student's program should consider whether other supports should be offered instead of or in addition to time away from the program.

A leave of absence may be extended beyond one year only with approval of the Dean of GPS, on the recommendation of the student's program coordinator and with the supervisor's input (if applicable). In such cases, a student will be required to submit documentation to demonstrate the need for additional time away from the program.

Backdated leaves are not permitted except with the approval of the Dean of GPS, and only in exceptional circumstances.

Appealing a Leave Decision

A departmental decision not to grant a leave may be appealed to the Dean, GPS. The Dean of GPS will only consider an appeal of a negative departmental decision, that is supported by documented compelling reasons. Decisions of GPS are appealed through the GPS academic appeals process.

Appendices

Appendix A: Ideal Program timelines and Milestones

MA Course Based

What	Year 1	Responsible Party
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7 courses at the graduate level	3 in Fall 3 in Winter 1 in Spring	Course Instructors
Proseminar A	Fall Term	EFS Grad Director
GPS Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement	August 31	FGPS
GPS Professional Development Requirement	August 31	FGPS via EFS Graduate Director
MA Portfolio Proposal	May 1st	Graduate Committee
MA Portfolio	August 15	Supervisor
MA Portfolio Assessment		Reader

MA Thesis Based

What	Year 1	Year 2	Responsible Party
6 courses at the graduate level	3 in Fall and 3 in Winter		Course Instructors
Proseminar A	Fall		EFS Grad Director
GPS Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement	August 31st		FGPS
GPS Professional Development Requirement	August 31st		FGPS
Thesis Proposal	March 1st		Graduate Committee

Thesis		July 15th	Supervisory Committee
Defence		August 31st	Examining Committee

PhD

What	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3+	Responsible Party
5 courses at the graduate level	3 in Fall and 2 in Winter			Course Instructors
Proseminar A	Fall			EFS Grad Director
Proseminar B	Winter			GTA Supervisor
Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement	August 31st			FGPS
Professional Development Requirement	August 31st			FGPS via EFS Graduate Director
Statement of Research Plan	March 1st			Graduate Committee
PhD Colloquium		Sept - April		
Long Thesis Proposal		March 1st		Supervisory Committee
Language Requirement		Before candidacy exam		EFS Grad Director
Candidacy Exam		May 15th		Examining Committee
Thesis			July 15th	Supervisory Committee
Defence			August 31st	Examining Committee