

UMD English MA Student Handbook

1: Introduction

The Department of English

The [Department of English at the University of Maryland](#) offers a PhD program in English Language and Literature, an MA program with concentrations in Literature or Writing Studies and Rhetoric, and MFA programs in Poetry and Fiction. The Department also offers a PhD in Comparative Literature. Graduate students can also earn certifications in Critical Theory and Digital Studies. With a large and distinguished graduate faculty, the Department provides its graduate students with an extraordinary depth and range of expertise, as well as highly individualized professional and pedagogical mentorship. Each [area group](#) (viewable on each faculty member's individual page), in collaboration with the [Center for Literary and Comparative Studies](#) (CLCS) and the [Graduate English Organization](#) (GEO), contributes to the Department's vibrant intellectual life.

MA in English

The MA program is designed to open academic and professional opportunities to our students by preparing them for entry into a competitive PhD program leading to an academic career at the college level or by enhancing their existing careers in extra-academic settings through professional development, specialization, and advancement. The MA program exposes students to a wide variety of opportunities not only through regular graduate courses but also through special lectures, colloquia, and academic events that speak to the interdisciplinary focus of its students and professors.

The Department's Center for Literary and Comparative Studies gives graduate students the opportunity to encounter the work of scholars from across campus and other universities through lectures, symposia, readings, and other events as well as to present their own work. MA students are invited to participate in the lively intellectual life of our large and active department and to take advantage of the multiple opportunities it affords for individualized attention and mentorship.

Introduction to the Handbook

The English MA Student Handbook serves as a guide for new students and as a reference manual for more advanced students as they progress through the program. The Handbook covers academic, administrative, funding, and mentoring information, and includes resources to aid in exploring the intellectual life of the English Department, the University of Maryland, and the broader DMV area. [Appendix 4: Troubleshooting](#) is designed to assist students who have encountered difficulties in completing their degree requirements, assembling committees, communicating with mentors, resolving scheduling conflicts, capstone projects, and more.

How to use the handbook

The Handbook is divided into five sections: *Introduction*, *Funding and Fellowships*, *Degree Requirements*, *Mentoring*, and *Teaching and Professionalization*. The four appendices include a *Directory*, *Recommended Timetables*, *Advisors and Expectation Setting Meetings* and *Troubleshooting and FAQ*. Page numbers for each of these sections, as well as their subsections, can be found in the *Table of*

Contents. If you need help understanding anything in the Handbook, please reach out to the Graduate Studies Office (GSO, Tawes 2116) for assistance.

Spaces and Facilities

Tawes Hall

The Department of English is located in [Tawes Hall](#), at 7751 Alumni Drive, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, 20742. Classrooms are located on all floors, while graduate student offices are located on the second floor and faculty offices are on the second and third. The Academic Writing Program (AWP, 1116) and Professional Writing Program (PWP, 1220) are located on the first floor, while the Main English Office (MEO, 2119), [Business Office](#) (2219E and 2219F), CLCS (2120), and GSO are located on the second floor.. Rooms on the ground floor are numbered 0100 through 0400; rooms on the second floor are numbered from 1100 through 1400; rooms on the second floor are numbered from 2100 through 2400; rooms on the third floor are numbered from 3100 through 3400; and rooms on the fourth floor are numbered from 4100. Signs are posted on each floor to assist with navigation, but if you can't find the room you're looking for, don't hesitate to ask in the MEO. Floorplans for all campus buildings can be accessed with your UID through [the Facilities Management website](#).

Common and shared spaces

Tawes Hall is home to several degree programs and a large number of students, faculty, and administrative staff. Common spaces include classrooms, lecture halls, conference rooms, bathrooms, the mailroom (2106), and the kitchen (2117). Shared spaces include the grad lounge (2221) and graduate student offices. Students are expected to treat all common and shared spaces with consideration and respect. Dishes used for events should be washed and returned to their cabinets after use, food in communal refrigerators should be labeled and disposed of properly, and students are expected to be mindful of their volume and conduct in shared workspaces such as offices and the graduate lounge.

