



**Marquette University
English Department
Graduate Student Handbook**
(updated August 2022)

Welcome to the Marquette English Graduate Program!

In this, you will find information for ADP, MA, and PhD students.

A note for all

Please regularly consult the Graduate School's website so you can make sure you are completing your course of study and filing the appropriate forms on time:

<https://www.marquette.edu/grad/current-students.php>

A note on faculty communication

We are here to help you. If there is a faculty member who is not teaching a graduate course whose work you are really interested in, we strongly recommend that you don't hesitate to reach out and set up a meeting with that person.

MA program

Goals of the program

In many respects, this program is a "a build your own MA in consultation with the DGS or other faculty adviser" program. Students come to us with a rich variety of interests and needs that will not be served by rigid requirements that every student must follow. However, this does not mean that the idea is to take a random set of courses. We want this program to serve as a bridge to achieving your personal and professional goals that you arrived with. Please consult each term with the DGS or faculty advisers on how you might get the most out of this program.

We have two tracks for our MA program. Both tracks require 30 credits / ten courses, including the one required course for all students, ENGL 6820. The primary difference between the two tracks is whether or not you choose to do a thesis.

1. An MA with a culminating thesis. Your thesis will be developed with a faculty adviser whom you ask to serve in this role. You will register for ENGL 6999 in the fall and spring of your second year, three credits each semester.
2. An MA with "just" coursework. You may (and are encouraged to) take a 3-credit professional project in your second year (ENGL 6998), which might include an internship, building a professional portfolio, or putting together an application for an MFA or PhD program. This would also be advised by a faculty member.

Required course

All MA students are encouraged to take ENGL 6820 as soon as they are able.

5000-level courses

Up to nine of your credits (three courses) can be at the 5000 level. These are courses you will take alongside Marquette undergraduates, who are taking the course at the 4000 level. Because different 4000-level courses are taught by different faculty, serve different populations, and are directed towards different ends, including the Marquette Core Curriculum, not all 4000-level courses are suitable for graduate students; additionally, different professors have different expectations about what a 5000-level graduate course should look like. If you are interested in taking a 5000-level course, you should consult the professor teaching the course as well as the Director of Graduate Study as soon as you can after course titles and descriptions are posted.

Courses from Other Departments

One course may be from outside English.

ADP program

The Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) offers Marquette undergraduates the opportunity to earn a BA and an MA in five years (in effect, shaving off one year). This is accomplished by taking four courses (12 credits) in your senior year, and then the remaining six courses (18 credits) in your graduate year. Like the MA program on which it is built, the ADP is designed to allow students to craft their own experience; you should consult with the Director of Graduate Study early in your second year to make sure you are moving forward towards your goals with this program.

PhD Program

Funding

We can guarantee 4 years of full funding, and we are often able to come up with a fifth year of funding. We will encourage you to apply for all available fellowships and will keep you posted on them.

TAs typically teach a 2/1 or 1/2 load, usually teaching Foundations in Rhetoric.

RAs typically work for a professor or professors, averaging approximately 20 hours/week.

Ott tutors, including the Ott assistant director, work in the Ott Writing Center, again averaging approximately 20 hours/week.

Research fellowships, including the department fellowship, generally do not entail work obligations.

As the program expands, our graduate students are finding other opportunities on campus, including working at the Center for the Advancement of the Humanities or in other units at Marquette. If you are interested in pursuing these sorts of positions in future semesters, contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

Doctoral Planning Form

Early in their first semester, new PhD students should meet with the DGS to fill out the doctoral planning form. The student should bring a transcript of MA work to the meeting so that the DGS can fill in which credits are being transferred. Up to 30 credits may be transferred.

Coursework

PhD students must take 54 credits of coursework beyond the undergraduate level, including 24 at Marquette; they must also take 12 dissertation credits at Marquette after their DQE.

The only required courses for MA and PhD students are 6820, the Theory and Methods course; 6965, the Teaching Practicum, if you are teaching; and 8830, the dissertation proposal writing course.

Like MA students, PhD students can take up to three 5000-level courses, though they are encouraged to take as many 6000-level classes as they can to gain the research and theoretical foundations for writing a dissertation. Up to two courses may be from outside the English department.

Typically, students take at least 2-2½ years of coursework; often people only take two classes when teaching, and it is highly recommended that you do not take more than three courses in a single semester.

