Department of English Graduate Student Handbook
Revised June 2013
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ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

The policies and procedures provided in this handbook pertain to the Graduate Program in English Program. This handbook should be used along with the NKU Graduate Catalog. Both documents should be consulted throughout your graduate study.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Graduate Program Office

The English Graduate Program Office is located in Landrum 537. The office can be reached by calling (859) 572-5578 or by e-mail at englishgrad@nku.edu. The fax number is (859) 572-6093. Information is also available at http://english.nku.edu/grad and at http://gradinfo.english-nku.org/blog.

B. Curricular Process

The Graduate Advisory Committee (GAC) consults with the Graduate Program Director to establish the policies pertaining to the English Graduate Program. The GAC makes recommendations pertaining to curricular changes in the graduate program. These changes then follow the normal departmental and university curricular process.

C. Advising

Students entering the English graduate program at NKU must attend an initial advising session with the Graduate Program Director prior to enrolling in courses for the first time. In certain circumstances students may have taken a graduate course prior to this advising session; however, students are responsible if the course does not apply to the requirements of a particular program of study. A student’s primary administrative advisor will be the director of the graduate program. Students are expected to meet with the director at the beginning of their programs and whenever they require guidance thereafter.

Graduate students, like all NKU students, will use MyNKU for most course registration functions. Problems with MyNKU should be discussed with the graduate program director. In addition, the Office of the Registrar (859-572-5556) is available during university business hours to answer registration questions. The Department of Information Technology, through the IT Help Desk (859-572-6911) and LiveChat (http://it.nku.edu/itsc/servicecenter.php), is also available to assist with technical problems related to MyNKU.

D. Counseling and Crisis Intervention

Recognizing that every facet of a student's life can affect his/her academic progress, qualified professionals within the Health and Counseling Services (572-5650) offer individual and group counseling, referral services, testing services to students who are self- or faculty-referred. Students may also seek specific assistance or support through the Career Development Center, Adult Learner Services, International Student Affairs, and/or Disability Services. Many other campus resources are also available to assist students facing various issues or challenges.

E. Learning Assistance Center

The Learning Assistance Center (BEP 230) is available to NKU students who seek writing or other academic assistance. The center has tutors who can help with specific coursework and provide advice on how to plan and write papers, essays, reports, or research papers. Excellent writing ability is crucial to success in the graduate program in English. For further information on learning assistance call (859) 572-5475 or laplearn@nku.edu.
II. Graduate Program Requirements

A. Admission Requirements

Please refer to the Graduate Catalog on the Graduate Programs website (http://gradschool.nku.edu) for university and program admission requirements.

B. Transfer of Graduate Credit

All coursework earned after the initial bachelor's degree will be reviewed for possible transfer to the graduate program. A maximum 12 hours of transfer work can be applied to the graduate program. The student must provide an official transcript from former institutions attended and a course description from the institution's course catalog. These transcripts must be forwarded directly to the NKU Office of Graduate Programs by the college or university attended. Students will be advised by the English graduate program director, in writing, of the coursework transferred, if any. The credits to be transferred into the graduate degree must be in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Transfer of graduate/professional credits must be completed during the first term of enrollment at Northern Kentucky University.
2. Courses accepted for transfer must have been taken at a regionally accredited college or university for graduate credit, and students must have received a grade of B or higher. Credit earned on a "pass/fail" basis will not be transferred. Credit earned through correspondence courses or work experience will not be transferred.
3. Credit earned at another university must be submitted to the English graduate program director for approval and must include a course description and other supporting documentation, such as syllabi and other course materials.
4. Credit earned must be at the graduate level and must not have counted toward completion of an undergraduate degree.
5. The courses must have been completed within the past six years. In rare cases, a student may apply to have courses no older than eight years old recertified.
6. The decision regarding transfer credits and the applicability to specific components of the student's course of study will be made by the English graduate program director.

The limit on transfer credit does not include any hours taken through the Greater Cincinnati Consortium of Colleges and Universities, which will be considered NKU courses only if taken in compliance with the current regulations listed in the NKU Graduate Catalog.

C. Time Limit for Meeting Degree or Program Requirements

Students have six years in which to complete a graduate degree program. Course work that between six and eight years old cannot be applied toward a degree unless approved by the graduate program director and the Graduate Council.

D. Catalog Applicability

1. The catalog of record is the one in effect during the semester in which a student is admitted into a graduate program. The policies and procedures published in this catalog apply during a student's academic career.
2. A student may request that his/her catalog of record be moved forward. A student cannot request that a catalog of record be moved backward.
3. If a student's progress toward a degree is interrupted for four or more academic years, all curricular requirements (the rules and regulations), both institutional
and programmatic, published in the catalog in effect upon re-entry to the university must be followed.

4. If a student is admitted to one degree program and subsequently applies to a different degree program, the catalog of record will be the one in effect for exceptions when the student enrolled in the new program.

5. Appeals to these regulations can be made to the Graduate Council.

E. Grading System, Criteria And Policies

Unfortunately, some students do not succeed in their graduate work. We do not think it is fair to allow you to continue in a program that is unsuited to your strengths. The following standards have been set to define university and program requirements for a student to be considered in good standing.

1. Good Standing and Academic Probation. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.00 must be maintained for all graduate coursework. Students may repeat courses to improve their GPA (consult the guidelines for the Course Repeat Option in the current Graduate Catalog). The grade-point average (GPA) is obtained by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the total number of semester hours attempted for graduate credit at NKU.

   a. Good Standing. Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average and earn no more than two Cs to remain in good standing. When a student falls below these standards, the student will be placed on academic probation. (See below for specifics pertaining to probationary status.)

   b. Readmission. A student removed from the program for academic reasons may be considered for readmission after one semester has elapsed. When a student applies for readmission, the student will need to document preparedness for re-entry into the program.

2. Grading System. The following grading system is used in reporting graduate student proficiency in graduate courses:

   A 4 quality points per semester hour
   A- 3.7 quality points per semester hour
   B+ 3.3 quality points per semester hour
   B  3 quality points per semester hour
   B- 2.7 quality points per semester hour
   C+ Below standard 2.3 quality points per semester hour
   C  Below standard 2 quality points per semester hour
   C- Below standard 1.7 quality points per semester hour
   F  Failure—0 quality points
   I  Incomplete. If a student cannot complete course requirements by the end of a semester, s/he may request a grade of incomplete if, in consultation with the graduate director, the instructor judges there is a reasonable possibility the student can earn a passing grade after completing of the work. In return for being given this extra time, the student is expected to negotiate a schedule for completion with the instructor and submit to the instructor all work necessary for completion of an Incomplete (I) grade according to that schedule, but on no account later than the sixth week of
the semester immediately following the semester in which the Incomplete was assigned. (Incompletes earned in the spring semester must be cleared by the sixth week of the fall term.) All Incompletes (I) are converted automatically to F’s if a grade change form has not been submitted to the Office of the Registrar prior to the eighth week of the semester. Please note that incompletes should be rare and are strongly discouraged.

X Incomplete. Grades of X are reserved for continuing work on capstone theses/projects/portfolios. They remain unchanged on your transcript until the thesis/project/portfolio has been completed.

P/F Courses may not be taken as pass/fail unless written approval is obtained in advance from the graduate program director.

W Withdrawal. 0 quality points.

3. **Written Work.** Written work requiring originality, analysis, and synthesis of ideas is required in all English graduate classes. No paper will receive a grade of A unless it is excellent with respect to form and effectiveness of presentation as well as subject-matter content. When appropriate, it must be substantiated with research and citations and must use MLA or other appropriate format, depending upon the requirements of the course. To receive full credit, assignments must be submitted by the due date specified. Specific applications of this policy and exceptions to it are at the prerogative of the instructor.

**F. Auditing Courses**

If you want to audit a graduate course in the English graduate program, you will need to get prior approval from the graduate program director. Audited courses may be repeated for credit that, in turn, can be counted towards the degree.

**G. Repeating a Course**

A graduate course may be repeated only once. The second grade will be used in computation of the GPA; however, the original course grade will remain on the transcript. All courses that are repeated must be taken at NKU. They cannot be taken at another university and transferred to NKU. To repeat a course, the student must complete, before the end of the semester in which the courses is repeated, an Option to Repeat a Course form, available in the Registration Service Center, so that only the second grade is calculated in GPA. You must submit a copy of this form to the graduate program director.

Graduate students are cautioned that some courses may be offered only infrequently.

