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# GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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Policies and Procedures of the Graduate Programs of the Department of English  
University of Pittsburgh



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## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome to the graduate programs of the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh! Our graduate programs are committed to innovation and excellence in scholarship, teaching, and creative endeavors across the programs that make up our department. The *Graduate Handbook* contains all the policies and procedures of the graduate programs; it is intended as a guide for both faculty and graduate students. If, after consulting the *Handbook*, there are questions about any of the programs and their policies, please consult the Graduate Administrator or the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Department of English maintains a file on every student enrolled in our graduate programs. In accordance with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment, each student, upon formal written request, is entitled to see all documents in their file that were placed there after January 1, 1975, and that have not had prior access rights waived. For teaching and advising purposes, members of the graduate faculty and the Graduate Dean's staff are permitted to consult graduate student files, but no one else may have access without the student's permission. Evaluations and other materials placed in a student's file are intended for the use of the student, faculty, and staff and are not to be released to others without the written consent of both the writer and the student.

Every active graduate student has a mailbox located in 501 Cathedral of Learning. Students should check their mailboxes regularly and should read promptly all memos, announcements, and e-mail messages from the faculty or staff.

## II. REGULATIONS OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they complete their program in accordance with these regulations. A request for exemption from any regulation must be submitted in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies with an explanation of the nature of and grounds for the request. Exemptions must be approved by the Graduate Procedures Committee.

The regulations published in the *Graduate Bulletin* of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences establish minimum standards and requirements. In some cases, the regulations of the Department of English may require more. In these cases, the regulations of the Department of English are to be followed.

If degree requirements are changed after a student has been admitted, the student has the option of abiding by the rules at the time of enrollment or by the new rules. A student readmitted after the lapse of an extended period may be required to follow the rules in effect at the time of readmission.

## III. ADMISSIONS

### ADMISSIONS CRITERIA, STATUS, AND REQUIREMENTS

All applicants to the Department of English graduate programs must have completed a bachelor's degree or its equivalent.

Students nominated for admission by the Graduate Admissions Committee may be admitted to graduate study in a specific degree program with “full,” “provisional,” or “special” graduate status, depending on their qualifications and objectives.

In order for a student to be admitted to full graduate status, they must have at least a 3.0 GPA at the undergraduate level, or in subsequent graduate degrees. Only students admitted to full graduate status are eligible for Dietrich School fellowships.

Students admitted to provisional status (without deficiency) transfer to full graduate status after completing four (4) graduate level courses (12 credits) with a grade of B (3.0) or higher. Courses taken to remove deficiencies do not contribute toward completion of graduate degree requirements. A student admitted with provisional status (without deficiency) will be subject to dismissal if they fail to achieve a B average in their first 4 graduate courses. A student admitted with provisional status (with deficiency) may be required to complete additional undergraduate courses satisfactorily before proceeding with their degree program.

Students may be granted special status to take specific graduate courses. Individuals with specific qualifications for one or more courses must receive from the instructor of each such course written approval to register. Students in this classification may earn up to 12 credits toward the completion of degree requirements at the University of Pittsburgh if they are subsequently admitted into a degree program, contingent on departmental approval of the transfer.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSIONS

The Department of English welcomes applications for admission from students in other countries. Applicants must have completed a bachelor’s degree or its equivalent. International applicants with a master’s degree from a non-U.S. institution are advised that such degrees may not be equivalent to a master’s degree from a U.S. institution.

Official academic credentials submitted upon application or admission must be accompanied by certified English translations if they are in languages other than English. These credentials must include the receipt of a degree that requires 16 years of full-time study, 4 years of which are at the post-secondary level. Official transcripts must show all post-secondary work attempted, including grades in each course, mark sheets, examination grades and standing in examinations and classes, or whatever other credentials are normally issued to give a clear description of the applicant’s accomplishments and qualifications for graduate study.

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## ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SCORES

The English department requires that international applicants submit English language proficiency scores as part of their applications. The University and the department accept scores from TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo. English proficiency scores are required if an applicant’s native language is not English. According to the policy of the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences, this requirement applies to citizens of any country where English is not the official language of the applicant’s country of citizenship, even if their previous mode of instruction has been English.

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## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

All international applicants must submit evidence of adequate financial resources for the entire estimated period of study at the University of Pittsburgh. Graduate applicants who receive full financial support from the University of Pittsburgh will be required to submit financial certification showing the availability of funds should the financial

award be insufficient to cover the total estimated expenses. However, applicants who will be supported by private funds, other organizations, or a combination of University of Pittsburgh support and private funds will be required to submit certification of the non- University of Pittsburgh sources of support. Certification of such funds must be in the form of a statement of support from the appropriate official of a sponsoring organization, or from a private sponsor that funds are available and transferable for the purposes of graduate study.