Graduate students are assigned a desk and an office once they are given a teaching appointment. Due to limited office availability, you may have to share a desk with one other person. Offices provide a workspace as well as a place to meet with students. While the doors do lock automatically, you should not leave valuables unattended in your office (including laptops). If you would like a key for your desk, you may request one in the Academic Writing Office (1116). If you misplace your keys, there is a replacement fee. Students and student groups may request to reserve classrooms, conference rooms, and other common spaces by contacting the MEO.

Accessibility

There are handicapped-accessible bathrooms on each floor of Tawes, and two elevators. One services the ground and first floor, while the other services the first, second and third floors. Unisex/family restrooms (0302 and 0324) and the lactation room (0322) are located on the ground floor. Not all third-floor faculty offices are wheelchair accessible (the GSO can provide a list of these rooms if needed). For more accessibility information, see [the UMD Accessibility Hub](#).

Facility Maintenance

General Purpose Classrooms are supported by the Division of Information Technology (DIT). Spaces owned by the Department of English are supported by the College of Arts and Humanities (ARHU). Sheets indicating the party responsible for supporting each learning space are posted near the

workstation and at the door to each space. You can find classroom support information [here](#). If you have a maintenance question for another space in the building, please contact the MEO Coordinator.

Elsewhere on campus

You can find all the buildings listed below on the [UMD Web Map](#).

Libraries and special collections

There are eight libraries on campus. The main library, [McKeldin](#), is on McKeldin Mall, due east of Tawes. McKeldin houses the main collection, as well as study spaces, printing facilities, the [Terrapin Tech](#) store and TLC Tech Desk, the Adaptive Technology Lab, Footnotes Café, the [Graduate School Writing Center](#) (GSWC), and the [Library Services Desk](#). The other seven libraries are the [Architecture Library](#), the [Art Library](#) (which is the closest library to Tawes), [Hornbake](#) (which houses [Special Collections and University Archives](#) and the [Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities](#) or MITH), the [Michelle Smith Performing Arts Library](#), [Priddy Library](#), [Severn Library](#), and the [STEM Library](#). You may request that books be delivered to most of these locations through your library request account, which is covered in greater detail in the *Online Resources* section below. Be sure to check library hours, as they vary from day to day and facility to facility. You can find more information about collections and facilities [here](#).

The Department of English also has its own subject area librarian who can work with students to find resources, learn about database options, and provide other research support. You can learn more about the subject area librarian on their [webpage](#).

McKeldin Library also participates in a consortium – The Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance ([CIRLA](#)) – that extends lending privileges to graduate students in all participant universities. In order to gain lending privileges at the university libraries consortium, graduate students should apply for a CIRLA card at the Library's Information Desk.

Due to the University's strategic location around various universities and research centers, graduate students enjoy access to a wonderful network of sources for research. The University belongs to the Folger Shakespeare Library Consortium and our graduate students and faculty regularly participate in their courses and programs (<http://www.folger.edu/folger-institute>). The University partners with the [Library of Congress](#), as well as the National Archives and Dumbarton Oaks, to facilitate research opportunities within close proximity to College Park.

Student Union

The [Adele H. Stamp Student Union](#) houses the University Book Center, the Student Organization Resource Center, Special Events and Programs, Event and Guest Services, Leadership & Community Service-Learning, the UPS Store, Off Campus Housing, the Ticket Office, and the Graduate Student Lounge, in addition to the largest food court on campus.

Health and fitness

The [UMD Health Center](#) (UHC) is across the street from Stamp. In addition to primary care and pharmacy services, the UHC also has resources for nutrition, behavioral health, substance use intervention and treatment, women's health, allergies, X-rays, massage and acupuncture, and advocacy services. You can make an appointment once you have enrolled in health insurance. More information on graduate student health insurance can be found [here](#). As of fall 2020, all students enrolled full-time in a master's or doctoral program at the College Park campus must have health insurance coverage.