**H. Application for Readmission**

Once admitted as a graduate student, a student has one year to enroll in a first class. Otherwise, the student must reapply. A student who needs to delay enrolling for an additional period of time must send a written request to the Office of Graduate Programs asking that they maintain the documents.

If a student enrolls at NKU, attends, but then interrupts enrollment for four or more years, s/he must apply for readmission. Official transcripts for any coursework taken elsewhere in the interim must also be submitted.

**I. Adding or Withdrawing From Courses/Program**

The *University Schedule of Classes and Academic Calendar* list the dates during which a student may add a course or withdraw from a course after completing registration. Drop/Add requests are completed by the student through MyNKU. The Schedule of Classes also provides detailed information on fees assessed for late registration and the refund schedule for dropped classes.
1. **Withdrawing from a Course.** The dates and consequences for withdrawing from courses with a “W” grade are printed in the Academic Calendar.

2. **Withdrawing from School.** To withdraw from school completely, students must comply with procedures and deadlines set by the Office of the Registrar. We understand that students may encounter a variety of circumstances that may force them to withdraw from all courses for one semester. When this occurs for two consecutive semesters, however, the university requires that students petition the Office of Graduate Programs explaining why they should be allowed to enroll to ensure that they have satisfactorily dealt with these circumstances before enrollment in a subsequent semester.

**J. Residency for Tuition Purposes**

1. **Residency Status.** You will be notified of your residency status when you are admitted to the university. Residency status is determined in accordance with the Council on Postsecondary Education’s Classification of Residency for Admission and Tuition Assessment Purposes. Pertinent excerpts from the Kentucky residency policy can be found in Appendix A of the Graduate Programs Catalog. The entire policy can be found at [http://cpe.state.ky.gov/policies/www/academic_policies/residency.htm](http://cpe.state.ky.gov/policies/www/academic_policies/residency.htm). You may appeal the initial determination of residency for tuition purposes by requesting a residency affidavit from the Office of the Registrar to initiate this process.

2. **Metropolitan Rate Eligibility.** The University recognizes a separate residency status for Ohio and Indiana students who live in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area. The Metropolitan Rate, significantly lower than out-of-state tuition, will apply to residents of the counties listed by the bursar at [http://bursar.nku.edu/cashiering/tuitionfees.php](http://bursar.nku.edu/cashiering/tuitionfees.php).

**K. Waiver of Graduate Program Policies**

You may request a waiver or exception to a university policy if you believe your case is exceptional. A written request detailing the reason(s) the waiver should be given is submitted first to the MAE program director. If the director agrees that your case may warrant an exception, the Director will forward the request to the Graduate Council. You will receive written notification of the final decision made by that office. If the director does not agree that your case warrants exception, you may ask the director to forward your appeal to the Graduate Council. You will be notified by the Office of graduate programs when your appeal is scheduled to be heard. (See “Appeal of a Regulation Governing Graduate Study” (L1) below.)

There are two regulations to which no exception will be made: (1) no one will receive a master’s degree with fewer than 30 hours of course work; and (2) no one will be awarded a graduate degree or certificate with a cumulative GPA below 3.0.

**L. Student Appeals**

1. **Appeal of a Regulation Governing Graduate Study**—Students may appeal a regulation pertaining to the MAE program by writing to the director of the MAE Program. The director, in conjunction with the chairperson or the chairperson’s designee, will decide on appeals pertaining to the course of study (e.g., substitution of courses). Other academic appeals will be transmitted by the director to the Graduate Council for a decision at its next regularly scheduled session. All portions of the graduate admissions requirements must be met before an appeal is made; the appeal will not be considered if the pertinent documents have not been received by the Office of Graduate Programs. Students have the right to present their appeal in person before the Graduate Council. Decisions of the Graduate Council may be appealed to the Vice President of Academic Affairs/Provost.
2. **Appeal of an Academic Grade**—Graduate students must follow the appeals process outlined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities when appealing a decision made by an instructor. This document may be found at <http://deanofstudents.nku.edu/codes_and_policies/codeofstudent_rights/index.php>.

3. **Appeal of Non-Academic Matters**—The appeals process for non-academic matters is also given in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

**M. Graduation Requirements**

A timely Application for Degree Candidacy must be filed with the Office of the Registrar by the following dates:

- Fall semester graduation: April 22
- Spring semester graduation: October 22
- Summer semester graduation: April 22

Additional fees may apply for late applications.

**III. MAE PROGRAM**

**A. Curriculum and Structure Prior to Fall 2013**

Coursework is divided between a core component (introductory and capstone experiences) and opportunities to specialize through a course of study, designed in consultation with the English graduate director, based upon the student's career and personal goals.

The MAE degree requires 30 hours of coursework, distributed as follows:

**Core Courses** (3-9 semester hours)

- ENG 600 Intro to Graduate Studies 3

One of the following capstone options:

- ENG 792 Comprehensive Exams 1-6
- ENG 793 Master's Project 1-6
- ENG 794 Master's Portfolio 1-6
- ENG 796 Master's Thesis 1-6

**Electives** (21-27 semester hours) selected among courses at the 500-799 level and an ENG or a CIN prefix (consult the latest graduate catalog for current courses).

**Course Requirements/Restrictions**

Students need to be aware of the following requirements of the program:

1. 21 semester hours must be at the 600-799 level.

2. A maximum of 12 semester hours of transfer credit from another regionally accredited university may be allowed (but only nine that have been applied to a previous graduate degree).

3. One course must focus on primarily pre-1900 materials (History of Rhetoric or another broad historical survey may also satisfy this requirement, subject to approval by the graduate program director).

4. Two graduate courses from another NKU graduate program may be approved for credit toward the MAE, subject to the approval of the graduate program director.
5. Overall GPA must be a minimum of 3.0 to qualify for graduation.

6. No more than 6 hours of "C" grade may be counted toward the MA in English. Students may retake any course once.

7. Students who change capstone options after completing coursework in another option must complete all of the requirements of the new option.

B. Curriculum and Structure Beginning Fall 2013

Coursework is divided between a core component and opportunities to specialize through a course of study, designed in consultation with the English graduate director, based upon the student’s career and personal goals.

The MAE degree requires 30 hours of coursework, distributed as follows:

Core Courses (15 semester hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG 600 Intro to Graduate Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two of the following three courses:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 544 Research/Methods in Professional Writing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 556 Composition Theories</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 750 Theories and Concepts of Cultural Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the following capstone options:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 792 Comprehensive Exams</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 793 Master’s Project</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 794 Master’s Portfolio</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 796 Master’s Thesis</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Electives (15 semester hours) selected among courses at the 500-799 level and an ENG or a CIN prefix (consult the latest graduate catalog for current courses).

Course Requirements/Restrictions

Students need to be aware of the following requirements of the program:

1. 21 semester hours must be at the 600-799 level.

2. A maximum of 12 semester hours of transfer credit from another regionally accredited university may be allowed (but only nine that have been applied to a previous graduate degree).

3. Two graduate courses from another NKU graduate program may be approved for credit toward the MAE, subject to the approval of the graduate program director.

4. Overall GPA must be a minimum of 3.0 to qualify for graduation.

5. No more than 6 hours of "C" grade may be counted toward the MA in English. Students may retake any course once.

6. Students who change capstone options after completing coursework in another option must complete all of the requirements of the new option.

C. Program of Study

New students for the MA in English must enroll in ENG 600 Intro to Graduate Studies during one of the first two regular semesters of their enrollment in the program. In
addition to introducing students to the fields of English studies and the faculty with whom they may work or take coursework, ENG 600 is also designed to encourage development of a common critical vocabulary and an awareness of potential career paths, as well as to assist students in beginning to form a research question and a plan of study to help them succeed in the program. A student's program concludes with successful completion of a capstone option (see Section III.F).

D. Independent Study

Independent study courses at the graduate level are governed by the Graduate Catalog, by regulations enforced by the Office of Graduate Programs, and by procedures implemented by the English graduate faculty. The Office of Graduate Programs defines independent study courses as follows:

- The content of the course is not the same as that covered in regular course offerings
- A member of the graduate faculty must agree to supervise the independent study and guarantee a sufficient number of contact hours.
- No more than 20% of the course work in a graduate student's program of study is allowed to be taken as independent study hours (6 hours for MAE students)

Capstone research hours, practicums, and internships are exceptions to this policy and are governed by separate regulations.

The English graduate faculty has mandated that no independent study course will count toward an English graduate program of study unless an independent study contract is on file with and approved by the graduate director before the course is scheduled and undertaken.