International students are considered equally with domestic applicants for departmental funding and may apply for additional financial aid. However, they should be aware that most funding offered through the department is in the form of Teaching Assistantships and Teaching Fellowships. Teaching Assistants and Fellows will be teaching English composition and/or literature to students whose native language is English. International applicants must offer evidence of work and background in English language and literature comparable in depth, breadth, and intensity to that of U.S.-educated applicants.

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#### REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Regulations of the Immigration and Naturalization Service require that a non- immigrant student (international student) be registered as a full-time student. The definition of “full-time” is 9 credit hours per term for graduate students.

The requirement to be registered as a full-time student also carries into the manuscript or dissertation stage of advanced degrees. International students must appear on official University records to meet the requirements placed upon them by their visa status. Their continued stay in the U.S. can be put in jeopardy by not being registered as full-time students. Further, the fact of registration affects a student’s eligibility for some University services, e.g. the Library and the Student Health Services.

### IV. FUNDING

Graduate students in the English department most commonly receive one of three types of funding: fellowships, teaching appointments (TA/TF), and graduate assistantships (GSAs).

#### FELLOWSHIPS

The following are descriptions of the various fellowships for which graduate students in the English department commonly compete for, with much success in recent years. Students are not allowed to be employed or receive payment for additional work at the University of Pittsburgh or externally during the period in which they hold a fellowship.

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#### ARTS & SCIENCES FELLOWSHIP (ASF)

Every PhD student and most MFA students admitted with full graduate status will receive a Dietrich School Arts & Sciences Fellowship during their first year of study. These fellowships provide a stipend and full tuition scholarship with no teaching duties for the period of the fellowship.

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#### K. LEROY IRVIS FELLOWSHIP

These fellowships offered by the Dietrich School’s Office of Graduate Studies are designed to enhance the diversity of the University of Pittsburgh’s graduate population and eventually the professorate. The fellowship provides

incoming students with a two-term stipend and a two-term tuition scholarship for the fall and spring semesters, with no teaching duties. Irvis fellows are also eligible to apply for summer research funds from the Office of Graduate Studies as a part of their fellowship. Preference is given to entering PhD students. Occasionally an additional year of fellowship support may be offered, usually for the 5<sup>th</sup> year of PhD study.

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#### PROVOST'S HUMANITIES FELLOWSHIP

These fellowships offered by the Provost's Office and the Graduate Office of the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences, provide incoming PhD students with a stipend and a full tuition scholarship, with no teaching duties, for the period of the fellowship.

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#### LILLIAN B. LAWLER PREDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

A gift from the Lillian B. Lawler estate has made it possible for the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences to offer predoctoral fellowships to graduate students in the foreign languages, English, or History. These fellowships provide a stipend and full tuition scholarship, with no teaching duties. Students must be nominated by the department to be considered for the Lawler Fellowship. Priority is given to students with financial need and a record of excellence as teachers. These fellowships are typically awarded to students in their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of study.

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#### ANDREW MELLON PREDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

These predoctoral fellowships provide a stipend and a full tuition scholarship, with no teaching duties, for the period of the fellowship. Students must be nominated by the department to be considered for the Mellon Fellowship. In the department of English these fellowships are customarily used to support extremely promising dissertation projects. They are typically awarded to students in their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of study.

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#### CAROLYN CHAMBERS MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP & NANCY ANDERSON FELLOWSHIP

The Carolyn Chambers Memorial Fellowship, awarded alternately to PhD students in English and History, is a four-month fellowship that comes with a stipend and a full tuition scholarship. During the years in which it is available to the English department, the Chambers Fellowship will be combined with the Nancy Anderson Fellowship, which also offers one term of financial support. This provides the fellowship winner with a tuition scholarship and stipend for a full year (two terms). The recipient of the fellowship will be selected on the basis of academic achievement and the promise of reach capability.

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#### RICHARD C. AND BARBARA N. TOBIAS DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

The generosity of the late Professor Richard C. Tobias has enabled the Department of English to offer two fellowships each academic year to support the completion of extremely promising dissertation projects in the department. These fellowships provide a stipend and a full tuition scholarship.

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#### CAROL KAY MEMORIAL DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP

The generosity of the late Carol Kay has enabled the Department of English to offer one fellowship each academic year to support the completion of extremely promising dissertation projects in the department. This fellowship provides a stipend and a full tuition scholarship.

## TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

All students on TA, TF, or GSA appointment are subject to the Dietrich School's policies on Teaching and Research appointments. The text of that policy can be found here: <https://www.asgraduate.pitt.edu/financial-support/teaching-and-research-appointments-tatfsgsgr>

For a full description of the guidelines, training, and regulations concerning teaching appointments, please see the "Guidelines for Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows" section below. Students granted provisional graduate status upon admission are not eligible for teaching appointments.

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### TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (TA)

Qualified students within a graduate program in the English department may be appointed as a Teaching Assistant (TA). These appointments require 20 hours a week for teaching services, for which TAs receive a stipend, full tuition scholarship in recognition of academic merit, and benefits. Although all MFA and MA students are admitted on the basis of merit, students who are admitted without funding should not expect to receive a Teaching Assistantship after their first year in residence.