The UMD [Counseling Center](#) is located in the Shoemaker Building, due south of McKeldin Mall, adjacent to LeFrak Hall and Taliaferro Hall. Counselors are available to students who are seeking a safe and confidential space to express themselves, feel understood, and identify ways to stay emotionally grounded during turbulent times. In addition to scheduled consultation appointments, walk-in consultation is available without an appointment. Services for students with disabilities can also be found [on their website](#).

The [Eppley Recreation Center](#), located on North Campus between Cambridge and Ellicott communities, is a multipurpose facility that offers a wide variety of free play activities, including cardio and weight training, basketball, racquetball and squash, swimming, and badminton, as well as group fitness classes. You will need your student ID to access these facilities.

International Student Services

International students who have questions about visa requirements and other practical matters should contact the [International Student and Scholar Services](#). Among other things, the Office of International Students (OIS) organizes a graduate student orientation that helps students transition to life in Maryland. Please check their website for more details about their orientation and access to their Arrival Guide, which offers information about life off campus, including local attractions, religious services, child care and schools, and campus activities. You can also access their [New International Student Checklist](#) for more details.

Parking and transportation

The University's shuttle bus service is a great means of traveling to and from campus and is included in your mandatory student fees. You must show a valid UMCP ID to ride. The [New Rider Guide](#) details shuttle routes, schedules, and more.

The Washington, DC metro area has an extensive bus and subway system run by the [Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority](#) (WMATA). The Metrobus and the Metrorail extend well into Montgomery and Prince George's counties. Rides start at \$1.35 for Metrorail and increase in price the farther you go and during rush hour. Metrobus costs \$1.20. You can find more information [here](#). The University of Maryland is located on the green line, College Park/UM stop. You can then take the Shuttle-UM or walk about 15 minutes to the campus.

Students may purchase a parking pass for a semester or a year at a time through UMD's [Department of Transportation Services](#) (DOTS). A parking permit does not require a physical pass, and the associated fee is automatically deducted from your student account after the application is complete. Be sure to pay close attention to email communications from DOTS, which inform permit-holders of athletic and special events which may affect parking permissions. If you plan to drive to campus you will likely want to park in a lot close to Tawes Hall. Be sure to check the DOTS website to see which lots are closest and available to commuting students.

Online Resources

Testudo

UMD [Testudo](#) is the online portal for the [Office of the Registrar](#), which is responsible for the coordination of course and classroom scheduling and registration, the maintenance of students' permanent academic records, and information management, data analysis, and reporting. On Testudo you can check your registration appointment and registration status, access your unofficial transcript or request an official

transcript, and check the GPA calculator. Testudo is used by both graduate and undergraduate students to enroll in classes, and provides a brief description for all courses offered. For more about registration, see *Registration* in the *Degree Requirements* section of this Handbook.

ELMS/Canvas

ELMS (electronic learning management system) is an online digital environment shared by students and faculty which provides access to content and administrative features for specific courses. You will use ELMS as both a student and a teacher to submit and collect work, access course materials, and communicate with peers and professors. Student and instructor guides can be found [here](#). The English Department maintains [an ELMS course page for all MA students](#), where you can find resources to help guide you through the program, including necessary forms, samples of past student work, and an electronic copy of the Handbook with working hyperlinks. You must be added to this course page by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies (CGS).

Library Request Account

You have several means of requesting items through the University Libraries. You may request any circulating item from any campus library or USMAI library through the catalog, whether it is on the shelf or checked out. You can find a guide to using the catalog [here](#). You may also request materials from thousands of libraries that are not in the [USMAI](#) system through [Interlibrary Loan](#). You can see all the titles you have requested or checked out through your library account (at the top of the [main library page](#) under the yellow dropdown menu), which you can access with your UID. You can find billing and fine information [here](#).

TERPware

[TERPware](#) is UMD's software download website, available to all registered UMD students, faculty, and staff. Most items—including Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud, antivirus software, and VPN client software—are available at no additional cost. You will need your UID and email to access TERPware, and you will need to be enrolled in at least one course before you can download software.

