

Admission Policies

Equity

The Department of English is committed to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion within our community. With graduate admissions, curriculum, and hiring, we strive to develop a learning environment that reflects and affirms the complexity of the broader community that we serve.

We recognize the settler-colonial roots of our institution and are committed to an ongoing process of addressing the embedded colonial power structures in our classrooms and infrastructure.

We welcome and encourage applications from diverse and equity-deserving groups, including (but not limited to) those who have been historically disadvantaged because of race, religion, sexual identity, gender identity and expression, age, disability, and/or socio-economic condition. As a department, we recognize that many people face barriers in post-secondary education that may negatively impact opportunities to succeed. We are committed to thoughtfully considering the full context of an applicant's life experiences and evaluating their application equitably.

MA Standards

Acceptance as an MA student in the School of Graduate Studies will be as either a regular graduate student or a qualifying student. A regular graduate student is one who has been accepted as a candidate for a higher degree or diploma. The normal minimum requirement of admission as a regular graduate student is an Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree (or a similar program with intensive specialization) in English with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5. The same level of degree with at least a B average (North American System) or upper second class standing (British System) is normally required for graduates of other universities. Applicants holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in a discipline other than English will be considered in the light of their undergraduate course program and their achievements in that program.

PhD Standards

Academic Stream: a GPA of at least 3.7 (A-) in an MA program in English is required for admission to the PhD program with an academic thesis.

Creative Writing Stream: a GPA of at least 3.7 (A-) in an MA program in English or MFA program in Creative Writing is required for students seeking to undertake a creative writing thesis in the doctoral program. Students with an MFA should have taken a broad range of English courses at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

Gender and Sexuality in Literature Stream: a GPA of at least 3.7 (A-) in an MA

program in English or an MA in Gender/Women's Studies is required for admission to the PhD program in the Gender and Sexuality in Literature Stream. Students with an MA in English should have taken some Gender / Sexuality / Women's Studies courses at either the undergraduate or graduate level; students with an MA in Gender/Women's Studies should have taken a broad range of English courses at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

Admission to the English Graduate Program is limited and very competitive. Because it is based on the human and physical resources available to deliver the program of study, admission to the MA or PhD is not guaranteed for those who meet the minimum academic requirements.

Process

Applications are processed through the School of Graduate Studies. The decision regarding admission is made by the Dean or an Associate Dean of the Graduate School, based upon the recommendation submitted by the Department of English's Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Graduate Committee. This decision is final and cannot be appealed.

Proficiency in the English Language

English is both the working language and the primary language of instruction and examination at the University of New Brunswick. It is essential that all students be able to communicate and understand the English Language, both orally and in written form. All international applicants to the School of Graduate Studies whose mother tongue is not English are required to demonstrate a competency in the English language that will enable them to participate fully in the academic life of the University; this includes international applicants who are Landed Immigrants or Residents in Canada.

Proficiency in English **MUST** be demonstrated by one of the means currently accepted by the School of Graduate Studies, as indicated on the [SGS website](#). This requirement will NOT be waived.

NOTE: Applications will be regarded as incomplete unless the test scores are received by the School of Graduate Studies directly from the Testing Agency.

The School of Graduate Studies will not issue the final "Certificate of Acceptance" until the English proficiency requirement is met.

Official certificates of acceptance are sent only by the School of Graduate Studies and are valid only for the date of commencement of studies indicated.

Part-time Studies

It is recognized that the work for the degree can, in certain circumstances, be completed effectively either partially or completely on a part-time basis. In such cases, the formal residency requirement may be satisfied by taking individual courses over a period of several years or by undertaking the research project off-campus but under the supervision of a faculty member. The research requirements of a PhD program normally require full-time attendance at the University. In exceptional circumstances, the PhD may be completed on a part-time basis. Such permission requires that a number of conditions be met. See the preceding section on the PhD program. Part-time students may not register for more than two courses per term.