The independent study contract form (see Appendix B.2) requires the following:

- Signature of the graduate program director
- Signature of the instructor, who must be a member of the NKU graduate faculty.
- An explanation of how the independent study fits into the student's program
- A syllabus that describes the course topic, reading list, assignments, learning objectives, and method of assessment
- A minimum of four contact opportunities

E. Teaching Assistant Program

With approval by the program director, the Writing Instruction Program director, and the selection committee, outstanding students may be permitted, through some combination of pedagogical experience inside and/or outside the classroom, to work closely with the Writing Instruction Program director and/or one or more experienced faculty members to learn about the practice of teaching. Interested students should contact the graduate director for details and schedules.

F. Capstone Experience

All MAE students must complete an appropriate capstone experience. Four options are presently available:

- Completion of a Master's Thesis
- Completion of the Master's Project
- Completion of the Master's Portfolio.
- Successful passage of the Comprehensive Examination in two areas.
After completing 15 semester hours of graduate study, students are required to submit a Declaration of Capstone Option (see Appendix B3) to the program director. Students are responsible for reading carefully the descriptions of each capstone option and seeking guidance from the program director in all aspects of planning the capstone experience.

Whether students elect to complete a thesis, a project, a portfolio, or the comprehensive examination, students are strongly urged to prepare well for this phase of the program by completing substantial graduate coursework in the appropriate fields and by seeking guidance in the selected field(s) from the appropriate members of the graduate faculty. Advice on forming a capstone committee is provided in Appendix C.

G. Master's Thesis

A master's thesis represents the culmination of work in the MAE program, demonstrating a student's ability to complete graduate level work in one or more fields encompassed by English studies.

Students who contemplate pursuing graduate work beyond the MA in English, especially in literary studies, rhetoric and composition, or professional writing, may want to consider writing a thesis to demonstrate their knowledge of the field and their capacity to plan, execute, and document in writing a significant research project pertaining to an important and original idea.

a. Definition

A written master's level thesis generally consists of a scholarly manuscript of between 60-75 pages. Format requirements for a thesis are available from the Office of Graduate Programs and must be followed precisely. All theses will be published through University Microfilms International (UMI).

A thesis must demonstrate the student's original thought on a specific research question at issue in the field of English studies, broadly defined, and is expected to reflect the student's grasp of theoretical, technical, and cultural issues surrounding that question. A successful thesis makes an original, significant contribution to knowledge in the field.

A thesis must consist of a polished, original work written in consultation with NKU faculty during the student's program and not previously published in any form.

The Master's thesis is not complete until a successful oral defense and final, approved submission of the project to University Microfilms International (UMI). Consequently, completing the thesis is not equivalent to completing ENG 796, though work performed in ENG 796 contributes to completion of the thesis. Until the thesis or project is complete, satisfactory progress will be indicated in ENG 796 with a grade of “X.”

When planning a Master's thesis, students should bear in mind that the final product will be published through UMI no later than one year after submission. Consequently, students should seek legal advice before writing theses that make use of proprietary material, copyrighted material, or material intended for future publication elsewhere.

b. Thesis Prospectus

During the first 15 hours of graduate coursework, students should begin the process of identifying a faculty member and committee members who may be willing to direct and serve as readers of the thesis. A thesis director must have full graduate faculty status and specific academic expertise in the field you select. With rare exceptions, the thesis director should have a terminal degree in the field. In addition, a student's thesis director must be willing to advise the student in writing a prospectus and to help the student locate at least two other faculty members who are willing to serve on the thesis committee.
After completing 15 hours of graduate study in the program, students who wish to pursue the thesis option are expected to submit a proposal to the program director in the form of a prospectus of 10-15 pages that delineates the research topic and the problems, issues, and questions the thesis will address; current scholarly thought in English studies pertaining to the topic; the student's unique approach; a preliminary working bibliography of resources; and the names of three faculty members who have tentatively agreed to serve on the committee. The prospectus should clearly demonstrate that the thesis is sufficiently rigorous to warrant assignment of 6 semester hours of advanced graduate work and fulfillment of a capstone requirement. Guidelines for completing a prospectus are provided in Appendix D.

Students may include one faculty member on the thesis committee who is an NKU faculty member from outside the department of English, a faculty member from another university, or an otherwise appropriate expert in the field of study. The program director must approve the final selection of all committee members. The committee as a whole is called the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC chair and at least one other committee member must be a faculty member of the Department of English. In addition, the chair of the committee must have full graduate faculty status, whereas the other members of the committee must have at least associate graduate faculty status.

Formal acceptance of the prospectus requires the student's signature and the signatures of the thesis director, committee members, and the program director (the capstone transmittal form is available in Appendix B). Please note that the committee and the program director have the authority to require that the student revise the prospectus. Consequently, students should start on this process as soon as they begin to focus on the particular area of interest.

Once the prospectus is signed by the student, committee members, and program director, the student's FAC is considered to be formed, and the student is permitted to enroll in thesis hours.

c. IRB Approval

If the thesis involves human subjects, the proposal also must be reviewed by the Institutional Review board (IRB), also known as the Human subjects Committee (HSC). IRB guidelines and forms are available from the NKU Office of Research, Grants, and Contracts [(859) 572-5136; <http://rgc.nku.edu>]. The report of this review must be filed with the department's Graduate Office. No research may be undertaken, nor may a student enroll for thesis hours, until such approval has been received and recorded with the graduate program director.

d. Thesis Defense

The defense is usually scheduled approximately three weeks prior to the final due date for the completed thesis, but only upon the recommendation of both the FAC chairperson and the MAE program director. Once the FAC has indicated that the thesis is ready for a defense, the student is responsible for negotiating a defense date and time with the members of the FAC and notifying the graduate program director of the date and time of the defense no later than two weeks before the defense.

Copies of the thesis must be distributed to the FAC members no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. The completed thesis is due, in final, approved form, to the Graduate Programs by May 1 for spring graduation and December 1 for fall graduation. Consequently, students should consider these constraints carefully when negotiating schedules with their committees.
The defense is a public presentation open to the student’s guests, the faculty of the Department of English, the FAC, and the public at large (see Appendix E). The chairperson of the FAC will chair the defense. The student is expected to defend the thesis against questions and challenges from the FAC members. The FAC can then approve, with a majority vote, the thesis as is, approve the thesis with required changes, or not approve the thesis/project.

**Sample Schedule for Fall Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copies distributed to FAC:</th>
<th>Early October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense:</td>
<td>Mid October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed thesis to program director:</td>
<td>November 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Schedule for Spring Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copies distributed to FAC:</th>
<th>Early March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense:</td>
<td>Mid March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed thesis to program director:</td>
<td>April 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. **Completing the Thesis**

The student must make all corrections, changes, additions, and deletions mandated by the FAC before submitting the final document to the graduate director and the Director of Graduate Programs. The FAC director will assign a final grade, recorded for ENG 796 Master’s Thesis, only after the thesis has been uploaded to UMI and approved by the Office of Graduate Programs.

Consistency of style and form, following the most current MLA manual and the guidelines published by the Office of Graduate Programs [http://gradschool.nku.edu/currentstudents/resources/thesis.php](http://gradschool.nku.edu/currentstudents/resources/thesis.php) must be observed. This guide also specifies any procedures and fees required so that the thesis can be submitted successfully.

The guide also addresses some questions related to the submission of nonstandard or innovative materials and media as part of the thesis. The Office of Graduate Programs, along with the project committee, must be consulted well in advance to ensure that materials or media not covered by the guidelines can be accepted.

In the course of research, students may wish to examine theses created by other students; however, students should not use other projects as models since exceptions, which may not be approved again, have sometimes been made. Instead, students should follow the most recent version of the MLA Manual and Style Guide and the advice of the thesis committee. Any discrepancies in the advice received by students should be brought to the attention of the graduate director for clarification.

H. **Master’s Project**

A master’s project represents the culmination of work in the English graduate program, demonstrating a student’s ability to complete graduate level work in one or more fields encompassed by English studies. Students who contemplate pursuing graduate work beyond the MA in English, especially in creative writing, may want to consider creating a project that demonstrates their knowledge and expertise of one or more creative genres.

The master’s level project option may be approved, on a case by case basis, to allow students to complete a capstone experience that cannot be documented in a formal master’s level thesis. A master’s level project must still consist of polished, original work.
created in consultation with NKU faculty during the student’s program and not previously published in any form.