8830: Dissertation Proposal

1. Students typically take 8830 in their last semester of coursework. They do so under the direction of their faculty advisor, whom they ask to advise their project in consultation with the DGS.
2. During the 8830, the student writes the dissertation prospectus. The goal is to have a completed draft by the end of the semester for perusal by the two other members of the committee.
3. The student should review sample proposals from former students and may request these from the DGS. All proposals should have the following sections:
 - a. statement of the problem;
 - b. status of the conversation;
 - c. methodology;
 - d. chapter descriptions/outlines,
 - e. annotated bibliography for field lists,
 - f. contextual list.
4. Before beginning, the advisor and student should review the required format for the prospectus, which is available under “forms” on the Graduate School website.
5. Before the 8830, the student and advisor should discuss what work the student is expected to do before the 8830. Ideally, the student should select and carefully re-read the project’s primary texts.
6. At the beginning of the 8830, the student and advisor should explicitly discuss expectations and process, as each team will have slightly different needs. To avoid misunderstandings, the student and advisor should explicitly address:
 - a. Roles. What does the advisor understand his or her role to be?
 - b. Communication. How often will you meet during the 8830? What should be expectations for email responses? How often will you check in? What are some ground rules of communication, especially delivering and receiving constructive criticism and asking for help?
 - c. Writing expectations. What form does the advisor prefer to receive files in? (paper/electronic) How long will the advisor typically need to read drafts? How willing or unwilling is the advisor to read rough drafts? What are the advisor’s expectations for editing and revision?
 - d. Writing history. What does the student think his or her strengths and weaknesses are in writing and in the writing process? How can the advisor and student use this information to strategize a work process and advising structure that will suit the student? What are the student’s plans for strengthening writing weaknesses?
 - e. Projected DQE calendar. The advisor and student should discuss the general arc of the work calendar. The student should then independently come up with a plan in writing that

he or she shares with the advisor. The student is expected to keep track of this calendar and make adjustments to it as needed.

7. The student should check in with the advisor and the DGS before asking other faculty to be on the committee. The committee should be formed by the end of the 8830 semester.

DQE

1. The DQE is a 90-minute (or so) oral exam that is evaluating three things: the claims, interventions, significance, methodology of the project as articulated in the prospectus; the secondary field lists; the contextual field list.
2. In consultation with the advisor, the student will assemble 2 or 3 secondary field reading lists. The student should be thoughtful in assembling those lists of texts that will be theoretically or conceptually important in the project. Examples of secondary fields: modernism; queer theory; disability studies; rise of the novel; English epic.
3. In consultation with the advisor, the student should assemble a representative contextual field list of primary texts that are not in the project but rather are adjacent to it. So, for example, a project on Joyce, Woolf, and Eliot would have people like Pound, Yeats, and Djuna Barnes on the list. This list is not meant to be comprehensive, but is meant to help the student develop and demonstrate awareness of the broader field in which the project is located.
4. The process described above is the typical process. However, certain faculty may elect to alter this process in some way (perhaps adding another secondary field or conceptualizing the contextual field differently). Some projects will be better served by a different structure. If this is the case, the advisor and student should explicitly discuss this and should write up the plan and send to the DGS so that can go in the student's file for later reference.
5. The advisor has sole discretion over when the student is ready for the DQE. Ideally, the DQE should not be scheduled unless the advisor has confidence that the project and student are ready. Clear communication will help if there is a delay in holding the DQE.
6. When the advisor and committee determine the student is ready, they find an appropriate time to hold the DQE and let Wendy Walsh and the DGS know so they can begin to file the appropriate papers.
7. The prospectus should go to the committee members no less than 10 days before the DQE.
8. During the exam, one of the committee members should take notes so that the student has a compiled list of suggestions and ideas that come up during the exam without having to stop and write things down.
9. After a successful DQE, the DQE form, the dissertation outline form, and the dissertation prospectus need to go over to the graduate school, with a copy being retained for the student's file. The student should be prepared to double check that the paperwork has been properly submitted. The Graduate School will reject it and send it back if the prospectus does not follow the exact format and guidelines it requires.

DQE Committee Members

1. The student should have one conversation at minimum with each of the members of the committee prior to the DQE.
2. The advisor should determine when to involve the committee members in the process, and how, and this should be clearly communicated to the student and the other committee members.
3. Typically, the committee is not expected to read several drafts of the prospectus—it should be in reasonably good shape before it goes to the committee.
4. When giving feedback on the proposal, the committee members should send it to both the student and the advisor.
5. The committee member should explicitly articulate what needs to be fixed before the DQE and what is a more general question that can be addressed in the DQE without requiring the prospectus itself to be revised.