Qualifying Period

An applicant may be admitted to a [qualifying period](#) when an assessment of the transcript indicates that their background preparation is inadequate for the proposed course of study, but where the standard of academic performance (and, where appropriate, achievement in creative writing) matches that required for admission to the School of Graduate Studies. A typical full-time qualifying program for the MA degree consists of two semesters of upper-level undergraduate courses, creative writing workshops, and/or honours seminars. Space in the qualifying program is limited to two students per year.

Probationary Period

A student may be admitted to a [probationary period](#). If the academic program performance of the student at the end of any academic term during that period does not meet the normal academic standards required of a graduate student, enrollment in the graduate program will be terminated immediately. A student on a probationary period is considered to be a regular graduate student and is eligible to receive financial support from the usual sources according to the appropriate guidelines and regulations.

Leave of Absence Policy

A [leave of absence](#) is a period of time during which a student is not required to register, no fees are assessed, and the time granted is not counted in the maximum time period permitted to the completion of a graduate degree. A student may normally apply for only one leave of absence during a degree program. A leave of absence will not normally exceed 12 months and will be granted only by the School of Graduate Studies, with the recommendation by the Director of Graduate Studies.

MA Policies

Academic MA Program

Students admitted to the [academic stream](#) will complete

- 15 credit hours (ch) of academic graduate courses,
- the 6 ch research methods course (Engl 6100),
- and a 90-100 page thesis on a topic of the student's choosing.

Students may request permission to substitute a creative writing workshop for one of the five regular courses.

Gender and Sexuality in Literature MA Program

Students admitted to the [GSL stream](#) will complete

- 3 ch GSL Core Course: Theories of Gender and Sexuality in Literature,
- 3 ch GSL elective,
- 9 ch of other academic graduate courses,
 - We recommend that 3 ch of these credits be taken through GWS 4004: Seminar in Gender and Women's Studies.
- the 6 ch research methods course (Engl 6100),
- and a 90-100 page thesis on a topic related to gender and sexuality.

Creative Writing MA Program

Students in the [creative writing stream](#) will complete

- the 15 credit hours (ch) of graduate courses by taking 2 creativewriting workshops in different genres and 3 academic courses.
- the 6 ch research methods course (Engl 6100),
- and a thesis in a genre of their choice with the guidance of a supervisor.

General MA Information

Graduating students may earn admission to a doctoral program in English from any stream.

Progress

Courses will normally be completed during the first eight months of the degree, but students have the option of taking a course in the second year of the program.

MA students must spend a minimum of two terms in residence (i.e., living in Fredericton or surroundings).

Students must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 to remain enrolled. Course choices must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

MA Thesis - Guidelines, Regulations and Procedures

Supervision

Students in MA program will write a thesis. The Director of Graduate Studies will act as each student's advisor until the student has chosen a supervisor from among the full-time faculty in Fredericton and Saint John. Retired professors and Honorary Research Associates may co-supervise a thesis with a full-time faculty member. Normally for the MA thesis, the supervisor will be a specialist in the relevant field or creative genre. Through graduate classes, including the methods course, students will have the opportunity to meet many faculty members and identify prospective supervisors.

Before beginning work on the thesis, the student should discuss the proposed creative, academic, or GSL project with the supervisor and, with their guidance, submit a thesis proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies. The proposal is a course requirement of the research methods course and must be submitted by the end of the student's second term. Guidelines for the preparation of academic and creative writing thesis proposals are available from the Graduate Assistant. The proposal and its accompanying bibliography must be approved by the Graduate Committee before thesis work is begun.

Students who plan to carry out research that involves interviewing subjects whose words or stories will be represented and cited in their theses must take steps to obtain their subjects' informed consent and protect their privacy and dignity. They must outline these steps in a Research Ethics Board (REB) application, which they will submit to the Director of Graduate Studies. The graduate committee will review the application and pass it on to UNB's REB. Normally, students will submit this form (if applicable) as part of their thesis proposal. They can also submit it at any time they plan to carry out interviews as part of their thesis research.

Students can download the REB application here:

<https://www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html>

Students are expected to consult regularly with their supervisor(s) as they research and write the thesis.

Thesis Length

The usual length for an **academic or GSL MA thesis** is 90-100 pages.