The master’s project is not complete until a successful oral defense and final, approved submission of the project to the graduate director. Consequently, completing the project is not equivalent to completing ENG 793, though work performed in ENG 793 contributes to the project. Until the project is complete, satisfactory progress will be indicated in ENG 793 with a grade of “X.”

A master’s project need not be published through UMI, and a copy will not be kept as part of the Steely Library collection.

a. Definition

A master’s level project must reflect the effort commensurate with 6 hours of graduate coursework and must include a substantial statement of 10-15 pages that explains the background, significance, relevance, and production/construction of the project along with a bibliography and literature review. Master’s projects are not published through University Microfilms International (UMI).

Examples of projects might include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. A publishable work of original long fiction or creative non-fiction, typically around 25,000 words beyond work created for other graduate level seminars
2. A substantial, publishable collection of short fiction or creative non-fiction, typically around 25,000 words beyond work created for other graduate level seminars
3. A substantial, publishable body of poetry
4. A substantial, original web site, preferably open access, that is significantly distinct from existing Internet resources and demonstrates significant command of best practices in design, accessibility, and usability.
5. A substantial, distinct, original video or documentary

b. Project Prospectus

During the first 15 hours of graduate coursework, students should begin the process of identifying a faculty member and committee members who may be willing to direct and serve as readers of the project. A project director must have full graduate faculty status and specific academic expertise in the field you select. With rare exceptions, the project director should have a terminal degree in the field. In addition, a student’s project director must be willing to advise the student in writing a prospectus and to help the student locate at least two other faculty members who are willing to serve on the project committee.

After completing 15 hours of graduate study in the program, students who wish to pursue the project option are expected to submit a proposal to the program director in the form of a prospectus of 10-20 pages that delineates the topic, genesis, and content of the project; current scholarly thought in English studies pertaining to the topic; the student’s unique approach; a preliminary working bibliography of resources; and the names of three faculty members who have tentatively agreed to serve on the committee. The prospectus should clearly demonstrate that the project is sufficiently rigorous to warrant assignment of 6 semester hours of advance graduate work and fulfillment of a capstone requirement. Guidelines for completing a prospectus are provided in Appendix D.
Students may include one faculty member on the project committee who is an NKU faculty member from outside the department of English, a faculty member from another university, or an otherwise appropriate expert in the field of study. The program director must approve the final selection of all committee members. The committee as a whole is called the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC chair and at least one other committee member must be a faculty member of the Department of English. In addition, the chair of the committee must have full graduate faculty status, whereas the other members of the committee must have at least associate graduate faculty status.

Formal acceptance of the prospectus requires the student’s signature and the signatures of the project director, committee members, and the program director (the capstone transmittal form is available in Appendix B). Please note that the committee and the program director have the authority to require that the student revise the prospectus. Consequently, students should start on this process as soon as they begin to focus in on the particular area of areas of interest.

Once the prospectus is signed by the student, committee members, and program director, the student’s FAC is considered to be formed, and the student is permitted to enroll in project hours.

c. IRB Approval

If the project involves human subjects, the proposal must also be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, (IRB) also known as the Human subjects committee (HSC). IRB guidelines and forms are available from the NKU Office of Research, Grants, and contracts [(859) 572-5136;http://rgc.nku.edu]. The report of this review must be filed with the department’s Graduate Office. No research may be undertaken, nor may a student enroll for project hours, until such approval has been received and recorded with the graduate program director.

d. Project Defense

The defense is usually scheduled approximately three weeks prior to the final due date for the completed project, but only upon the recommendation of both the FAC chairperson and the MAE program director. Once the FAC has indicated that the portfolio is ready for a defense, the student is responsible for negotiating a defense date and time with the members of the FAC and notifying the graduate program director of the date and time of the defense no later than two weeks before the defense.

Copies of the project must be distributed to the FAC members no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. The completed project is due, in final, approved form, to the program director by May 1 for spring graduation and December 1 for fall graduation. Consequently, students should consider these constraints carefully when negotiating their schedules with their committees.

The defense is a public presentation open to the student’s guests, the faculty of the Department of English, the FAC, and the public at large. The chairperson of the FAC will chair the defense. The student is expected to defend the project against questions and challenges from the FAC members. The FAC can then approve, with a majority vote, the project as is, approve the project with required changes, or not approve the project.

Sample Schedule for Fall Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copies distributed to FAC:</td>
<td>Early to mid-October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense:</td>
<td>Late October/early November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed project to program director:</td>
<td>December 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Schedule for Spring Graduation

Copies distributed to FAC: Early to mid-March
Defense: Late March/early April
Completed project to program director: May 1

e. Completing the Project

The student must make all corrections, changes, additions, and deletions requested by the FAC before submitting the final project. The FAC director will assign a final letter grade to the project only after the project has been approved by the graduate program director. This project grade will be recorded as ENG 793 Master’s Project. The statement documenting the project must be consistent in style and form, following the most current MLA Manual and the graduate programs style guide.

Students will receive guidance from the instructor of ENG 600 and his/her FAC in the development and completion of a project; however the student is responsible for completing the project.

In the course of research, students may wish to examine projects created by other students; however, students should not use other projects as models since exceptions, which may not be approved again, may have been made, and the organization of projects tends to be specific to the projects themselves. Instead, the student should follow the MLA Style Guide or other approved format, as well as the advice of the FAC and the graduate director.

I. Master’s Portfolio

A master’s portfolio represents the culmination of work in the English graduate program, demonstrating a student’s ability to complete graduate level work in one or more fields encompassed by English studies. The portfolio is particularly appropriate for students with dual specializations and who want to focus on publishing their scholarly work.

Students who contemplate pursuing graduate work beyond the MA in English, especially in literary studies, rhetoric and composition, or professional writing, may want to consider writing a portfolio to demonstrate their knowledge of the field and their capacity to plan, execute, and document in writing important and original ideas. The portfolio is particularly designed for candidates who hope to complete their capstones in publishable form.

a. Definition

A written master’s level portfolio generally consists of two manuscripts, each around 30 pages, accompanied by the student’s statement explaining how the portfolio demonstrates the student’s ability to complete graduate level work. The portfolio must consist of the following:

1. One of the following:

   a. Two journal article length scholarly papers (i.e., ~30 pages each), each revised to a publishable state under the guidance of a faculty expert in the field in which the paper is written. The papers may be in the same field of English Studies or may be in different fields of English Studies.

   b. One article length scholarly paper and one creative written work (each ~30 pages in length), each revised to a publishable state under the guidance of a faculty expert in the field in which the paper/work is written.
2. A reflective statement (6-10 pages) indicating the following:

   a. Why the candidate believes that the works submitted in the portfolio demonstrate graduate level work
   
   b. Significance of the project and contribution to the field
   
   c. Justification for choosing the topics/genres
   
   d. Reflection on how graduate education contributed to the genesis of the project

A master’s level portfolio must reflect the effort commensurate with 6 hours of graduate coursework and must include a substantial statement that explains the background, significance, and relevance of each paper along with a bibliography and literature review. Portfolios are not published through University Microfilms International (UMI).

b. Portfolio Proposal

During the first 15 hours of graduate coursework, students should begin the process of identifying a faculty member and committee members who may be willing to direct and serve as readers of the portfolio. Portfolio directors must have full graduate faculty status and specific academic expertise in the field selected. With rare exceptions, the portfolio director should have a terminal degree in the field. In addition, a student's portfolio director must be willing to advise the student in writing a prospectus and to advise the student as to other faculty members who may be suitable to serve on the portfolio committee. If the manuscripts in the portfolio are in two different fields, the student should locate two graduate faculty members, one in each field, who can co-chair the committee and direct scholarly work in the selected fields. In such cases, a graduate faculty member, who need not be a content area specialist, must also be identified serve as the third committee member in the capacity of a reader.

After completing 15 hours of graduate study in the program, students who wish to pursue the portfolio option are expected to declare this as their capstone (see form in Appendix B). The student should then begin work on a prospectus of 10-20 pages that delineates the research topic; the problems, issues, and questions the portfolio will address; current scholarly thought in English studies pertaining to the topics; the student’s unique approach; and a preliminary working bibliography of resources. The content of the prospectus is negotiated with the three faculty members who have tentatively agreed to serve on the committee and is not considered complete until all three members and the graduate director have signed the prospectus transmittal form (see Appendix B). The prospectus should clearly demonstrate that the portfolio is sufficiently rigorous to warrant assignment of 6 semester hours of advanced graduate work and fulfillment of a capstone requirement. Guidelines for completing prospectus are provided in Appendix D.

