

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

INTRODUCTION

Applications

Applications are available from the Director of Graduate English Studies, 118 College Dr., # 5037, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 or online at www.usm.edu. The application for admission, complete transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work, and results of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test must be submitted to the Graduate Office before any action can be taken on the application. The current *Graduate Bulletin* can be found online at www.usm.edu/graduatestudies or a copy can be obtained from the Office of Recruitment, 118 College Dr., #5166, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001.

Admission

Successful applicants to the M.A. program usually have completed appropriate undergraduate coursework in English with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. GRE scores for the general test, a statement of purpose, a writing sample, and two letters of recommendation are required. Applicants who do not meet standards in one area but who have an otherwise strong record may be eligible for conditional admission.

Admission to the Ph.D. program is competitive. Applicants will be judged on the basis of GPA in previous graduate work, the completion (or pending completion) of an appropriate master's degree, GRE scores (especially the verbal score), two letters of recommendation, a statement of purpose, and writing samples—a scholarly paper for literature students, fiction or poetry for creative writing students. Successful applicants usually have better than a 3.5 GPA in graduate English coursework. Applicants who do not meet standards in one area may, under exceptional circumstances, be given conditional admission. The Ph.D. application deadline is Nov. 1 to begin in the spring semester and March 1 to begin the following fall.

Assistantships

Regularly admitted students may apply for teaching assistantships, which are awarded competitively. The Department reserves a number of assistantships for new students. Stipends are \$8000 for a two-semester academic year, plus full tuition waivers for fall, spring, and summer semesters. Assistants teach two sections of freshman composition per semester or tutor in the Writing Center or they assist faculty in research, teaching, editing, and administrative work. To apply, the candidate must submit recommendations from two instructors, a "statement of purpose," and a writing sample—a scholarly paper for literature students, fiction or poetry for creative writing students—to the Graduate Director. Application deadline is March 1.

Other Financial Aid

Applications for graduate work-study are available online at www.fafsa.gov. The Financial Aid Office determines eligibility based on need and provides the English Department with a list of eligible applicants. The English Department selects from that list on a merit basis. Responsibilities for graduate work-study students assigned to the English department may include teaching freshman composition, tutoring in the Writing Center, assisting faculty in research, teaching, and/or editing, or administrative work. English graduate students who are work-study recipients assigned to the English department receive a full tuition waiver.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

Foreign Language Requirements

The following foreign language requirements may be met in the following ways:

1. Completing twelve undergraduate hours in a foreign language, culminating in 202 or its equivalent, with an average of B or higher.
2. Completing a six-hour graduate sequence in reading knowledge of a foreign language (501-502) with an average of B or higher.
3. Passing a translation test given by the Foreign Language Department.
4. Passing the CLEP test (see *Graduate Bulletin* for specifics).

The M.A. in English requires proficiency in one foreign language.

The Ph.D. in English requires proficiency in two foreign languages (or one and 12 graduate hours in another discipline). The Ph.D. requires two research tools as follows:

1. A foreign language.
2. A second foreign language or twelve graduate hours in another discipline, to be determined by the student's qualifying exam committee and the Graduate Director.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

THE MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

LITERATURE EMPHASIS

At least 30 graduate semester hours are required for the Master of Arts, with 6 hours reserved for thesis. With the approval of the Director of the Office of Graduate Studies, 6 graduate hours taken elsewhere may be applied to the degree. The candidate must complete 12 hours in British or American Literature and must complete a minimum 18 hours at the 600 level or above, with at least 6 in the area of concentration. (English 697, 714, and 791 do not satisfy the requirement.)

Required Courses: English 506, History of the Language, must be completed by all M.A. candidates in literature. For students with a similar undergraduate course, another course may be substituted with the approval of the Graduate Director. English 640, Bibliography and Methods of Research, is also required.

Foreign Language: M.A. candidates must demonstrate proficiency in one foreign language. See General Guidelines for details.

Thesis Requirement: A thesis is required of M.A. degree candidates. Students are required to take 6 hours of English 698, Thesis, and must be enrolled for 3 hours of English 698 during the semester in which the thesis is defended. The Graduate Office, on the advice of the English Department's Graduate Director, appoints a three-person committee to oversee the thesis. The topic for the thesis must be approved by this committee. Copies of the completed thesis are submitted to all members of the committee early in the semester in which the student expects to defend. When the thesis has been approved, final copies are submitted to the Graduate Office.

Thesis Defense: Prior to the deadline of the Graduate Office, candidates must pass a comprehensive oral exam conducted by the thesis committee. The comprehensive exam consists of questions on the thesis and the related areas of concentration.

Application for Degree: In the semester prior to the semester in which the degree will be taken (e.g., fall for a spring degree; see current *Graduate Bulletin* for deadline), candidates are required to submit to the Graduate Office a formal Application for Degree and to pay the required fee. Applications for Degree may be obtained online at www.usm.edu/graduatestudies or from the Director of Graduate English Studies.