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### TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS (TF)

PhD students who have completed two years of teaching in the Department of English and who have demonstrated that they are qualified to undertake more responsible part-time teaching duties than are regularly assigned to TAs, are appointed as TFs. These appointments require approximately 20 hours a week, for which TFs receive a stipend, full tuition scholarship for the duration of their appointment, and benefits.

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### SUMMER TEACHING

Each year the English Department is able to offer a limited number of summer teaching appointments to qualified graduate students. Because summer teaching is largely done without the faculty support provided to those who teach during the fall and spring terms, graduate students who teach in the summer need to have had as much pedagogical experience as possible. Generally, these appointments are made on the basis of a graduate student's teaching experience and course availability. For PhD students, first priority will be given to those who have completed their PhD Project Proposal according to schedule and are embarking on the writing of their PhD Project Papers. Normally this will be a student who has just completed their 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the PhD Program.

Summer teaching for TAs in the MFA program cannot be guaranteed because enrollments determine which and how many courses will be offered. The Writing Program considers the experience that TAs gain in their Seminar in Composition classes, in the Writing Center, and in other TA assignments to be crucial to the teaching that they do in creative writing classes. When available, therefore, summer teaching will be initially assigned to those MFA students who have completed 2 years of coursework and 2 years of teaching (or tutoring in the Writing Center and equivalent TA appointments). If additional summer courses are available to MFA students, those who received their Teaching Assistantships in their second year will be considered and given priority when possible. Summer teaching appointments will always, finally, be determined by the fit between the needs of the Writing Program and the TA pool.

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## GRADUATE STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS (GSA)



The department is able to offer a number of full or partial Graduate Student Assistantships (GSA) positions each year. These appointments provide a stipend and tuition benefit, depending on the nature of the appointment. GSAs assist faculty in research projects, editorial work, and the like.

Students may also apply for open GSAs in other University units or departments.

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

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### RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT FUNDS (R&D)

The Department of English awards over \$40,000 of grants annually to graduate students to fund work that is necessary to students' dissertation projects or their final manuscripts. Common activities that students receive R&D grants to fund include travel for archival research; support to attend workshops, seminars, or take language coursework unavailable at the University; conference support; and equipment & software, among other things. Applications for R&D funds are typically accepted twice per academic year, contingent on the availability of funds.

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### CONFERENCE TRAVEL GRANTS

The Department of English provides funds to support travel for graduate students participating and presenting in professional & academic conferences. This money is normally used to make up the difference in expenses after students have exhausted other available resources. Students must present a paper at the conference to be eligible for conference grants through the department.

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### DIETRICH ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS

Summer fellowships are awarded to PhD students who have completed their second and fourth year of doctoral study, to support their steady progress towards the degree. These fellowships will offer approximately \$5,000 per student, and they are normally to be used for completion of foreign language requirements and/or for drafting a PhD Project proposal.

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### DEAN'S TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Every term, the Office of Graduate Studies offers Dean's Tuition Scholarships to cover the cost of tuition for students without other forms of funding. The academic qualifications and need of the student are considered when making an award. Because the amount of tuition money is limited, these scholarships are not normally given to one student for a long period of time. A new application must be made each term; renewal is not automatic or guaranteed. Priority is given to students already in a program rather than entering students. Most commonly, these scholarships are used to offset expenses for a PhD student's last semester of enrollment, when they will be defending their dissertation and graduating.

Dean's Tuition Scholarships only cover the cost of tuition. All fees remain the financial responsibility of the student.

## V. ADVISING & REGISTRATION

Graduate student advising in the English Department takes place at all levels of degree progression. The Director of Graduate Studies is the faculty advisor for all first-semester MA students. Entering PhD students will be assigned a coursework advisor in their field and may change their coursework advisor to a different member of the Graduate

Faculty in English by consulting with the DGS. PhD Project Committees and dissertation committees advise students in the advanced stages of the PhD program. Core faculty in each track of the Writing Program serve as advisors to students working in that track. The MFA Manuscript Committees advise MFA students in the advanced stages of their program. The Director of Graduate Studies is always available to students to discuss any matter related to the program generally and their own course of study in particular.

## REGISTRATION

All graduate students are required to consult with their faculty advisors each term before registering. Advanced PhD students should also regularly meet with the committee supervising their PhD project or dissertation. The Graduate Advisor will be directly responsible for reviewing the student's registration and any add/drop forms and giving a copy to the Graduate Administrator. Note that TAs, TFs, and GSAs must be enrolled full-time each term in which they hold a university appointment. Students must be registered for at least one credit in order to use the library, take departmental examinations, register degree milestones, or graduate.