The Graduate School website

The [Graduate School website](#) provides [a catalog of online resources](#) for incoming graduate students, including information about academic deadlines, funding, registration, and more. Under the "New Students" section you'll find a link to the [New Student Checklist](#), which will help guide you through the process of enrollment, **creating the directory ID** and **password** you will need to access campus networks, obtaining your student ID, submitting immunizations records, and more.

University email

New students can create their umd.edu email address by going to the [University's IT page](#) and activating it by the provided links. This account is linked to the University's G Suite system, so it's easy to arrange for all of your email to forward to the same Gmail inbox. You can find the steps to do that [here](#). All University employees are required to use their umd.edu email account when contacting students or conducting university business. Do not use a personal email account on anything UMD related.

2: Funding and Fellowships

Departmental funding and fellowships

The MA program has a handful of half-TAships to support students; however, many students apply for graduate assistantships to fund their program of studies. These GAships are available in other departments around campus, some of which include tuition remission and other benefits. For more information, visit <https://ejobs.umd.edu/>.

Overloads

Students working more than 20 hours per week on a full-time TAship/ GAship are considered to be working an overload. (Students are never permitted to work more than 30 hours per week within the university system.) Overloads require the permission of the student's advisor as well as the DGS. An overload will only be approved when it is anticipated that it will not interfere with the student's plan of study. Overloads are not granted to students who currently have Incompletes or are otherwise behind in meeting program benchmarks. Overloads are granted on a semester basis. When requesting a continuation of an existing overload, the DGS will assess progress based on degree work completed. Questions about applying for an overload should be addressed to the GSO. Due to visa restrictions, international students are not permitted to work overloads.

Travel and Conference Funding

The Department provides financial support for graduate students presenting their research at academic and professional conferences. In order to receive departmental travel funds, students must be delivering a presentation/ poster at a regional, national, or international conference, including no more than one Graduate Student Conference.

For MA students, the Department offers one-time funding of up to \$400. In addition to these funds, the department will provide up to \$400 in matching funds for external travel awards, such as the [ARHU Travel Award](#), [The Graduate School's Goldhaber Travel Award](#), and the [International Conference Student Support Award \(ICSSA\)](#).

Students who have exhausted their non-matching funds and who have applied for, but did not receive one of these awards, should contact the Business Office. For more details go to the department's [Graduate Funding webpage](#).

Billing and the Business Office

The yearly funding totals listed in your offer letter reflect a research or teaching assistantship stipend plus any fellowships you have been awarded. These two components pay differently. You'll receive your RA/TAship stipend via a biweekly paycheck from approximately August 24 through June 14 each year. To estimate your biweekly paycheck before taxes withheld and any insurance premiums deducted, divide the annual stipend by 22. You can also check your payroll information [here](#) by clicking on "View/Print Bi-Weekly Earnings Statement."

Fellowships are disbursed in lump sums at the beginning of the semester (for Fall, usually by the end of August/mid Sept, for Spring, usually by the end of January). To calculate each fellowship payment, divide the award amount by two. You'll receive one half in the beginning of the Fall semester and the other in the beginning of the Spring semester. All fellowships are deposited to your UMD Student Account; once they do, you will request the Office of Student Financial Aid to deposit them to your bank account. After you set up this initial direct deposit, it will happen automatically in the future. If you were awarded summer fellowship funding, you'll receive the funds in your student account by the end of May.

Please note: International students studying on a visa will receive fellowships via payroll check at the beginning of the semester.

Direct deposit

For your TAsip stipend, we recommend you complete a hard copy Direct Deposit Authorization Form with original signature and submit it to the Business Office. Direct Deposit allows the Business Office to deposit your biweekly paycheck directly into your bank account, rather than mailing paper checks.

For your Fellowship Disbursements, please visit the Office of Student Financial Aid website and sign up for [Student Refunds](#).