CREATIVE WRITING EMPHASIS

Candidates for the M.A. in Creative Writing must meet the general requirements as set out above for the M.A. in English, with the following exceptions and modifications.

Candidates must complete a minimum of 12 hours of creative writing courses, including a minimum of 6 hours of either fiction or poetry workshop. Six hours of English 698, Thesis, may be used to satisfy in part this concentration requirement. Students must complete a minimum of 18 hours of course work, with at least 9 hours in literature (including English 540), and 9 hours in readings and theory (English 625, 626, 627, 692). English 506, and English 640, are not required for M.A. candidates in Creative Writing.

The procedure for the thesis is the same as that for the M.A. in English. The creative thesis should be 50 pages of poetry, 100 pages of short fiction, or a novel/novella of similar length.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

THE PH.D. IN ENGLISH

The candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree must complete 54 graduate hours beyond the master's degree, with 12 hours reserved for the dissertation. No more than 6 hours of coursework at the 500 level can count toward the degree. He or she must also pass a qualifying examination, pass written comprehensive examinations, submit an acceptable Ph.D. dissertation, and orally defend the dissertation. The Ph.D. candidate must also satisfy the specific requirements listed below.

Required Courses: The following are required: 1) English 640 (Bibliography and Methods of Research); 2) English 540 or English 744 (History of Criticism or Seminar in Literary Criticism); and 3) 12 hours of English 898 (Dissertation). The candidate must take at least 3 hours of 898 in the semester the dissertation is defended. After the candidate selects a specialization from the 5 areas listed in "Comps" below, he/she must take at least two courses in three other areas of literature.

Qualifying Exam: The Ph.D. candidate must take an oral qualifying exam after completing 9 semester hours of doctoral work. The exam will be administered by a committee of at least three members, including all of the faculty who have taught the student. The Qualifying Exam serves both as an evaluation of the student's work and as a formal advisement session. Passing the Qualifying Exam constitutes permission to continue in the Ph.D. program. The exam may be repeated only once.

Residency: All Ph.D. candidates must complete 24 graduate hours of continuous study on the Hattiesburg campus during two consecutive semesters. Students holding assistantships may fulfill the residency requirement by earning a total of 24 semester hours within three consecutive semesters (including the summer term).

Foreign Languages: Ph.D. candidates must demonstrate proficiency in two research tools: one foreign language and either a second foreign language or 12 hours of graduate work in another discipline (by arrangement with candidate's Qualifying Committee). See General Guidelines (page 1 of this document) for specific requirements.

Comps: The written comprehensive examination, taken after all course work and language requirements have been completed, will be administered by a committee approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Office of Graduate Studies. This committee will consist of at least five members of the graduate faculty. The comprehensive exams will be drawn from the following 5 areas of study.

- 1) British Literature I (Beginning to 1660, including Milton)
- 2) British Literature II (1660-1900)
- 3) American Literature to 1900
- 4) Twentieth-Century British and American Literature
- 5) Creative Writing

Literature Comprehensive Exams: The candidate will take a four-hour examination in one of the first four areas listed above. The candidate must take two examinations of three hours each, one covering a single author and the other another period or special area. Exam areas must be approved by the doctoral committee at least one semester before the scheduled examination.

Creative Writing Comprehensive Exams: The candidate will take a four-hour exam in creative writing and three-hour exams in (1) an area other than creative writing and (2) a single author or special area. Exam areas must be approved by the doctoral committee the semester before the scheduled examination.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

Failure of Comprehensive Exams: A candidate may fail all or any part of the comprehensive examination. Any part of the exam may be retaken only once; failing any part of the examination twice will result in dismissal from the Ph.D. program.

Dissertation: The dissertation calls for planning and completing an original and substantial piece of scholarship (or creative writing) under the supervision of a dissertation committee appointed by the Office of Graduate Studies on the advice of the Director of Graduate Studies. This committee consists of the dissertation director and four additional members of the graduate faculty. Upon completion, the dissertation must be defended orally before the dissertation committee. For information about the precise dissertation requirements, the candidate should consult the "Graduate Office Policies for Preparing Theses and Dissertations" available online, www.usm.edu/graduatestudies.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

A CHECKLIST FOR APPLICATION MATERIALS

Admission for Graduate Study at USM

In order to ensure accurate processing, application materials must be sent to the correct offices as set out below. The TA selection committee can consider your TA application only if you have been given regular admission status by the Office of Graduate Studies. Graduate Admissions will notify you when your application has been processed. You have two sets of forms to prepare, as follows.

1) **All students applying for graduate study in English should send**

- a. the application for graduate school,
- b. GRE scores, and
- c. transcripts:

to the following address:

Office of Graduate Admissions
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Dr., # 10066
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

2) **All students applying for graduate study in English must supply the following**

- a. **Writing Sample:** A substantial scholarly paper for literature students, fifteen to twenty pages of fiction or poetry for creative writing students.
- b. **Statement of Purpose:** A 300-750 word statement outlining your career and professional goals and explaining why you want to pursue graduate study in your chosen field (form attached).
- c. **Letters of Recommendation:** At least two letters of recommendation from individuals who are acquainted with your academic record.
- d. **Notification of Application for Teaching Assistantship in English** (if applicable, please circle the appropriate AM/AM NOT statement on the attached Statement of Purpose form).