## POLICIES & GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE ADVISING

1. Faculty advisors aid students in selecting courses, taking into consideration the student's background and goals. Advisors should direct graduate students to relevant course offerings in English and other departments and to existing career guidance facilities. Advisors shall meet with each student at least once each semester; additional meetings may be requested by students or faculty.
2. An advisor who judges a student's performance to be inadequate at any stage will recommend to the student appropriate steps, including further consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies or other faculty.
3. A meeting of the Director of Graduate Studies and all members of the graduate faculty who have taught first-year MA and PhD students shall take place near the end of every spring term, and no later than the end of the subsequent fall term, to evaluate each first-year student's progress. This evaluation fulfills the Preliminary Examination requirement for the PhD. The Director of Graduate Studies shall then meet with each student (a meeting which may include other faculty members) to discuss their progress and any recommendations made during the prior meeting for that student's program of study. The primary goal of this meeting is to provide advice to students about the future progress of their degree, to encourage students in the formation of their intellectual interests, to direct students to faculty with shared interests, and to guide students in planning their future course of study. Students who seem to be having difficulties in particular areas will also be advised about steps they might take to enhance or direct their course of study to overcome these difficulties. If after three terms a student continues to have difficulties that indicate, in the judgement of the graduate faculty, that they are unlikely to complete the PhD successfully, the student may be deemed ineligible to continue toward the PhD and advised to apply for a terminal MA degree.

## GRADUATE COURSES

The graduate courses offered each year are coordinated by the Graduate Curriculum Committee. New courses may be initiated by faculty, or by students if they can demonstrate sufficient student interest and faculty willingness to teach the course. Most of the courses available to graduate students in the Department of English are those offered at the 2000-level. Students in the PhD or MA program who wish to take a graduate writing seminar and students in the MFA program who wish to take a graduate course in Composition, Literature, or Film should consult the instructor to make certain they have the necessary preparation for the course.

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## COURSES OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT

Students should consider the regulations governing each degree and consult with their faculty advisor(s) before enrolling in courses outside the department.

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## DIRECTED STUDY

In exceptional circumstances, a student who wishes to pursue a topic that cannot be studied in the context of a graduate course may be able to arrange for a Directed Study (ENGLIT 3902) with a member of the graduate faculty willing to supervise the work. A student wishing to request a Directed Study should discuss possible alternatives with a faculty member and the Director of Graduate Studies. (Please note that a Directed Study is a voluntary addition to the regular load of the faculty member who agrees to supervise.) Registration for a Directed Study is limited to students in good standing. The letter grade system or the satisfactory/no credit (S/NC) system may be used to evaluate the quality of the work.

The following procedures must be followed in preparing a proposal for a Directed Study:

1. Students must consult with a faculty member about the feasibility of such a course of study. Students must obtain the written permission of the faculty member who has agreed to supervise the Directed Study, in the form of a letter from the faculty member expressing their support to the DGS.
2. For their proposal, students must prepare a detailed description of, and state the overall objectives for the Directed Study. This description must include specific information about primary and secondary readings, and a schedule of the work to be done. The description must demonstrate that the topic cannot be studied in the context of an existing graduate course. Students must also include a statement of the mode of evaluation as worked out with the instructor.
3. Students must also submit a completed Directed Study proposal form, which can be obtained from the Graduate Administrator.
4. MFA students may not use a Directed Study to replace one of the graduate Composition, Film, or Literature courses they are required to take.
5. A student may count no more than 3 Directed Study credits toward the PhD.
6. A student holding a Teaching Assistantship or Teaching Fellowship, or a student working as an assistant to the departmental bibliographer or to a faculty member, may not use a Directed Study to obtain credits for work already covered by a stipend.

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## ENGLIT 3910 (COMPREHENSIVE EXAM), ENGLIT 3000 (DISSERTATION RESEARCH), AND ENGWRT 2900 (MANUSCRIPT WRITING FOR THE MFA)

These courses (also referred to as “dummy credits”) are used to provide credits to PhD students who are engaged in work for their Project Exams or their dissertation prospectus, and to MFA students working on final manuscripts. Only the satisfactory/no-credit (S/NC) grade is available.

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## SMSA 3666 & FTDA 3999

Separate from the English department’s dummy credits, the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences also provides 2 options for 0- or 1-credit enrollment for PhD students who must be registered during a particular semester but do not need to be engaged in traditional coursework, particularly in the advanced stages of their degrees.

PhD students who need to be enrolled in the summer term to hold a summer appointment (TA/TF/GSA), register milestones, or graduate are able to enroll in SMSA 3666 (Summer Milestone Study), a 0-credit enrollment option. It puts enrolled students at full-time status, as if they were enrolled in 3 credits of dummy credits or regular coursework. MA and MFA students are not eligible to enroll in SMSA 3666. They must continue to enroll in 3 credits of ENGWR 2900 (Manuscript Writing for the MFA) if they need to enroll in the summer for an appointment, registering milestones, or to graduate.

After passing their prospectus defense, PhD students are eligible to enroll in FTDA 3999 (Full-Time Dissertation Study in the Humanities) during the academic year or the summer term. It is a 1-credit enrollment option that puts students enrolled in it at full-time status, as though they were enrolled in 9 or 3 credits of dummy credits or regular coursework. This is the most common enrollment for the fall and spring for PhD students who have completed the required coursework for their PhD and reached the ABD (all but dissertation) stage.