Bills, fees, fines, and paystubs

All students who register for courses incur a financial obligation to the University. Returning students may not be permitted to register for a subsequent semester until all financial obligations are settled, including current semester fees, parking violations, library fines, medical charges, and other miscellaneous charges. In addition, if you become financially ineligible after completing registration, your registration is held subject to cancellation unless your account is settled by a prescribed date. Students who owe a prior balance and participate in early registration are sent an email notification of their e-bill before the start of classes. Payment is due in full by the early scheduled due date. If you register for classes after the notices are sent, you must settle your bill in full immediately or your registration is subject to cancellation. If your registration is canceled, you must re-register and select from classes currently available.

[Student Financial Services and Cashiering](#) (SFSC) generates student e-bills on the 25th day of every month (viewable online the 26th). E-bills are due on the 20th day of the following month. For instance, an e-bill generated on August 25th is due the next month on September 20th. Failure to make payment by the specified due date will result in a late fee or finance charge and may jeopardize your continued enrollment. Payment in full must be received before the close of business on the due date to avoid a late fee. In the event your account is not settled by the due date, we are required to assess your account with a late payment fee of \$10 or 5% of the unpaid balance, whichever is higher. Each month thereafter, a finance charge of 1.5% is assessed to the outstanding balance until your account is paid in full.

The Business Office

The Business Office is responsible for processing financial transactions within the department and for facilitating transactions outside the department, such as providing required information to the University so that fellowship and funds from other offices can be processed. They are also responsible for hiring paperwork, sending out GAsip contracts and coordinating benefits for department employees. They work with other English Department offices to aid and assist them in budgeting and financial planning. If students have issues with fellowships and funding not being disbursed in a timely manner, questions

about their employment contracts or benefits, or reimbursements for approved expenses (travel, food for events, etc) please contact them at english_business@umd.edu.

Taxes

You will complete a W4 with the rest of your new employee paperwork to instruct UMD how you would like taxes withheld. Please note: both TAsip stipends and fellowship funds count as taxable income. Your TAsip biweekly paychecks will have taxes withheld; however, taxes cannot be withheld from fellowship payments. Because fellowship money is still taxable income, you will likely owe tax on those earnings.

One way to mitigate your fellowship tax burden when you file is to have additional taxes withheld from your stipend to account for your fellowships. On the W4, immediately below the line for allowances (on Section 2, Line 6 and Section 3, Line 2), you have the option to have an additional amount withheld from your paycheck. This is how you can have the maximum withheld from your TA biweekly salary in order to minimize the amount you owe on fellowships when you file each year. For advice specific to your situation, please consult a tax advisor.

If you wish, you may take advantage of TerpTax. The Graduate School has partnered with TerpTax and the Robert H. Smith School of Business to provide a free, comprehensive tax preparation service for UMD graduate students. Housed in the Robert H. Smith School of Business since 2015, TerpTax is a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) chapter—a program created by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to provide free tax return preparation to the community. International graduate students are also welcome to use Glacier Tax Prep to assist with preparing tax returns. You can find their website [here](#).

3. Degree Requirements

Advising and Course Registration

Advising

All MA students are advised by the graduate coordinator. During the first year of your program, you will meet with the graduate coordinator at the beginning of each semester to discuss course registration for the next term as well as your program of study. Students are thereafter required to meet with the coordinator at least once an academic year (but are highly encouraged to meet every semester). You will also be assigned a faculty mentor to discuss your academic interests, progress and goals.

University Account IDs and passwords are required to access most online university services (registration, parking permits, emails accounts, library databases, etc.) Accounts can be created following your acceptance to the University using the following link and instructions: <http://it.umd.edu/new/>.

Following creation of an ID and password, you will be able to activate your accounts. Accounts can take a few days to be activated and you will need an account to register for classes. As soon as you register for your UMD account, your default e-mail address for all university related business will become your userid@umd.edu.

Course descriptions are located on the [English Department website](#) and the schedule for these offerings (including day/times and waitlists for a given semester) are found on [Testudo](#).