For a **creative writing thesis**, the length can vary considerably depending on the genre; a poetry collection may be 60-70 pages and a novel 200 pages or more. All creative theses must be accompanied by an analytical introduction (15-20 pages) written by the candidate and must include a bibliography of works read and studied in connection with the project.

Thesis Defense

Once it is complete, two members of the English Graduate Academic Unit (GAU) must approve the thesis before it can proceed to the oral examination. These two members could be the student's supervisor plus a reader chosen from the GAU. Alternately, they could be co-supervisors. Once the thesis has been approved, the

examining board will be set up by the Director of Graduate Studies. It will be composed of the

- thesis supervisor,
- the departmental reader or thesis co-supervisor,
- and an external examiner (from a UNB GAU other than English).

Students are welcome to suggest potential readers and examiners and are advised that all faculty readers and examiners must be given at least two weeks to read the thesis. A detailed time-line is available from the Graduate Assistant.

Once the Examining Committee has read the thesis, it determines whether the project meets the standards of good critical or imaginative writing. If it does, then the student has passed the written component of the project and may proceed to the oral examination. If it doesn't, the examiners may recommend

(a) that the thesis be revised or rewritten in specific ways; or (b) that the thesis be failed. This means that the decision about the overall merit of the written thesis is rendered by the examiners, and communicated to the candidate, before the oral. Students are advised that all faculty readers and examiners must be given at least two weeks to read the thesis.

Students hoping to defend in mid- to late-April (the deadline to avoid paying summer tuition and fees) should have a complete draft ready for approval by two members of the GAU by March 15 and, if approved, a final version to the examining committee by April 1. After the examination, students should plan to spend a day or two on final corrections and photocopying before submitting the thesis and all relevant forms to the School of Graduate Studies.

At the oral examination, the student is assessed as to their ability to discuss academic and creative issues raised by the project, its literary context, and the texts in the bibliography. The question of the acceptability of the project itself, having been decided previously, is not reconsidered. The oral examination begins with a brief talk (20-30 minutes) about the project from the candidate, followed by questions from the examining board. Other graduate students and faculty members are encouraged to attend and ask questions after the examiners have concluded their examination of the candidate. At the close of the oral examination, the Examining Committee will discuss the candidate's performance, gauging the adequacy of their responses and knowledge of the texts in the bibliography. If the Examining Committee decides that the candidate has not demonstrated adequate knowledge, it may recommend that the candidate reconsider the entire project before another oral examination is scheduled. In any event, it is only the oral component of the examination which can be passed or failed at this stage.

The thesis must follow the guidelines for MA theses; these are available from the Graduate Assistant or on the [UNB School of Graduate Studies website](#).

PhD Policies

Direct-Entry PhD

Beginning in Fall 2018, we offer exceptional undergraduate students the opportunity to proceed directly into our PhD Program.

Admission to the [Direct-Entry PhD](#) requires a GPA of at least 4.0 in the final two years of the BA in Honours English. A 4.0 GPA does not guarantee admission.

The standard for *continuing* in the Direct-Entry PhD is a 4.0 GPA at the end of the first year of study. Students who do not achieve this standard but receive above 3.7 (the normal standard for continuing) will in the second year of the program be required to take the number of courses normally required of first-year PhD students; such a student would then follow the schedule for the regular PhD in completing the comprehensive exams and Teaching Apprenticeship.

In the Direct-Entry PhD, students in Year 1 will complete

- 5 academic seminars (18ch),
- the 6ch Research Methods course (Engl 6100)

Students automatically continuing in the PhD will in the first term of Year 2 complete their course work by taking 2 academic seminars (6ch). These students will complete all comprehensive exams in January of Year 3. Also in Year 3, students will undertake the Teaching Apprenticeship. This schedule will permit students to begin full-time dissertation work in January of Year 3.

For this degree, a minimum of six terms (three academic years) of study and research in residence is mandatory. The degree is designed to be completed in five years; the time limit for completion is eight years.