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## GRADES

Grades in graduate courses are defined as follows:

Grades	Explanation
<b>A</b>	Genuinely exceptional work, at a level of both ability and performance well above the acceptable graduate level.
<b>B</b>	Acceptable graduate work, short of distinction, but of solid graduate quality.
<b>C</b>	Attainment below graduate expectations. (The Dietrich School does not accept courses earning less than a B- as credits earned toward graduate degrees.)
<b>F</b>	Failure. May be awarded for poor performance, plagiarism, non-attendance, or non-fulfillment of course requirements.

Additionally, a plus or minus may be added to A, B, and C grades. The D grade is not used.

Grade	Explanation
<b>S (Satisfactory)</b>	Indicates satisfactory completion of all requirements and obligations of the course (otherwise, the grade will be NC, no-credit). The S/NC grading option may be requested in any graduate course, although certain courses require letter grades (e.g. PhD core courses).
<b>N</b>	Non-credit audit.
<b>W</b>	Withdrawal from a course after the add/drop period. Students should complete a course withdrawal form, which is available from the Graduate Administrator.

<b>G</b>	Work incomplete because of genuine emergency or circumstances beyond the student's control. A G grade must be removed within the student's next term of residence.
<b>I</b>	Work incomplete in departmentally designated research, thesis, or fieldwork courses. This grade is for work that is intended to extend over the course of more than one semester and is generally not appropriate for graduate courses in the Department of English.

For G grades, instructors should require a statement from the student concerning specific plans and their timetable for finishing incomplete work. Except in very unusual circumstances, instructors will not accept work handed in too late in the make-up term to be read and evaluated before the final date on which grades are due. Every instructor of a graduate course will turn in a completed grade roster for the course by the grading deadline. Although it may be necessary to give one or more students in a course a grade of G or I, no instructor will automatically assign these grades to all students.

### SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Students must make satisfactory progress towards their degree and in all coursework. The following are considered unsatisfactory progress:

1. Except in cases of illness or other serious personal difficulty, more than two G and/or I grades on a student's record will constitute unsatisfactory progress.
2. PhD students will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress if they have not passed their PhD Project examinations by the beginning of the spring term of their fourth year of residence.
3. Students who have received two grades below a B will be considered making unsatisfactory progress. A student receiving one grade below a B will be warned (The Dietrich School Graduate Studies office does not accept courses earning less than B- as credits earned toward graduate degrees.)
4. A student in any of the graduate programs in English must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. A student whose grade average in courses falls below the required minimum will be considered to be making unsatisfactory progress.

Unsatisfactory progress for any of these reasons will be cause for non-renewal of a TA or TF appointment, and grounds for placing a student on a one-term probation. Failure to rectify the cause for unsatisfactory progress during the probation period will be grounds for dismissal from the graduate program.

### PROBATION & DISMISSAL

A graduate student who fails to make satisfactory progress in an English graduate degree program may be dismissed from graduate study at the University. Prior to dismissal, a period of academic probation (normally one term of full-time graduate study or its equivalent) will be granted during which the student must demonstrate an ability to meet degree requirements and to complete a degree within an approved time limit.

A student will be placed on probation only once. If they fail to make satisfactory progress a second time, they will be subject to dismissal.

A student who exceeds the statute of limitations for a degree will be subject to dismissal. Except under exceptional circumstances, if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Dean's Office, the statute of

limitations may be extended for a specific period. However, such an extension will be made only for sufficient cause, and no student should make plans in expectation of its approval.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE

The Department of English expects students admitted into its graduate programs to engage in continuous study from the time of initial enrollment, and leaves of absence are used only in exceptional circumstances only. Under special conditions, graduate students may be granted one leave of absence from the MA, MFA, or PhD program. A maximum leave of two years may be granted to PhD students, and a maximum leave of one year may be granted to MA and MFA students. Students must take a leave of absence for either one or two full years.

The length and reason for the request must be stated on the form available from the Graduate Administrator. A request may be denied. If the request is approved, the time of the leave shall not count against the total time allowed for the degree being sought (see under “Statute of Limitations” in the sections on the MA, MFA, and PhD programs). Readmission following an approved leave of absence is a formality.

The student must notify the Director of Graduate Studies in writing that the student intends to return from leave. The Director of Graduate Studies must receive this notification by 1 February of the spring term before the student intends to return. A TA or TF who takes a leave of absence while in good standing and who wishes to retain their teaching position must inform the Director of Graduate Studies in writing by February 1<sup>st</sup> of the spring term before their return. A funded student who for any reason takes a leave of absence while not in good standing must notify the Director of Graduate Studies by the same date they wish to assume or return to their teaching position. The Graduate Procedures Committee will consider such a request for a teaching position.