Mandatory Advising

All MA students are required to participate in a series of mandatory advising appointments throughout their time in the program. Please see the list below for more information about what is expected each semester:

- Semester 1 (Fall)
 - Schedule an appointment with the CGS between mid-September and mid-October to discuss registration for Spring courses and to discuss benchmarks for the program.
- Semester 2 (Spring)
 - Schedule an appointment with the GSO for mid-February to early-March to discuss course registration and a potential advisor for the First Year Meeting and the graduation project. You will also set a time for your First Year Meeting at this time.
 - The First Year Meeting: At this meeting, the DGS and CGS will sit down with you and your potential capstone advisor to discuss how your first year in the program went, what prospective path your research may take, potential career paths you may wish to pursue, and discuss the graduation benchmark of your choosing (capstone or thesis).
- Semester 3 (Fall)
 - Schedule an appointment with the CGS and DGS to discuss course registration and progress towards completing the graduation project. This meeting is also a good chance to discuss how things are going with your advisor and if any problems have arisen.
- Semester 4 (Spring)
 - At the start of the semester, reach out to the CGS to discuss scheduling for the Capstone/Thesis defense.

Registration

The graduate coordinator is responsible for helping you with the registration process. Once you have chosen your classes, you will need to email the graduate coordinator to obtain “stamps” (essentially a lifting of a registration block) before you register for classes. After you have received approval from the graduate coordinator, you can register for classes via Testudo (this site also maintains the waitlist for courses that are full).

All graduate students must register for courses and pay associated tuition and fees each semester, not including summer and winter sessions, until the degree is awarded. Please consult the graduate coordinator with any questions.

To set up an appointment to discuss advising, registration, or any other questions related to either process email rburgard@umd.edu.

Leave of Absence for Childbearing, Adoption, Illness or Dependent Care

In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, and caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents) may have on the time and energy that graduate students have to devote to their educational programs, the University allows students in such circumstances to apply for a leave of absence (LOA) of up to two semesters during which time they do not intend to make academic progress toward the completion of their degree. The time taken on an approved LOA is not included in the time limitations for degree completion.

Application for a LOA may be made on a one- or two-semester basis. A LOA ordinarily will not be granted for more than one academic year. A LOA must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested. A letter of request should be addressed to the Dean of the Graduate School and should provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances leading to the request and a justification of the time requested (one semester or one year). The request must be approved by a faculty advisor and the DGS prior to submission to the Graduate Dean. Medical Leaves of Absence must be approved by the Graduate School’s Graduate Academic Counselor, who also approves of students returning from medical Leaves of Absence.

Students on approved LOAs are not registered at the University and, therefore, do not have the rights and privileges of registered students. Students must be registered during a semester in which they fulfill a University or departmental degree requirement, such as Capstone Defenses. In addition, students must also be registered in order to be eligible for any form of University financial aid (e.g., a Teaching Assistantship).

More information about the Graduate School’s policies related to LOAs can be found [here](#).

Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy

The University of Maryland Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy provides for a period of up to six weeks during which new parents may postpone completion of academic requirements. The Department of English will allow for an additional six weeks totaling twelve weeks of parental leave. This time is intended to provide graduate students with an opportunity to integrate the challenges of new parenthood with the demands of graduate-level training, scholarship, and research. This is not considered a leave of absence. It allows for maintaining full-time, registered graduate student status. Thus, students remain fully eligible for the rights and privileges of registered students while adjusting to their new familial obligations.

When planning for this accommodation, please be in touch with your advisor and the GSO so that we can best support you during this process.

For more information on the Graduate School's policy, see [here](#).

The form for Parental Accommodations can be found [here](#).

Transfer Credit

The ENGL MA degree only accepts transfer credit for courses taken at the University of Maryland as a Non-Degree Seeking Student (formerly Advanced Special Student).

Coursework

All coursework must be completed with a minimum of a 3.6 GPA. Students are discouraged from taking Incompletes (the grade given when a student fails to complete all assigned work by the end of term), particularly in the first fifteen credit hours of coursework. See also the *Satisfactory Progress* section of this Handbook.