Any student who wishes to leave the Direct-Entry PhD without graduating with the doctorate can apply to graduate with an MA, provided that they have completed the following requirements:

- 7 academic seminars (21ch)
- the 6ch Research Methods course (ENGL 6100)
- revision of one of their course assignments into a potentially publishable journal article.

Academic PhD

Students admitted to the [academic stream](#) of the PhD Program will complete

- 15 credit hours (ch) of academic graduate courses after the Master's degree, in addition to any courses taken to make up omissions in the candidate's background.
- the 6 ch Research Methods course (Engl 6100),
- the 6 ch Teaching Apprenticeship (Engl 6999),

- two comprehensive exams
- and a dissertation.

Gender and Sexuality in Literature PhD

Students admitted to the [GSL stream](#) will complete

- 3 ch GSL Core Course: Theories of Gender and Sexuality in Literature,
- 3 ch GSL elective,
- 9 ch of other academic graduate courses,
 - We recommend that 3 ch of these credits be taken through GWS 4004: Seminar in Gender and Women's Studies.
- the 6 ch research methods course (Engl 6100),
- the 6 ch Teaching Apprenticeship (Engl 6999),
- two comprehensive exams
- and a dissertation on a topic related to gender and sexuality.

Creative Writing PhD Requirements

Students admitted to the [creative writing stream](#) will complete

- 15 credit hours (ch) of graduate courses after the Master's degree, in addition to any courses taken to make up omissions in the candidate's background. Students must take two creative writing workshops (6 ch) as part of the 15 credit hours of elective course work. These workshops will be in two different genres.
- the 6 ch Research Methods course (Engl 6100),
- the 6 ch Teaching Apprenticeship (Engl 6999),
- two comprehensive exams
- and a dissertation.

General PhD Regulations

Residency

A minimum of four terms (two academic years) of study and research in residence is mandatory. The degree is designed to be completed in four years; the time limit for completion is seven years.

Courses

By the completion of their PhD course work, *all* students are expected to have coverage, at either the graduate or undergraduate level, in at least **six** of the following areas:

- Middle English
- Renaissance
- 18th-Century British
- 19th-Century British

- 20th- and 21st-Century British
- American
- Canadian
- Post-Colonial
- Literary Theory
- Indigenous Literatures
- Gender and Sexuality Theory

Candidates will not normally be allowed to take more than 50% of their course work in any one area of literature.

Academic, GSL, and Creative Writing PhD students must obtain a GPA of 3.7 in courses taken after the MA, with no grade below 3.0 (B). Students in the Direct- Entry Academic PhD program must obtain a GPA of 4.0 in their first year of course work.

Comprehensive Examinations

By the end of April of the first year (the beginning of January of the second year for the Direct-Entry PhD), doctoral students are required to have chosen a supervisor, submitted a draft thesis-proposal for approval by the Graduate Committee, and chosen the fields in which they will write their comprehensive examinations, subject to approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Goals of the Comprehensive Exams. The comprehensive exams allow students to 1) exhibit expertise in their research area, 2) understand literary ideas and movements across a variety of texts, 3) demonstrate general knowledge as preparation for future teaching, 4) demonstrate readiness to pursue their dissertation project, and 5) prepare for job interviews and public presentations.

Exam Schedule. Students beginning an Academic, GSL, or Creative Writing PhD program in September will normally begin writing their exams in the November of their second year. The schedule will be as follows:

- The first exam will be written during the first full week of November;
- the second will be written during the first full week of May.

Students beginning a Direct-Entry Academic PhD program in September will normally begin writing their exams in July of their second year. The schedule will be as follows:

- The first exam will be written during the second full week of July;
- the second will be written during the first full week of January of Year 3.

Exact dates and times in these periods will be set from year to year. The only exception to writing exams at these dates will be official deferrals based on serious medical or compassionate grounds, granted upon written application before the exam to the Director of Graduate Studies and to be approved by the Graduate Committee. A student who does not sit a scheduled exam will be deemed to have

failed.

Written Component. All candidates must pass two comprehensive examinations in the following order: a set examination, and a field examination.