Students may include one faculty member on the portfolio committee who is an NKU faculty member from outside the department of English, a faculty member from another university, or an otherwise appropriate expert in the field of study. The program director must approve the final selection of all committee members. The committee as a whole is called the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). The FAC chair and at least one other committee member must be a faculty member of the Department of English. In addition, the chairs of the committee must have full graduate faculty status, whereas any other members of the committee must have at least associate graduate faculty status.
Formal acceptance of the prospectus requires the student’s signature and the signatures of the portfolio directors, committee members, and the program director (the prospectus transmittal form available in Appendix B.) Please note that both portfolio committee and the program director have the authority to require that the student revise the prospectus. Consequently, students should start on this process as soon as they begin to focus in on the particular area or areas of interest.

Once the prospectus is accepted and three appropriate faculty members have agreed to serve, the student’s FAC is considered to be formed, and the student is permitted to enroll in portfolio

c. IRB Approval

If the portfolio involves human subjects, the proposal must also be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) also known as the Human Subjects Committee (HSC). IRB guidelines and forms are available from the NKU Office of Research, Grants, and contracts [(859) 572-5136; <http://rgc.nku.edu>]. The report of this review must be filed with the graduate program director. No research may be undertaken, nor may a student enroll for portfolio hours, until such approval has been received and recorded with the graduate program director.

d. Portfolio Defense

The defense is usually scheduled approximately three weeks prior to the final due date for the completed portfolio, but only upon the recommendation of both the FAC chairperson and the MAE program director. Once the FAC has indicated that the portfolio is ready for a defense, the student is responsible for negotiating a date and time for the defense with the members of the FAC and notifying the graduate program director of the date and time of the defense no later than two weeks before the defense. Copies of the portfolio must be distributed to the FAC members no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. The completed thesis/project is due, in final, approved form, to the program director by May 1 for spring graduation and December 1 for fall graduation.

The defense is a public presentation open to the candidate’s guests, the faculty of the Department of English, the FAC, and the public at large (see Appendix E). The chairpersons of the FAC will chair the defense. The student is expected to defend the portfolio against questions and challenges from the FAC members. The FAC can then approve, with a majority vote, the portfolio as is, approve the portfolio with required changes, or not approve the portfolio.

Sample Schedule for Fall Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copies distributed to FAC:</th>
<th>Early to mid-October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense:</td>
<td>Late October/early November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed portfolio to program director:</td>
<td>December 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Schedule for Spring Graduation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copies distributed to FAC:</th>
<th>Early to mid-March</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defense:</td>
<td>Late March/early April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed portfolio to program director:</td>
<td>May 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Completing the Portfolio

The student must make all corrections, changes, additions, and deletions requested by the FAC before submitting the final project. The FAC director will assign a final letter grade to the portfolio only after the portfolio has been
approved by the graduate program director. This project grade will be recorded as ENG 794 Master’s Portfolio. The contents of the portfolio must be consistent in style and form, following the most current MLA Manual and the graduate programs style guide. In the event one or both of the portfolio manuscripts are targeted for submission to a specific publisher or journal, the manuscript may be formatted using the style required by that publisher or journal, provided a copy of the publisher’s guidelines is submitted along with the portfolio.

Students will receive guidance from the instructor of ENG 600 and his/her FAC in the development and completion of a portfolio; however the student is responsible for completing the portfolio.

In the course of research students may wish to examine portfolios created by other students; however, students should not use other portfolios as models since exceptions, which may not be approved again, may have been made, and the organization of portfolios tends to be specific to the contents of the portfolio themselves. Instead, the student should follow the MLA Style Guide or other approved format, as well as the advice of the FAC and the graduate director.

**J. Comprehensive Examination**

The comprehensive examination represents the culmination of a student’s work in the MAE program, demonstrating knowledge of and ability to complete graduate level work in English studies. This option requires that students pass exams in at least two areas. Students may elect to be tested in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition and Rhetoric</th>
<th>Professional Writing</th>
<th>Literary Theory and Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Literature</td>
<td>Folklore and Literature</td>
<td>Postcolonial Theory and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Literature before 1865</td>
<td>American Literature after 1865</td>
<td>African American Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural American Literature</td>
<td>Southern Literature</td>
<td>Medieval Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance Literature</td>
<td>Restoration and 18th century Literature</td>
<td>Romantic and Victorian Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernist Literature</td>
<td>Postmodern Literature</td>
<td>Young Adult Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Cinema Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comprehensive exam is administered twice each academic year, once in November and once in April. Normally, it is undertaken in a student’s final semester. A student must indicate, in writing, his/her intention to take the exam by completing the appropriate form, located in Appendix B, and submitting it to the graduate program director by October 15 to take exams during the following Spring semester and by April 15 to complete exams during the following Fall semester.

The exam will be based on reading lists created by the student in consultation with faculty in the selected fields. Students taking the exams are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the works on the reading list and *that they are conversant with the general, current critical conversation surrounding these works.*
APPENDICES
A. MISSION STATEMENTS

1. NKU Mission Statement
Northern Kentucky University has a singular mission within the Commonwealth as a metropolitan and regional institution. It offers community college, bachelors, graduate, and professional programs addressing the educational needs of a large and diverse population. Through such programs, the University educates students to be productive citizens, to prepare them for success in careers and occupations, and to pursue a commitment to life-long learning. As an educational, cultural, and social center, the University stimulates economic development and fosters the academic, artistic, and personal freedoms vital to a free society.

2. Mission of the Department of English
The Department of English promotes critical, creative, and reflective expression among its students. Students engage with diverse literary and cultural texts while practicing critical reading and effective written communication. The program emphasizes intellectual development and humanistic values that enable students to identify and pursue personal, civic, and career goals.

3. Relationship to University Structure
The Department of English, like all academic units at NKU, reports to an academic dean (the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences), and through the Dean to the Provost and President. The Department of English currently offers the Master of Arts in English and Graduate Certificates in Professional Writing, Creative Writing, Composition and Rhetoric, and Cultural Studies; Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and English Secondary Education; and several minors. These programs are administered by the Chair of the Department of English, who conducts the administrative business for the faculty and students. The Director of the MAE program is responsible for the graduate program and works with the Chair, the Assistant Chair, and the Writing Instruction Program Director to ensure coordination between the undergraduate and graduate programs.

4. Mission of the Graduate Program in English
The Graduate Program in English is designed to serve the needs of students who want to pursue advanced study of culturally diverse literature, writing, and rhetoric as it is practiced in both traditional and emerging contexts. Through a program of study that includes coursework, field experiences, use of new writing technologies, and community engagement, students will synthesize, apply, and contribute to knowledge in the broad field of English, including creative writing, diversity studies, literary studies, cultural studies, professional writing, and rhetoric and composition.
B. FORMS

The following are forms internal to the English graduate program. Other forms, such as forms to change catalog or to apply for transfer credit, are available on the Graduate Programs website at <http://gradschool.nku.edu>. Other forms are available from the Office of the Registrar, such as applications for degree candidacy. Use of these forms does not replace reading of the Graduate Catalog or the English Graduate Student Handbook. Students are advised to read and ensure that they understand both documents.

B.1 Graduate Student Checklist
B.2 Request for Independent Study
B.3 Declaration of Capstone Option
B.4 Prospectus Transmittal Sheet
B.5 Thesis/Project/Portfolio Transmittal Form
B.6 Application for Comprehensive Exams
### B. 1 Graduate Student Checklist Pre Fall 2013

This form is provided to assist you as you plan your program; however, it is not comprehensive and is not intended to substitute for carefully reading the Graduate Catalog and the English Graduate Student Handbook. Ensure that you read these documents so that you are aware of deadlines and requirements as you proceed through your program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ENG 600 (3) (required Fall or Spring of first year in program)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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<td>3. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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<td>4. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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<td>5. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 6. Capstone Option Declared

(Required at 15 credit hours: complete form B3) □

(Student planning credit bearing capstone options should now begin to write the prospectus while completing #7-9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ENG/CIN ______ (3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Capstone Options: Thesis, Project, Portfolio, or Comprehensive Exams** □

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Submit Prospectus/Prospectus Transmittal Form (complete and submit prospectus with form B4)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. ENG 791, 792, 793, or 794 (1-6 hours)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Successful Defense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Capstone Accepted by FAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Capstone accepted by graduate program director</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. (Thesis only) capstone accepted by UMI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. (Thesis only) capstone accepted by Office of Graduate Programs)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. 21 semester hours must be at the 600 level.
2. 12 semester hours maximum of transfer credit may be allowed (but only 9 that have been applied to a previous graduate degree) (must be approved by Graduate Director).
3. One course must focus on pre-1900 materials.
4. Two graduate courses from another NKU program may be approved for credit toward the MAE. (Student must petition in writing for acceptance of non-ENG/CIN courses)
5. Overall GPA must be a minimum of 3.0 to qualify for graduation.
6. No more than 6 hours of "C" grade will be counted toward the MA in English. Students may retake any course once.
7. Students who change capstone options after completing coursework in another option must complete all of the requirements of the new option.
8. No more than 6 credit hours of independent studies are allowed. All allowed independent studies must be approved in advance by the instructor and Graduate Director.
This form is provided to assist you as you plan your program; however, it is not comprehensive and is not intended to substitute for carefully reading the Graduate Catalog and the English Graduate Student Handbook. Ensure that you read these documents so that you are aware of deadlines and requirements as you proceed through your program.