A graduate student may request a leave of absence due to a medical or family emergency at any point. The Director of Graduate Studies may require documentation, for instance, a letter from an attending physician, to demonstrate that the request is due to an emergency. If the student is funded, the time of the leave of absence due to a medical or family emergency will not count against the years of funding they can expect from the department—that is, a leave of absence due to a medical or family emergency “stops the funding clock.”

A student who wishes to take a leave of absence for reasons other than a medical or family emergency must request the leave of absence by 1 February of the spring term before the student wishes to take the leave; requests received after this date will be denied. A funded student who takes a leave of absence for reasons other than a medical or family emergency will forfeit a year’s funding for each year of the leave—that is, a leave of absence for reasons other than a medical or family emergency does not “stop the funding clock.” For compelling academic reasons, exceptions may be granted by the Graduate Procedures Committee on the recommendation of the chair of the student’s dissertation, PhD project, or MFA Manuscript committee, or, if these committees have not yet been formed, on the recommendation of the student’s faculty advisor.

## GRADUATION

Students must apply for graduation by the appropriate deadline for the term in which they intend to graduate. At this time, students must notify the Graduate Administrator in writing of their intention to graduate. All graduate students must be on active status in order to graduate. Students who fail to submit an application for graduation on time or who are not on active status may be forced to delay graduation and may be required to pay tuition in

order to graduate. For graduate requirements and deadlines for submission of graduation paperwork, consult the Graduate Administrator or the Graduate Studies Office.

## VI. GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS & TEACHING FELLOWS

All PhD and MFA students admitted to full graduate status (not provisional) may be considered for a Teaching Assistantship or Teaching Fellowship, unless otherwise indicated on the application. FA students who hold a Teaching Assistantship in their first year of study and who are in good standing can expect to have their teaching appointments renewed for a second year of support, with a third year of teaching support contingent on progress toward the degree, quality of teaching, and availability of funding and courses. PhD students admitted to full graduate status (not provisional) are awarded a non-teaching Dietrich Arts and Sciences Fellowship for their first year and are awarded a teaching appointment in their second year of study. PhD students in good standing can expect to have their teaching appointments renewed for a third, fourth, and fifth year of support, with a sixth year of teaching support contingent on progress toward the degree, quality of teaching, and availability of funding and courses.

### TEACHING REQUIREMENTS

All PhD students are required to teach for at least two terms. All new TAs will be assigned to teach Seminar in Composition sections during their first year. TAs and TFs reappointed to a second or subsequent year of teaching may be assigned introductory Composition, Film, Literature, or Writing sections as such sections are available.

### CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT

1. All TAs must enroll in ENGLIT 2996 (Writing Pedagogy 1) and ENGLIT 2997 (Writing Pedagogy 2) and pass these courses during their first year as teachers (for PhD students, no later than their second year in the program). Successful completion of this training sequence is a requirement for eligibility for future teaching in the English department.
2. As a condition of their appointment, all new TAs and TFs must earn a B or better in ENGLIT 2500 (Seminar in Pedagogy). Seminar in Pedagogy is required for all PhD students in their first year in the program. MFA students who are teaching or planning to teach will also take this course in their first year in the program. TAs and TFs accept their assignments with the understanding that they will also attend required summer workshops and staff meetings and follow such syllabi as are approved by the appropriate program director.
3. TAs and TFs must be classified as full-time students, which means enrolling in a minimum of 9 credits each term of the academic year. However, not all nine credits need to be in "subject" courses. ENGLIT 3190 (Comprehensive Exam), ENGLIT 3000 (Dissertation Research), and ENGWRT 2900 (Manuscript Writing for the MFA) are available to TAs and TFs only in the department of English to help fulfill the nine-credit requirement. TAs and TFs are reminded that all nine credits must be taken for credit. A course that is audited will not count towards the 9-credit requirement.
4. If students have any questions about their responsibilities as teachers, they should consult the relevant program director. Teachers are responsible for making sure that their students understand what plagiarism is and should not hesitate to consult the relevant program director about this or other student problems. Teachers should become familiar with the University's Guidelines on Academic Integrity for Students and Faculty. A copy of this document is available on the departmental website.

5. Every teacher is also responsible for notifying the main office of the department if they are unable to meet a class, or if the class is meeting at a different time or place from that scheduled. If at all possible, during an absence a teacher should arrange for a substitute.
6. According to the policy of the Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences, students are expected to be on campus while teaching on a TA or TF appointment. Students are forbidden to teach classes remotely from outside the United States, regardless of whether the class is online or in person.

## TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Individual teaching assignments are decided for each term by the program directors and the Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) based on course availability, individual TA/TF experience, and TA/TF preferences. Program directors also organize the in-class visitation of TAs and TFs required by the University and appoint faculty members who serve as teaching mentors. Mentors will arrange formal or informal meetings with TAs and TFs.