The **set examination** will be in a field relevant to the student's research and teaching interests. The first examination will be based on a set list of primary and secondary readings in one of the following fields: (1) Medieval; (2) Renaissance Dramatic; (3) Renaissance Non-Dramatic; (4) Restoration and 18th- Century British; (5) 19th-Century British; (6) 20th- and 21st-Century British; (7) American; (8) Canadian; (9) Post-colonial; (10) Indigenous Literatures; (11) Narrative; (12) Poetry; (13) Drama; (14) Prose Non-Fiction; (15) Theory; (16) Gender and Sexuality Theory; and (17) Gender and Sexuality in Literature.

Students can adjust these lists in consultation with the examiners and with the approval of the graduate committee. Students must provide written justification for every change they propose to the lists. There is no limit to the number of texts that can be substituted. However, students should have a good reason for substituting texts (for instance, to update or expand the canon, or to replace texts they've already read). Substitutions should retain the balance of the original list as reflected in its division into temporal periods, national literatures, or fields of research. For example, students taking the Narrative or Poetry exams should not substitute 20th/21st century texts for 19th century texts.

The **field examination** will be based on a customized list of texts in the student's thesis area, drawn up by the student in consultation with their supervisor and one other examiner and approved by the Graduate Committee.

Each list will consist of 50 book-length works. Multiple shorter works (short stories, essays, poetry chapbooks or groups of individual poems) can be combined to make up the equivalent of a book-length work, at the examiners' discretion.

Each list must be submitted to the graduate committee 5 months before the exam date.

The written examination will be devised and graded by two Graduate Academic Unit Members with expertise in the area in question. For each exam, students will be given the option of either writing a 48-hour take-home exam or a 3-hour on-campus exam. Students who write the take-home exam should write about 5,000 words (roughly 15 pages double-spaced) in total. Students who write the on-campus exam should write about 2,500 words (roughly 7-8 pages double-spaced) in total. Both the take-home exam and the on-campus exam are "open book" and may be written by hand or on computer. Students are entirely responsible for any work that is lost or not saved during the exam.

The exams are designed to test advanced knowledge of a field and may consist of

between two and three essays. All written exams should exhibit the ability to carry out graduate-level critical analysis (including close reading, formal analysis, and argumentative engagement) and to organize coherent arguments with strong thesis statements. Where appropriate, students should demonstrate an understanding of literary, scholarly, and historical contexts. Because of space limitations, it is normal for students to briefly outline arguments that they can expand on in the oral exam.

Plagiarism on the exam (including the use of AI) is grounds for failure and possibly more severe disciplinary consequences.

The question papers of past examinations are kept on file by the Graduate Assistant for consultation beforehand, by students and faculty. Students are strongly urged to consult with their supervisors and with the professors setting these examinations so as to ensure a common awareness of the requirements. Examiners and any students needing a copy of their work will be given a copy of the written exam and questions by the next day. The examining board will inform students if the written exam is a pass, fail, or a provisional pass. Students who fail the written exam do not proceed to an oral.

Oral Component. After each of the comprehensives has been written, the two GAU Members who prepared the exam and the Director of Graduate Studies will conduct 60–90-minute oral examinations within one week of the written portion. The oral will enable the examining board to ask the candidate to elaborate on the written portion as well as to demonstrate knowledge of texts on the reading list that were not discussed in the essays. Students should re-read their written exams before the oral and be prepared to address flaws in argumentation and correct errors of fact or interpretation.

Students who require memory aids, such as notes, flashcards, the reading lists, the written exams, or books from their lists, may refer to them during the exam. However, these aids must not be used as prepared responses from which students read verbatim. Students will be evaluated for their ability to extemporize answers in response to questions posed by their examiners.

Criteria for a pass on the oral include structured answers, familiarity with key themes and debates in the area of study, arguments substantiated by textual evidence and details, and the ability to consider conflicting positions.