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<tr>
<td>Two of the three following courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENG 544 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENG 556 (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 750 (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Capstone Options: Thesis, Project, Portfolio, or Comprehensive Exams</strong></td>
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<td>17. (Thesis only) capstone accepted by Office of Graduate Programs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.3 REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDIT

Independent studies at the graduate level are governed by policies established by the English graduate faculty, the Graduate Catalog, and the Office of Graduate Programs (see the English Graduate Student Handbook). This form must be completed and approved by the graduate director before an independent study course is added to the schedule or attempted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term: ____________________________</th>
<th>Date: ____________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: __________________________</td>
<td>Student ID: ______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Title and Topic of Independent Study.

2. Explain how the topic of this independent study differs from normally offered courses; i.e., why can't this topic be pursued within normally scheduled courses?

3. Explain how this independent study course will contribute to the coherence and goals you have set for your graduate program

4. **MANDATORY:** Attach a syllabus from the faculty member supervising the independent study that provides (1) the course topic, (2) reading list, (3) assignments/method of assessment, (4) learning objectives, and (5) a minimum of four contact opportunities

| Graduate faculty member who has agreed to supervise this independent study |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Signature_______________________ | Name____________________________ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and signature of the English graduate program director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature_______________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.4 DECLARATION OF CAPSTONE OPTION

Complete this form after finishing 15 credit hours in the English graduate program to declare your capstone option.

Name: ___________________________________ Student #: ________________________

I have completed at least 15 credit hours in the MA in English program and plan to complete the following capstone option (choose 1)

☐ Master’s Thesis ☐ Master’s Project, or ☐ Master’s Portfolio

Tentative Title(s) or Topic(s): ______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Committee Members (these are members of the graduate faculty who have tentatively agreed to serve on your committee):

Chair or Co-chair: _____________________________________________________________

Co-chair or Reader: ___________________________________________________________

Reader: ________________________________________________________________

☐ Comprehensive Exams

Area 1 _________________________________________________________________

Area 2 _________________________________________________________________

I have read the most recent revision of the MAE Graduate Student Handbook and will comply with the deadlines listed for planning for and scheduling my capstone. I understand that I am responsible for scheduling appointments with the above faculty members and keeping track of deadlines and preparing adequately for both the written and oral components of my capstone.

Name ___________________________________________ Date ____________

### B.5 PROSPECTUS TRANSMITTAL FORM

Use this form as a cover sheet for your thesis/project/portfolio prospectus.

| Name: _____________________________ | Date: ______________________ |
| SAP#: _____________________________ | |
| Choose one: | Thesis | Project | Portfolio |
| Proposed Thesis/Project/Portfolio Title: | |

I have read the most recent revision of the MAE Graduate Student Handbook and will comply with the deadlines listed for planning and scheduling for my exam. I understand that I am responsible for scheduling appointments with the faculty members on my committee and for keeping track of deadlines and preparing adequately for both the written and oral components of my capstone.

Signature of Student

______________________________

Signatures & Affiliations of Proposed Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) members

1. Chair or Co-chair

2. Co-chair or Member/Reader

3. Member/Reader

4. Member/Reader (optional)

**For Program Use Only**

Approval:

Graduate Program Director: __________________________ Date: ____________________
### B.6 APPLICATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION CAPSTONE

Use this form to declare your intention to complete the Comprehensive Examination capstone option during a next term. **A rationale for and copy of each reading list must be attached.**

Name: ____________________________  Date: ______________

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Faculty Member/Reader

**Committee Signatures:**

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**Student Signature**

I have read the most recent revision of the MAE Graduate Student Handbook and will comply with the deadlines listed for planning for and scheduling my exam. I understand that I am responsible for scheduling appointments with the above faculty members and keeping track of deadlines and preparing adequately for both the written and oral components of my exam.

Signature  Date

**Graduate Director Signature:**

Director, Graduate Studies  Date
B.7 THESIS/PROJECT TRANSMITTAL FORM

Use this form to submit your completed thesis to the Director of English Graduate Studies. Note that your thesis/project is not complete and cannot be counted toward your MA degree until you have made all changes and met all requirements specified by your committee, the Director of English Graduate Studies, and the Office of Graduate Programs.

Name: ___________________________________________ SAP#: ___________________

Title: ________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Defense Date & Time: ___________________________________________________________

Committee Approval:
The above thesis/project was defended successfully and meets university and disciplinary standards.

Chair or Co-Chair ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Co-chair or Member/Reader ______________________ Date _________________________

Member/Reader ______________________________ Date ___________________________

Graduate Program Director Approval:

Director, Graduate Studies _____________________ Date ___________________________
C. CAPSTONES: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Graduate programs usually have a capstone requirement that represents the culminating experience in their graduate programs. In NKU’s English graduate program, you must complete a Thesis, Project, Portfolio, or successfully pass Comprehensive Exams in three areas. Although the responsibilities of committees vary depending upon the capstone experience you choose, candidates must locate at least three members of the Graduate Faculty to serve as committee members. Candidates must also defend their capstone in a public session. The following guidelines are provided to assist you in this process.

1. Which capstone should I select? Conventional wisdom varies on the benefits and drawbacks of various capstone options, but the following might be useful to you:
   a. **Master’s Thesis.** Many faculty and graduate programs believe that the MA thesis is preferable to the other options, especially for students who hope to go on to PhD programs, because it demonstrates the student’s ability to plan and complete a sustained, original research project and to synthesize those results in writing. Students writing the thesis should complete substantial coursework the area of English Studies the student hopes to enter and then choose a research topic in that area. The MA thesis is a credit-bearing capstone, and six credit hours of ENG 796 Master’s Thesis may be counted toward the thirty required for the MA in English. MA theses are published on UMI’s Dissertations and Theses data base.
   b. **Master’s Project.** Creative writing students often choose to complete an MA project rather than a Thesis. MA projects are not published on UMI’s Dissertations and Theses data base, a benefit to students who may want to publish their work after graduation. THE MAE program keeps copies of MA projects for assessment purposes only. Students who want to complete a capstone in a form other than written (e.g., electronic, visual, etc.) also may want to investigate the MA project. The MA project is a credit-bearing capstone, and six credit hours of ENG 793 Master’s Project may be counted toward the thirty required for the MA in English.
   c. **Master’s Portfolio.** The MA portfolio is designed for students who have split or dual specializations (e.g., creative writing and literary studies, or composition/rhetoric and professional writing) and who want to complete a capstone that reflects their ability to perform scholarly and/or creative work in both fields. The MA portfolio also reflects current thinking in the field of English studies by recognizing the value in publication in a graduate student’s career. An increasingly popular option in graduate programs nationally, the portfolio consists of two shorter written artifacts (i.e., around 30 pages each) that are brought as nearly as possible to publishable form, often with a particular publishing venue in mind. The artifacts may be scholarly, pedagogical, and/or creative in nature. The MA portfolio is a credit bearing capstone, and six credit hours of ENG 794 Master’s Portfolio may be counted toward the thirty required for the MA in English.
   d. **Comprehensive Exams.** Some faculty/programs believe that students who undertake comprehensive exams are better prepared for further study better than those who write a thesis. Exams also provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate expertise in two broad areas of English Studies, which may be useful for those who want to teach as adjuncts or at the community college level. The MA Comprehensive Exam is a credit bearing capstone, and six credit hours of ENG 792 Master’s Portfolio may be counted toward the thirty required for the MA in English.