In their first year as a TA, students will normally teach one 19-student section of Seminar in Composition per term. In subsequent years, more advanced graduate students may teach other introductory courses administered by the various departmental programs. Currently, most TAs and TFs have complete responsibility for one or more sections of Composition, Film, Literature, or Writing courses, and some share responsibility with more experienced teachers, conducting recitation sections of courses with large enrollments.

When a Teaching Assistant completes two years of teaching, they are normally promoted to the status of a Teaching Fellow.

## TEACHER TRAINING

All new TAs will enroll in ENGLIT 2996 Writing Pedagogy 1 and ENGLIT 2997 Writing Pedagogy 2 during their first two terms teaching (for PhD students, no later than the second year in the program). These courses are led by the Chair of the Committee for the Evaluation and Advancement of Teaching (CEAT) and designed to serve the needs of new TAs. Each new TA will be assigned a mentor who will visit the new instructor's class at least once in the fall and spring semesters and will confer with the new instructor after each visit to discuss teaching strategies and to make suggestions for improvement. The mentor will prepare a brief written report on their initial visit, which will be given to the new instructor and to the Chair of CEAT. The Chair of CEAT, or a faculty member designated by them, will visit each new instructor's class once during the fall term and, if necessary, once during the spring term, and will provide the Director of Graduate Studies with a recommendation regarding TA renewal.

## COMPENSATION

In addition to a stipend and tuition remission, TA and TF appointments provide health insurance coverage for the full year (from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>). Students should notify the Graduate Administrator and Payroll Coordinator of any changes in address, marital status, etc, so that their payroll and W-2 forms can be kept up to date. Paychecks are issued on the last working day of each month, unless otherwise noted.

## DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARDS



Each year at least 1 TA or TF will be chosen to receive the department's Distinguished Teaching Award. The award shall consist of a modest amount of money and a certificate. Each year, the department Chair shall request applications for this award from graduate students. Students who apply for the award will normally be close to completing their degree and should submit a portfolio of teaching materials they have developed and teaching evaluations they have received. A committee designated by the DGS and made up of faculty representing the PhD and MFA programs shall select the recipient(s) of the award. The award will be announced at the end of the spring or beginning of the fall term.

## VII. RENEWAL, EVALUATION, TERMINATION, AND GRIEVANCES

The clarification and implementation of TA/TF/GSA renewal, evaluation, termination, and grievance procedures are for the benefit of the graduate students and faculty. These procedures are designed to protect TAs, TFs, and GSAs from arbitrary treatment, to ensure that TA/TF/GSA performance is carefully evaluated according to clear and reasonable criteria, and to ensure that undergraduates are not exposed to detrimental treatment. Moreover, faculty members are hereby given clear guidelines for their own responsibility to TAs, TFs, and GSAs.

### RENEWAL OF TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

MFA students in good standing can expect to have their teaching appointments renewed for a second or third year of teaching support contingent on progress toward the degree, quality of teaching, and availability of funding and courses. PhD students in good standing can expect to have their teaching appointments renewed for a third, fourth, and fifth year of TA/TF support, with a sixth year of TF support contingent on progress toward the degree, quality of teaching, availability of funding and courses, and approval by the dean. MFA students must apply for a third year of teaching support, and PhD students must apply for a sixth year of teaching support. TA/TF/GSA funding will never be awarded to an MFA student beyond the third year of study. No PhD student will receive more than five years total of TA/TF support.

### RENEWAL OF NON-TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

The renewal of non-teaching appointments, such as GSAs or non-teaching TAs, will follow the same guidelines as stated in section X.A above, with the added stipulation that renewal is contingent upon the request of the student, the approval of the professor supervising the GSA or non-teaching TA, and the satisfactory fulfillment by the student of the responsibilities of their appointment.

### REQUIRED TEACHING EVALUATION & MATERIALS

1. Each TA is required to have their class evaluated by the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching (OMET) each term for the first two years of teaching in the Department of English. Copies of the numerical scores will automatically be sent to the Department Chair.
2. After the first two years, each TF must have one class per year evaluated by OMET. Copies of the numerical scores will automatically be sent to the Department Chair.
3. All TAs and TFs must have one classroom visit by a faculty supervisor each year. The director of the program in which the TA or TF is teaching will arrange these visits. A letter reporting on this visit will be placed in the student's file. Ordinarily the classroom observation will occur in the first half of the term in

order to allow for useful evaluation. In preparation for the classroom observation, TAs and TFs will discuss with their evaluator(s) their plans for the class session and the materials to be used. Following the class observation, the evaluator should have a conference with the TA or TF to discuss the performance, offering suggestions for developing existing strengths and responding to problems.

4. In addition to these annual observations, PhD students are strongly encouraged to request that members of their dissertation committees visit their classrooms preparatory to the students asking for letters of recommendation for job applications.
5. Written progress reports on GSAs or TAs or TFs in non-teaching capacities must be made once per year to the Director of Graduate Studies by the appropriate supervisor.