Literature applicants should send these materials to

Director of Graduate English Studies
118 College Dr., # 5037
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Creative writing applicants should send these materials to

Admissions Coordinator
The Center for Writers
118 College Dr., # 5144
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Please write a 300-750 word statement of purpose indicating your career and professional goals and explaining why you want to pursue graduate study in your chosen area. You might mention particular interests, academic or creative accomplishments, teaching experience, or other relevant preparation. Please use this form and additional sheets as needed. Return to the address as indicated on page 6.

I (circle one) AM | AM NOT applying for a Teaching Assistantship.

Name:

SS#:

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PH.D APPLICANTS

The English department has instituted a new admissions procedure for applicants to the Ph.D. program. Although we have rolling admission for the M.A. program, we consider Ph.D. applicants in a group and make admission decisions competitively, keeping in mind the space available in our program.

You should submit all application materials by the following deadline in order to receive full consideration. Late applications may be considered if space is available.

APPLICATION DEADLINE TO BEGIN

Fall Semester	March 1
Spring Semester	November 1

Please note that we require transcripts, GRE scores from the General Test, at least two letters of recommendation, a Statement of Purpose, and a writing sample--a scholarly paper for literature students, fiction or poetry for creative writing students.

Forms for the Office of Graduate Studies

1) Complete the application online at The Office of Graduate Studies (<http://www.usm.edu/gradapp/>) and submit it via the Internet. You may also request printed forms from and submit those to the Office of Graduate Admissions, 118 College Dr., # 10066, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 by the deadline date for the appropriate semester as indicated below. All applicants should include a \$25.00 nonrefundable application fee. For further information please go to "Prospective Students" section of The Office of Graduate Studies at <http://www.usm.edu/graduatestudies/>. Please remember that your letters of recommendation and other required application materials should be sent to the English Department at the addresses on the sheet entitled A Checklist for Application Materials above.

- Summer
- Fall Ph.D. Degree
- Fall M.A. Degree
- Spring Ph.D. Degree
- Spring M.A. Degree
- May 15
- March 1
- August 1
- November 1
- December 15

Specific information on registration dates and times can be found at www.usm.edu/graduatestudies.

- 2) Applicants who are graduates of institutions other than the University of Southern Mississippi must submit one official copy of transcripts from each institution they have attended. These transcripts should be mailed to the Office of Graduate Admissions, 118 College Dr., #10066, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001. Transcripts must be received directly from the sending institution.
- 3) Applicants seeking admission to the Graduate School must present results of the Aptitude Section of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) as part of the admissions process. The advanced tests of the GRE may be required by some academic departments (consult the Graduate Bulletin). Test scores are used in

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

conjunction with the applicant's past academic performance and other pertinent data in determining admissibility to the various graduate programs.

The GRE is offered on university and college campuses and at other specified locations worldwide, including the University of Southern Mississippi. Applicants are encouraged to write directly to the Graduate Record Examination, Box 955, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, for packets containing an information bulletin and registration material. Information regarding the Graduate Record Examination can be found online at www.gre.org. GRE packets may also be obtained from the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies, 118 College Dr., 5024, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001.

- 4) The applicant's credentials will be processed as soon as the required transcripts, test results, and application fee are received. Students applying to graduate programs offered by the Department of Psychology must have the Personal Reference forms completed and forwarded to the Department of Psychology, Box 5025 USM, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5025.
- 5) Housing accommodations should be requested through the Director of Housing, 118 College Dr., # 5064, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001 or online at www.usm.edu/reslife.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN ENGLISH & CREATIVE WRITING

CW WRITING SAMPLE COVER SHEET

Students applying to the creative writing program are required to send samples of creative work. Your writing sample should be **no more than twenty pages of fiction or poetry**. One or two stories, or six to ten poems will be fine. Emphasis is on quality. Please fill out the questionnaire below and use this page as a cover sheet for your writing sample.

Name:	Addr:	City/ST/ZIP
Tel:	E-Mail:	Age (optional):
Degree held:	School:	GPA:
GRE Verbal:	GRE Quantitative:	GRE Total:
Applying for financial aid:	(1) Teaching Assistantship	(2) Work Study Support
App for fiction or poetry (circle one):	Fiction	Poetry
App for fall or spring (circle one):	Fall	Spring
Application is for year:	20__	
Who will send references (2 req'd):	(1)	(2)
Teaching experience (circle one):	Yes	No
If Yes, pls specify:		
Writers with whom you've studied:	(1)	(2)
	(3)	(4)

Please use this as a cover sheet for your writing sample. Send the completed form and writing sample to the address listed on page 6 of this packet.