2. Whom should I ask to be on my committee?
   a. Only members of the NKU graduate faculty can be on your committee. All tenure-track faculty at NKU are automatically members of the graduate faculty. Others may be granted Associate Graduate Faculty status, but they must formally apply.
   b. A thesis or project committee consists of a chair and two outside readers; a portfolio or comprehensive exam committee consists of two primary readers and one outside reader.
   c. Except in extremely rare circumstances, the chair or co-chairs of your committee should have completed a doctoral dissertation and/or terminal degree in the field in which you are completing your capstone. Consult the graduate program director if you have any questions.
d. The second member of your committee should have completed their dissertation research in the field for which you are writing, but as a minimum must have substantial research in the field, as documented by publications, teaching, and other professional development activities.

e. The third member of your committee can be any member of the graduate faculty, either in English or in another department, subject to the approval of the graduate director.

3. **How are faculty members compensated for working on my committee?**

   a. Faculty members are not formally compensated for working on your committee, but take on the work primarily as a service. After directing many capstones, a faculty member may be granted a course of reassigned time.

4. **What is the best way for me to convince a faculty member to work with me?**

   a. Enroll in the courses of faculty with whom you would like to work. Once there, demonstrate your level of commitment to the field and to graduate study, attend class regularly, and participate thoughtfully.

   b. Take advantage of opportunities to enrich your education through activities external to the courses you take.

   c. Demonstrate your collegiality by maintaining positive relationships with your peers and faculty mentors.

   d. Avoid taking incompletes in courses. Finishing a thesis or project is much more difficult than finishing a course.

   e. Keep appointments.

   f. Begin talking to prospective faculty early about your ideas.

   g. When asking faculty to be on your committee, make an appointment to talk with them individually. Email is great, but *this is not the way to approach a faculty member to be on your committee*. Come prepared to discuss your project, and be receptive to suggestions. As a minimum, most Faculty want to know following before they will agree to work with a student:

      i. The faculty member has adequate time to do a good job.

      ii. The student is prepared in the field.

      iii. The student is responsible enough to complete the project.

      iv. The student is self-motivated.

      v. The student has a good, original idea for a thesis or project that can be completed in the time frame available.

      vi. The student has two substantial written projects in hand that can form the basis of a portfolio.

      vii. The student knows enough about the field to work in a responsible way to create a viable reading list for a comprehensive exam area.

   h. Take responsibility for your success. A faculty member cannot tell you what to write or spend a great deal of time editing your work.

   i. Have a backup plan. Faculty members at NKU carry a heavy load. Be understanding if a faculty member is already too committed elsewhere to be on your committee.

   j. Ask the graduate director for suggestions of others who might be able to work on your committee.

   k. Keep the academic year in mind, and be flexible with faculty about scheduling. Faculty members are required to maintain a research agenda in addition to a full teaching schedule.
Summer and time between terms may be the only time available to them to remain up to date and relevant as researchers in their fields.

5. **How do I get permission to enroll for thesis hours?**
   a. Declare your capstone option by completing the appropriate form from the *Graduate Student Handbook* and submitting it to the graduate program director after completing 15 hours in the program.
   b. Complete your prospectus, get it approved by your committee, and submit it to the graduate program director with the appropriate form from the Graduate Student Handbook *in a timely manner*.

6. **May I enroll in all six hours of my credit bearing capstone in one term?**
   a. Completing all six hours of your capstone in one semester is extremely difficult. Theses must distributed to committee members by around March 15 for an April 1 defense and by October 15 for a November 1 defense. This leaves only 1.5 months to write the thesis if all hours are completed in the same term. Students completing projects and portfolios have one additional month, but 2.5 months is still inadequate to write a successful capstone.
   b. A much better option is to spread the capstone hours over two or more semesters. Credit bearing capstones can be taken in increments of as little as 1 credit hour.
D. CREATING A PROSPECTUS

1. Overview and Purpose

Briefly, a prospectus is a description or plan for an upcoming project that is shared with an audience in order to gain support or "permission" to proceed with the project. More specifically, a prospectus in English Studies demonstrates both the project’s potential as a scholarly endeavor and the candidate’s ability to complete the project. The approval of a prospectus, often by committee or department faculty, ensures that the candidate and the committee understand the expectations, scope, organization, and limits of the project and any accompanying research. The prospectus can also act as a fail-safe for the writer and the committee as questions and concerns can be addressed before the project begins in earnest.

First and foremost, the prospectus is for you, the writer. Ideally, it should help you sharpen the focus of your capstone, determine which theories, methodologies, and research strategies will serve you best, and develop a coherent arrangement for your material. Drafting even the shortest writing plan forces a writer to think carefully about what she or he wants to say and this prospectus is no different. Keep in mind that while a prospectus is not tentative or vague, the project itself may change slightly as the writer moves forward.

However, the prospectus is also for the members of your capstone committee, who will be evaluating your work based on the goals and objectives presented in the Graduate Student Handbook.

2. Goals and objectives.

Depending upon the capstone you choose to complete, the organization of the prospectus and the final document will differ. Generally, however, all prospectuses should accomplish the following:

1. Explain the candidate’s unique approach (or combination of approaches) to the topic
2. Demonstrate an understanding of current and/or pertinent scholarly thought in English studies pertaining to the topic as well as the relation of the topic to other associated topics
3. Delineate clearly the research topic and the problems, issues, and questions the thesis will address
4. Offer a detailed summary of the content of the project and should reveal the ways the broader research topic will be developed through the sequence of chapters.
5. Include a working bibliography of resources, including primary and secondary works related to the subject area
6. Be of sufficient length to satisfy the objectives listed above—between 10-20 pages, not including bibliography

3. Section Headings

The section headings used in any document should arise from the needs of the project at hand. We recognize, however, that students often appreciate sample organizations for unfamiliar forms, and most students in the program will not have written a prospectus. Consequently, provided is a sampling of possible organizations for consideration, recognizing that few, if any, capstones will follow them without reflection.

* This guideline was adapted from a handout created by Dr. Jennifer Cellio, Northern Kentucky University.
a. Thesis

I. Introduction and Thesis Statement (1-2 pp.)—A general overview of your project and a clear thesis statement articulating your claim, argument, or research question.

II. Genesis of Project and Objects/Sites of Study (1-2 pp.)—A brief discussion of the source or origin of your research question or thesis statement. What prompted this work? From where does the desire to write emerge? Also, an outline of the objects of study. What texts or documents will you study?

III. Methodologies/Theories (2-3 pp.)—A description of the theories, techniques, and/or research methods you will employ.

IV. Significance of Project and Contributions to Field (1-2 pp.)—Your justification for choosing this topic; an explanation of the scholarly significance of your project. Also, an explanation of the ways your project contributes to your field as a whole.

V. Chapter Summaries (about 1 p. per chapter)—A brief outline or summary of the contents of each proposed chapter.

VI. Timeline (1 p.)—(A month-by-month sketch of draft and revision deadlines.)

VII. Working Bibliography/Works Consulted (3-5 pp.)—(A complete or nearly-complete list of all texts to be used in writing the thesis.)

b. Project

The following are examples of recent creative project prospectus outlines.

1) Section headings for project comprising an excerpt of a science fiction novel

   1. Overview
   2. Plot Synopsis
   3. Goals and Themes
   4. Challenges
   5. Project Timeline
   6. Annotated Bibliography

2) Section headings for a project comprising a collection of poetry

   1. Overview
   2. Structure
   3. Voices
   4. Unifying Elements
   5. Major Themes
   6. Challenges
   7. Timeline
   8. Bibliography

3) Section headings for a project comprising an excerpt of a biographical work

   1. Overview
   2. Relevance
   3. Process
   4. The Literary Lessons
   5. Casting the Book
   6. Ending the Story
   7. The Voice
   8. Conclusions
   9. Working Table of Contents and Summary
   10. Committee
   11. Bibliography and Literary References
c. Portfolio

1. A reflective overview indicating
   a. Significance of the project and contribution to the field
   b. Justification for choosing the topics/genres
   c. Reflection on how graduate education contributed to the genesis of the project

2. Description of journal article #1
   a. Outline of proposed article
   b. Preliminary bibliography for proposed article

3. Description of journal article #2 or creative work
   a. Outline of proposed article
   b. Preliminary bibliography for proposed article
E. CAPSTONE POLICIES AND COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