Failure and Appeal. Students will be permitted one failure on each comprehensive exam; a second failure on any exam will lead to withdrawal from the program. A student sitting an exam for a second time will have their exam read and their oral witnessed by three members of the department, one of whom will be the Director, whether or not they are already on the examining board. The student has a right to appeal the results of their exam. The procedure for appeal is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Normally, then, students will finish their comprehensive reading and writing in just over a year (May-May for Academic, GSL, and Creative Writing students, January- January for Direct-Entry students). This will leave over two years for students to complete their degree requirements. Any exceptions to the above schedule must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Accommodations. Students needing accommodations should submit their requests through the Student Accessibility Centre. Students can request that their exams be postponed if they are struggling with health or personal issues. These requests can be directed to either the Accessibility Centre or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Language Requirement

Doctoral candidates, in consultation with their supervisor(s), will determine whether their Doctoral research depends on knowledge of a language other than English. If such knowledge is necessary, students and their supervisors will submit to the Director of Graduate Studies a plan and timeline for acquiring that language.

Dissertation: Guidelines, Regulations, and Procedures

The major emphasis in the program of study for the doctorate in English will be on the thesis. By the summer of their second year (January of the third year for the Direct-Entry PhD) a student, guided by the Director and with the aid of an appropriate supervisor in the Department, should begin work on the thesis. The proposal (a draft of which will have been submitted in April of the first year for Academic, GSL, and Creative Writing students, January of the second year for direct-entry students) must follow the Guidelines for the Preparation of Thesis Proposals. This information is available from the Graduate Assistant and also available online at the School of Graduate Studies website. Each proposal has to be approved by the Graduate Committee before thesis work is begun. In choosing a thesis topic, the candidate must consider the resources of the library and faculty. Otherwise the process of selecting a thesis supervisor is similar to that described above under "MA Thesis."

Students who plan to carry out research that involves interviewing subjects whose words or stories will be represented and cited in their theses must take steps to obtain their subjects' informed consent and protect their privacy and dignity. They must outline these steps in a Research Ethics Board (REB) application, which they will submit to the Director of Graduate Studies. The graduate committee will review the application and pass it on to UNB's REB. Normally, students will submit this form (if applicable) as part of their thesis proposal. They can also submit it at any time they plan to carry out interviews as part of their thesis research.

Students can download the REB application here:

<https://www.unb.ca/research/vp/ethics.html>

The academic and GSL PhD thesis, according to the Graduate School Calendar,

must demonstrate the candidate's competence to undertake independent research work and must contribute significantly to knowledge in the candidate's field of study. That contribution must be of sufficient quality to merit publication (in whole or in part) in appropriate scholarly journals or as a book. The thesis must show that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material and it must be written in a satisfactory literary-critical style. Its length should be 200-250 pages, and it should be free of typographical and other mechanical errors.

Regulations and guidelines for the preparation and submission of the PhD dissertation can be found on the [SGS website](#).

The creative writing dissertation must meet the standard of excellent imaginative writing, normally fiction, poetry, drama, screenwriting, or creative non-fiction, and be of sufficient quality to merit publication (in whole or in part) in creative journals, as a book, or as a play or film. The thesis will consist of the creative project and an analytical introduction of 30-50 pages that shows that the candidate is fully aware of the pertinent published material in the genre, and it must be written in a satisfactory literary and critical style. While dissertation length can vary considerably depending on genre, the overall dissertation must be substantial in both quantity and quality, and it should be free of typographical and other mechanical errors.

Every doctoral thesis will be considered first by the supervisor and two readers from within the Graduate Academic Unit. If a student has two or more co-supervisors, only one reader from the Graduate Academic Unit is required. If passed, it will then be read by a committee struck by the School of Graduate Studies and consisting of the supervisor, members of Graduate Academic Units from within the University, and an external examiner who is a recognized authority in the field of research. This committee will hold a final, oral examination of the candidate and their thesis. This examination will be chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies and will be open to the university community.

The [procedures](#) involved in reading and examining the thesis are time-consuming. The whole process from submission to examination may take up to 12 weeks. If modifications to the thesis are required by the Examining Board, it may, of course, take considerably longer. Clearly, it is desirable to have the approved thesis in the hands of the School of Graduate Studies as soon as possible, but in no case later than the dates provided in the most recent graduate calendar for graduation at Spring Encaenia Fall Convocation. A detailed time-line is available from the Graduate Assistant.