After the DQE

1. The advisor and student should debrief about the DQE ideally within one week of the DQE. The advisor should help the student to process the feedback that was given, and the student should communicate any questions, concerns, or feedback they have.
2. At a later meeting, it is a good idea to revisit the questions listed above, but this time apply them to the dissertation process so that both the advisor and student are on the same page in terms of the process and expectations.

ABD Procedures, Credits, and Forms

1. After a successful DQE, students should get the 12 dissertation credits (ENGL 6999) out of the way as soon as possible. So, if there is a fall defense, they should sign up for 6 credits in the spring and 6 in the summer. University fellowship eligibility depends on these credits being done.
2. As long as a student is on an assistantship for research or teaching, they do not need to sign up for other continuation credits. If they register for 9975, the teaching assistantship, that automatically grants them full-time status. Same goes for 9976, the research assistantship.
3. Once a student is no longer on an assistantship or fellowship, they should register for either 9999 (continuation credits, full-time), 9998 (continuation credit, half time), or 9970 (continuation credits, less than half time).
4. At each mid-semester point and end of term, the DGS needs to make sure to go and give credits for all of the placeholder courses all of the graduate students have registered for.

Anatomy of a Department

Tenured professors (Associate Professors or so-called “Full” Professors) have successfully undergone a seven-year process of vetting that entitles them to the expectation of annual reappointment.

Tenure-track professors (Assistant Professors) are currently undergoing that process of vetting.

Tenured and tenure-track professors are the research faculty of the department, as well as the so-called “graduate” faculty; in nearly all cases your classes will be taught by, and your theses or dissertations advised by, tenured and tenure-track faculty. If you are writing a dissertation, a good rule of thumb is that your dissertation director should be tenured; in some instances you may find it appropriate to ask someone who is soon-to-be-tenured, but will be tenured by the time you finish.

Non-tenure-track professors have term appointments, usually on the order of three-year contracts and at times as little as only one year (or even one semester). They are not entitled to reappointment beyond the terms of their contract; they are also not expected to do service work, including advising theses and dissertations or serving on dissertation committees. Generally speaking, non-tenure-track professors do not teach graduate classes at either the 6000 or 5000 level, though there are exceptions, most commonly in creative writing.

The *chair* of the department is elected by the tenured and tenure-track faculty; they are the primary manager of the department and control things like workload, scheduling, grievances, and the like. Currently, the chair of the English department is Leah Flack.

The *director of graduate study* works with the chair to administer the graduate program. The director of graduate study will advise you on the courses you need to take, important deadlines you need to meet, and other administrative matters; if you are in the PhD program, some of this advising work will eventually overlap with the advising and mentoring done by your dissertation committee chair. Most of the time, if

graduate students have a question or problem, the DGS is their first stop. Currently, the director of graduate study is Gerry Canavan.

The *director of Foundations in Rhetoric* directs the FiR program, which many graduate students teach in; your work in the classroom will be supervised by her. Currently, the Foundations director is Lily Campbell.

Wendy Walsh is the department assistant; she is your contact person for forms, permission numbers, logistical matters, and the like.

Other Matters

- A general rule of thumb on how to address your professors as a graduate student: use the “Dr. Lastname” format the first time you address them and see if they correct you; afterwards use the name they sign their emails with until advised otherwise.
- If you are on funding, please remember that your stipends run from September to May; you will likely need to find summer employment of some sort unless you are extremely good with saving money. Your classmates are likely the best source of information for what sorts of summer jobs and summer internships people have had success securing in the past.
- Except in cases of genuine emergency, try not to use incompletes as a means of spacing out your work; it only makes things worse. Plan ahead for that end-of-the-semester crunch.
- Consider asking your professors if you can double-submit your papers; researching once and writing twice as much is often better than developing two separate ideas in a short amount of time.
- If you are working towards a longer project, be strategic about the papers you write for your courses; if a paper you write for a seminar can become part of your thesis or dissertation later on you’ve done yourself a terrific favor.
- *Don’t* obsess over the job market, but *do* be mindful of the sort of work you want to do following the graduate program and pursue opportunities while you are here that set you up for success afterwards. Graduate school is a terrific opportunity to build many different sorts of skills.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help and for advice, either from faculty or from your classmates. That’s truly what we are here for.