PART 1. THESIS, PORTFOLIO, OR PROJECT

1. Capstone Process (Thesis, Portfolio, or Project)
   a. From 0-15 credit hours, the student completes ENG 600 Intro to Graduate Studies and other coursework.
   b. At 15 credit hours, student indicates capstone preference.
   c. From 18-24 credit hours, student negotiates with committee members (normally a potential chair and 2-3 potential members) through the writing of the prospectus.
      i. The student meets with the potential committee members several times, receives feedback, and redrafts the prospectus.
      ii. When the committee and the student have reached agreement, the student, the chair, and the members signify this by signing the prospectus.
      iii. The student conveys the prospectus, with its signature sheet, to the graduate program director.
      iv. The graduate program director reads the prospectus, ensures the project is commensurate with a capstone in English Studies, ensures that the committee is appropriate to supervise the capstone, and signs the signature form. This signifies the transfer of academic advising relating to the capstone project only to the committee chair.
      v. The graduate program director initiates the paperwork to permit the student to enroll in capstone hours (thesis, portfolio, or project).
   d. From 25-30+ credit hours, under the direction of the committee chair, the student drafts and revises the capstone in response to comments expressed by the committee chair and the committee members.
   e. When the committee is satisfied with the capstone, usually around midpoint in the last 3 credit hours of the capstone option, the student informs the graduate director of a date and time mutually agreed upon between the student and the committee members for the capstone defense. The graduate director arranges the venue and publicizes the capstone defense.
   f. The student defends the capstone based upon a published procedure, with possible outcomes ranging from pass with distinction, pass, and fail. In all cases, the committee may mandate additional changes in the capstone as submitted.
   g. The committee chair informs the graduate director in writing of the outcome of the capstone defense.
   h. If the student fails, the student has one additional opportunity to defend the capstone.
   i. If the student passes, the student makes any mandated changes and conveys the capstone to the committee chair.
   j. The committee chair verifies the corrections.
   k. The completed capstone document is conveyed to the graduate director, but remains the responsibility of the committee chair until accepted by the graduate director and, if applicable, by the NKU Graduate Programs office.
   l. Once the completed capstone document is accepted as complete, the committee chair may assign a grade to the student.
2. Committee Responsibilities (Thesis, Portfolio, Project)

a. **Overview.** Faculty members agreeing to serve on a student’s capstone committee have special responsibilities to the student, the program, and the discipline.

b. **Graduate Program Director.** The English graduate program director has the following responsibilities in the capstone process:
   i. Administrative advising throughout the student’s program
   ii. Academic advising through the first 24 hours of the program, excluding the processes surrounding prospectus drafting and revision
   iii. Consulting with the committee chair, as needed
   iv. Ensuring the academic integrity of the process
   v. Certification of degree

c. **Committee Chair.** The Capstone Committee Chair has the following responsibilities:
   i. Chairing the capstone committee
   ii. Contributing to the academic integrity of the process by communicating any concerns only within committee meetings, directly to the student, or directly to the graduate program director
   iii. Treating the student’s written materials and ideas with the confidentiality due to the intellectual property of a colleague
   iv. Consulting with the student on creation of the prospectus
   v. Reading drafts of the prospectus and capstone in a timely manner
   vi. Providing feedback to ensure, to the extent possible,
      1. the academic integrity of the capstone
      2. its alignment with best practices and the current state of scholarly thought across the interdisciplinary field of English Studies
   vii. Chairing the capstone defense
   viii. Communicating the results of the defense to the graduate program director in a timely manner
   ix. Verifying mandated revision to the capstone
   x. Continuing to provide direction to the student until the capstone is accepted as complete by the graduate program director and Office of Graduate Programs

d. **Committee Members.** The Capstone Committee Members have the following responsibilities to the student:
   i. Reading and commenting on the prospectus and capstone in a timely manner
   ii. Sharing their expertise to ensure, to the extent possible, alignment with best practices and the current state of scholarly thought across the interdisciplinary field of English Studies
   iii. Contributing to the academic integrity of the process by communicating any concerns only within committee meetings, directly to the committee chair, directly to the student, or directly to the graduate program director
   iv. Treating the student’s written materials and ideas with the confidentiality due to the intellectual property of a colleague
   v. Attending and participating in committee meetings and the capstone defense
3. Conducting the Capstone Defense (Thesis, Project, Portfolio)

The following procedures and schedules must be followed for conducting capstone defenses in the Department of English:

1. **Student identifies a defense date and time convenient to both the committee and the student:** 3 weeks before defense.

2. **Student communicates final capstone title and defense date and time to the graduate program director:** 3 weeks before defense.

3. **Graduate program director schedules venue and publicizes the defense:** 2 weeks before defense.

4. **Student distributes final capstone document to committee:** 2 weeks before defense

5. **Time allotted for defense:** 1 hour

6. **Venue:** Public

7. **Format:** ~10 minute statement by candidate; 50 minute Q&A by committee

8. **Deliberation:** committee deliberates up to 20 minutes in private (candidate and guests must leave the room)

9. **Decision:** committee invites the candidate to return to the room and renders its decision directly to the candidate as
   
   a. **Approve as is**
   
   b. **Approve with changes**
   
   c. **Not approve**

10. **Notification:** The chair of the committee must convey the decision of the committee to the graduate program director in writing.

11. **Consequences of Committee Decision**

   a. **Approve as is:** Once the graduate program director is notified by the committee chair that the capstone is approved as is, the candidate may submit the completed capstone to the graduate program director and begin to work out final formatting issues.

   b. **Approve with changes:** If the committee’s decision is “approve with changes,” the chair of the committee must convey the instructions for revision to the candidate in writing within one week of the defense. The candidate and the chair should set up the timeline for completion. The committee chair must verify that the recommended changes have been made to the capstone in consultation with the candidate. Once the committee chair approves the changes, s/he must notify the graduate director in writing that the capstone is acceptable before the graduate director can accept the capstone from the candidate and begin the process of working out final formatting issues.

   c. **Not approve:** If the committee does not approve the capstone, the candidate is afforded one additional opportunity to defend, or the candidate may elect to undertake
comprehensive exams. The committee chair must advise the candidate of the following responsibilities and options:

i. The candidate must notify the committee members and the graduate program director in writing of his/her decision within one week of the failed defense.

ii. If the candidate elects a second defense, the committee chair should work with the candidate (1) to explain the deficiencies that led to the committee’s decision and (2) to develop a timeline for a second defense in the following regular semester.

iii. If the candidate notifies the committee that s/he elects to undertake comprehensive exams, the capstone committee is considered disbanded, and the candidate must assemble an examination committee. Members of the disbanded committee are not obligated to serve on the examination committee.

PART 2. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

1. A student electing comprehensive exams must select two areas in which to be tested.

2. For each area, the student must locate an NKU graduate faculty member whose PhD-level or subsequent research is in the selected area and who is willing to direct that portion of his/her comprehensive exam. (Contact the graduate program director for a list of faculty in each area.) These members are designated as content area member. A third member of the committee must be a member of the graduate faculty; this member is designated as a reader. The three faculty members who agree to work with the student constitute the student’s examining committee.

3. In consultation with the faculty members, the student is expected to create examination lists appropriate to each field, based on the following guidelines:

   d. Approximately 25 texts
   
e. 40-60% should be book length texts
   
f. 40-60% may be shorter texts
   
g. The texts should be a mixture of criticism, theory, and primary sources
   
h. The texts should constitute a representative sampling adequate to form the basis of broad coverage in the examination area.

4. The test itself will include a written and an oral component

   i. Written component

      i. Each content area member of the examining committee will pose two questions in the examining area.

      ii. The student will receive all questions at the same time and choose one in each area.

      iii. The student will have 48 hours in which to compose written responses to the two selected questions. The deadline will be provided with the questions. The questions will be submitted in person in LA500.
iv. The response to each question will be approximately 7000-8000 words (12-15 pages in a standard font, double-spaced) in length.

v. Faculty will have at least two weeks to review the written responses before the oral component is administered.

j. Oral component

i. The student’s written responses will form the basis of the oral component of the examination.

ii. The oral component will last up to 60 minutes, consist of Q&A with the faculty examining committee, and be scheduled subject to the availability of the faculty.

k. Deliberation

i. Following the oral component, the student will leave the room, and the committee will have 15 minutes to confer.

ii. The committee will render a decision immediately, as follows:

1. Pass with distinction

2. Pass

3. Fail

5. In the event a student fails the comprehensive exam, s/he may take the exam one more time with different questions, or the student may elect to complete a different capstone option.

6. In the event a student fails the comprehensive exam twice, graduate programs regulations dictate that s/he will be expelled from the program.