## REASONS FOR NON-RENEWAL

Reasons for non-renewal of an appointment include unsatisfactory professional conduct or performance, inferior academic performance (a GPA below 3.0), completion of fewer than 9 credits of graduate work per term, failure to maintain satisfactory progress, exceeding one's statute of limitations, failure to complete required teacher training, failure to satisfy any regulations of the Department of English graduate program, or changes in allocation of TA/TF positions to the department. If it is impossible for financial or other reasons to offer renewals or other appointments to all qualified TAs and TFs, priority will be given to those with superior academic and teaching records.

## TERMINATION PROCEDURES

The department subscribes to the provisions of the University Policy Statement for TAs, TFs, and GSAs. This statement provides that, in the event a TA, TF, or GSA appointment is to be terminated, the "TA/TF/GSA must be informed in writing by the Dean, explaining reasons for termination, and procedures for appeal." In such cases, the Director of Graduate Studies will request that the Dean write a letter of termination. Before such an act is taken, a faculty oversight committee will observe the following procedures:

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## PROCEDURES FOR OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

All issues involving dismissal as a TA/TF due to unsatisfactory performance as a teacher will be referred to an oversight committee composed of the Department Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the program directors.

1. If a problem involving a TA/TF's teaching arises, there will be a meeting of the Oversight Committee to review the case prior to sending observers to a class.
2. Ordinarily at least two members of the Oversight Committee will conduct class observations, including, when possible, the director of the program in which the TA or TF is primarily studying.
3. The observers will report immediately to the Oversight Committee, which will then recommend action to the Director of Graduate Studies.

## GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Following notification of termination by the Dean, if the TA, TF, or GSA is still dissatisfied, they can initiate grievance procedures with the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

## VIII. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to graduate admissions, appointments, access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on university equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint or grievance procedures, please contact: William A. Savage, Office of Affirmative Action, 901 William Pitt Union, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, 412-648-7860

## IX. ANTI-HARRASSMENT POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

No University employee, University student, or individual on University property may intentionally harass or abuse a person (physically or verbally) with the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with such person's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or academic environment. Consistent with the University Nondiscrimination Policy, this Anti-Harassment Policy includes cases where the conduct is based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status. This Policy will be applied with due respect for the University's commitment to equality of opportunity, human dignity, diversity, and academic freedom. For further information, please consult the section of this Handbook titled "Departmental Procedures Regarding Harassment."

### DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES REGARDING HARRASSMENT

The following procedures are an attempt to mediate the complex and competing agendas that could arise as a result of an incident of racial, sexual, or sexual orientation harassment. Because complaints may involve the competing interests of various members of the university or greater community, an awareness of the uneven distributions of power operating in the pursuit of any resolution must be kept at the foreground of any investigation. Several practical consequences follow from such recognition. In particular, the wishes of the person bringing the complaint should be a prime consideration throughout the pursuit of a resolution to the incident. Moreover, those charged with dealing with matters of harassment should keep in mind that their role is not to judge, but to consult and to mediate. Harassment is an extremely serious charge. In order to protect the rights of all involved, it is imperative that consultations be treated seriously and not become material for idle conversation. Any breach of confidentiality could seriously undermine a resolution to the incident, as well as damage existing relations within the community such that everyone suffers. These procedures will be effective in the department of English starting from the beginning of Fall Term 1997, but may be subject to amendment upon the adoption of a University-wide policy.

At the beginning of each year, at least 2 persons within the department will be named to act as Officers on matters of racial, sexual, and sexual orientation harassment.

1. Those persons should educate themselves for this position by having conversations with people within the department who have dealt, in a serious way, with cases of racial, sexual, and sexual orientation harassment, and with the appropriate administrators within the department, the Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies, and with representatives from appropriate University offices. The departmental officers, in turn, should function as a resource to educate others in the department by, for example, compiling relevant information or by speaking at relevant departmental forums.
2. In response to specific incidents or complaints, the officers have several functions:
  - a. First and foremost, they will be available to consult, to discuss and air problems and possible courses of action, and to provide information. This aspect of their charge does not involve advocacy.
  - b. Each departmental officer will hear formal complaints and initiate appropriate action, as listed under section c, and if necessary, d and e.
  - c. In consultation with those discussing an issue or initiating a complaint, an officer may seek more information or local mediation of the issue. They may also advance more general proposals to relevant departmental committees.
  - d. The decision to move the process from discussion to referral will be made in full consultation with the person bringing the complaint and should be recorded in writing.
  - e. If the matter is referred to a University office, the referring departmental officer will inform in writing all those directly involved that a complaint has been made. From that moment on, the officer will seek an expeditious and appropriate response to the complaint and will regularly inform those involved about the status of the complaint.
3. All action related to a complaint should be kept confidential by everyone involved to the maximum possible extent. If in the process of pursuing a complaint an officer cannot maintain confidentiality, they should consult with the person bringing the complaint.
4. Each officer will keep a written record of all complaints. The complainant should sign off on the accuracy of how the complaint has been recorded. This record is confidential, except as an archive to be consulted when specifically relevant to future complaints.