Some advice for getting the most out of graduate school

1. ***Own your education.*** You are an adult, not an undergraduate, and you have chosen to be here.
2. ***Work to develop intellectual independence.*** A big difference between undergrad courses and grad courses is that grad professors expect you to teach yourself some of the material so that you show up to class already knowing some things.
3. ***Be open when you need help.*** You are not expected to have everything figured out. Ask for help if you need it. Your professors have made the mistakes you will make.
4. ***Make decisions that are authentic to you and authentic to what compelled you to graduate study.*** Try not to make choices based in anxiety, insecurity, or what you think you should be doing.
5. ***Make writing a regular practice.*** Keep an intellectual journal, try to write every day.
6. ***The more advanced you get, the more you should plan to read journals in your field regularly.*** Figure out what those journals are, and check in on them monthly.
7. ***Be ruthlessly curious.*** The only way scholarship actually happens in this profession is because someone REALLY wanted to know something.

8. ***Be mindful of your stress levels and come up with action plans for self-care. Take care of your mental health.*** Understand what your body and mind need to be healthy, even when things are busy. Everyone needs a decent amount of sleep, a healthy diet, and exercise. Your primary goal is to be a well-developed human being first. Mental health is important on its own terms every day of your life. In our field, mental clarity is essential. Work can be extremely difficult if not impossible if there are untreated, unacknowledged depression or anxiety issues in your way.
9. ***Understand the impact you are having on others and vice versa.*** Support your fellow graduate students and celebrate their successes as well as your own. Turn to them for support when you need them. Don't try to win the classes you are taking. Don't let academic imposter syndrome keep you from hearing and learning from your fellow graduate students. When you are stressed out, pay attention to how easily your stress can spread to your fellow graduate students—be sources of calm and support for each other. You need each other, so don't try to beat each other.
10. ***Develop a schedule and a reasonable, honest sense of discipline.*** Create the conditions where you can meet your own goals without becoming your own bad cop or projecting onto your professors scary, world-ending work scenarios. Keep the promises you make to yourself.
11. ***Be flexible because unexpected things always happen.*** At some point you will come down with a stomach bug, or your computer will crash, two days before something important is due. Don't forget to be kind to yourself.
12. ***Know when to step away from work to rest, have fun, live your life.*** The answer to success in academia is not always or even often “work more hours.” It is cultivating the conditions that allow you to be extremely productive when you are working.
13. ***Stay in touch with your aesthetic sensibility.*** Even though our prime modes of discourse here are intellectual, we are really doing this because we are moved by art in some way. Go to museums, go see good concerts and movies, feed your need for artistic engagement. As stressful as graduate school can be at times, and it can be very stressful, it is also a unique, once-in-a-lifetime chance to devote yourself to exploration and discovery of all kinds.

FAQs

- What classes are required to graduate for MA/PhD students?
 - Graduate students in English are required to take one critical theory course; there are no other mandatory courses. The theory course is typically offered once every two years, so sign up for it whenever it is offered.
- What are the period/language requirements for graduate students in English?
 - There are no period requirements. There is a foreign language requirement, but it may be waived if a student does not require a language for his or her dissertation. If you find yourself in this situation, consult with the DGS about a possible waiver.
- Can students take foreign languages, and can those classes count toward graduation?
 - Students can sign up for foreign language classes, but they do not count toward the credits required to graduate.
- Are graduate classes offered in the evening or on weekends?
 - In response to graduate student requests, it has been established that one graduate seminar (out of two taught each semester) will be held either online or in the evening.
- Can I take classes at local colleges/universities and have them count toward graduation?
 - Credits earned at other schools can be transferred in but will not be covered by a student's MU stipend.
- If I take an advanced undergraduate course as a graduate student, what should I expect, and what steps do I need to take in registering?
 - There are two numbers for dual courses: a 4000-level and a 5000-level. Register for the 5000-level. You should expect an enhanced curriculum with opportunities to complete

graduate-level seminar papers or the equivalent; however, students are strongly encouraged to take the 6000-level courses, even if they are out of their field, since breadth is part of any graduate education and sometimes the connections made are surprisingly useful.

- What if CheckMarq says I need a permission number to register for a class?
 - This is common. Email Wendy Walsh (the administrative assistant) and cc the DGS (Gerry Canavan). Wendy has access to the software and can generate the number. Sometimes the DGS has to approve it, but Wendy is the only one who can implement it. This is routine and never a problem if you're registering normally.
- How does auditing a class work for graduate students?
 - Students must first register for a course via CheckMarq, then request the audit option from the Graduate School. The [Audit Request Form](#) is located on the [Graduate School forms website](#).

Healthcare and Departmental/University Resources:

- Is healthcare available to graduate students?
 - Graduate students are encouraged to access basic health care via the University health clinic for a flat fee of \$163/semester. The University does not offer automatic health insurance coverage for more advanced/emergency levels of care, but does participate in group buy-in plans as outlined here:
<https://www.marquette.edu/grad/graduate-student-healthcare-options.php>
That said, many students have found that the ACA (Obamacare) gives them cheaper options, which is why the website above also links to those resources. Students under 26 can remain on their parents' insurance.
- Are there counseling resources available to graduate students?
 - Graduate students enrolled on a full-time basis are eligible for services at the Counseling Center, which can be reached at the following link:
<https://www.marquette.edu/counseling/eligibility.shtml>
- If I'm concerned about something that happened in one of my classes or in an encounter with a student or faculty member, who can I talk to?
 - The Director of Graduate Studies is the liaison between graduate students and faculty, and is the first stop if a student experiences or witnesses an altercation in need of resolution.

Academic conferences:

- How do I find conferences that relate to my research?
 - The University of Pennsylvania's "Call for Papers" site compiles CFPs from a wide range of disciplines and is a valuable starting place to search for relevant conferences. You can reach the UPenn CFP page at the following link: <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/>.
- Which conferences should I prioritize?
 - This answer varies widely depending on the academic field. Consult with experienced scholars in your research area(s) to determine which conferences are most valuable for your academic interests and goals. That said, conferences are mainly useful as a way of "professionally acculturating" and any conference is likely to serve this role. It's a good idea to look for regional conferences that are less expensive.
- How do I get funding to attend a conference?
 - The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) and the Association of English Graduate Students (AEGS) offer travel grants, but they seldom cover the whole cost. Funding is also available directly from the department; contact the DGS for more information.

Publishing:

- When should I start trying to publish articles?
 - If you are going on the academic job market, start as soon as possible without compromising your coursework or dissertation progress. A revised dissertation chapter or even a course paper can sometimes be publishable, but talk to a faculty member about how to prepare it.
- Which kinds of publications should I prioritize?
 - This depends on what kind of job you hope to get. If you apply to professor jobs at research university, you'll be most competitive if you have 1-2 peer-reviewed articles placed in competitive journals or peer-reviewed essay collections. plus a conference presentation or two. However, fewer and fewer college jobs fit this model. You should consult with your advisor about your strengths and how to highlight them; helpful publications may include pedagogical research, publicfacing essays, digital projects or blogs, or even creative work.

Letters of recommendation:

- How can a get a letter of recommendation?
 - Ask professors by email or in person. Give them enough time (3-4 weeks is ideal) and include as much supplementary material as possible (your cv, an old paper, a link to the job/fellowship description if available). When you're on the "traditional" job market, they'll usually write one generic letter and then tailor it to specific jobs if necessary; remember to ask them to change the date/details if you go on the market more than once. Don't feel apologetic about asking! Your professors want to do this for you. If there's a delay, remind the person and stay in touch.

Preparing for Academic and Non-Academic Careers:

- How do I write and format my CV?
 - A thorough (and opinionated) guide to the academic CV can be found at the following link: [Dr. Karen's Rules of the Academic CV](#). It's also a good idea to look at the CV of scholars in your field and use them to reverse-engineer your own CV. Your dissertation director will be willing to share theirs; you can also ask advanced MU students.
- How do I obtain letters of recommendation?
 - Ask professors in person or by email, giving them *at least* three weeks and ideally more. Send them your cv, a writing sample, and a link to the fellowship or position. It's appropriate to ask them to emphasize something that the job requires. The more specifics you provide, the better their letter is likely to be. Don't be apologetic or shy about asking for letters; professors want you to succeed and want to write them. Because of the long lead-up, though, they sometimes forget; it's polite to remind them if you don't hear back.
- What can I be doing to prepare for career options outside of academia?
 - Talk to the DGS for some initial counseling! Career Services is also happy to work with graduate students and discuss your resume/CV. It can be useful to meet a few times per semester to discuss how you can translate your academic work into other professional contexts as well as what you can be doing to add to your resume to make yourself viable in non-academic career paths.