Concentration in Literature

The MA with a Concentration in Literature requires 30 hours of graduate coursework including the successful completion of either an MA Capstone Project or an MA Thesis. All students must meet the following course distribution requirements:

1. **Either** ENGL 601: Literary Research and Critical Contexts **or** ENGL 602: Critical Theory and Literary Criticism (3 credits)
2. One course in Critical Theory, Genre, or Rhetoric (3 credits)
3. One course in each of the following (12 credits):
 - a) Medieval and/or Early Modern
 - b) The Long Eighteenth Century
 - c) The Long Nineteenth Century
 - d) Modern and Contemporary

The anticipated period for completion is two years of full-time study. The degree must be completed in five years.

The distribution of the remaining 12 hours depends upon whether the student selects the MA Capstone Project or the MA Thesis option. All students, however, must take at least 9 of their 30 credits in 700-level seminars or their equivalent. Students may take up to six credits of independent-study courses to fulfill the 600-level electives requirement. Students may also, in place of three credits of an independent-study class, take one 400 level course to fulfill the elective requirement. Students interested in taking an independent-study course for 600-level course credit should collaborate with their professor in writing up an intended course of study and file it with the GSO for approval by the DGS before the first day of classes each semester. (Please email the graduate coordinator for the Independent Study form). Students may also make special arrangements to do additional work in their 600-level courses to have those courses count as a seminar/700 level course. Students wishing to take a 600-level class as a seminar must provide the GSO with a proposal and syllabus detailing the additional work that will be undertaken in order for the course to be counted as a 700-level seminar. The proposal and

syllabus must be signed by both student and instructor and submitted to the GSO for approval by the DGS at the beginning of the semester. Students may not take an independent study for seminar/700 level credit except in extreme circumstances and only after receiving permission from the DGS. ENGL611 can be counted to fulfill either an Elective requirement or the requirement in “Critical Theory, Genre, or Rhetoric” in the coursework that you need to complete toward your MA degree.

The student who chooses to complete the MA Capstone Project will complete 30 credits of coursework. The student who chooses the MA Thesis option will take a total of eight courses (24 credits) and will register for six credits of thesis research (English 799).

Concentration in Writing Studies and Rhetoric

The MA with a Concentration in Writing Studies and Rhetoric likewise requires 30 hours of graduate coursework. This coursework may be undertaken in any one of three areas: the rhetorical study of texts, the teaching of writing, or professional/non-academic writing. The student selects courses on various aspects of the theory of writing/composition, rhetoric, and language studies, and successfully completes either an MA Capstone Project or an MA Thesis.

All students must meet the following course distribution requirements:

1. Two required courses (6 credits):

ENGL607: Readings in the History of Rhetoric to 1900

Either ENGL775: Seminar in Composition Theory **or** ENGL776: Seminar in Modern Rhetorical Theory

2. Four courses chosen from the following (12 credits):

ENGL 605: Readings in Linguistics

ENGL 609: Technologies of Writing

ENGL 611: Approaches to College Composition

ENGL 612: Approaches to Professional and Technical Writing

ENGL 618: Writing for Professionals

ENGL 649: Readings in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy

ENGL 668: Readings in Digital Studies

ENGL 708: Topics in Rhetoric

ENGL 779: Topics in Language Study

3. Four electives (12 credits, unless a thesis is chosen, then two electives (6 credits) plus 6 credits of Thesis hours.)

Students may take up to six credits of independent-study courses to fulfill the 600-level electives requirement. Students may also, in place of three credits of an independent-study class, take one 400 level course to fulfill the elective requirement. Students interested in taking an independent-study course for 600-level course credit should collaborate with their professor in writing up an intended course of study and file it with the GSO for approval by the DGS before the first day of classes each semester. (Please email the graduate coordinator for the Independent Study form). Students may also make special arrangements to do additional work in their 600-level courses to have those courses count as a seminar/700 level course. Students wishing to take a 600-level class as a seminar must provide the

GSO with a proposal and syllabus detailing the additional work that will be undertaken in order for the course to be counted as a 700-level seminar. The proposal and syllabus must be signed by both student and instructor and submitted to the GSO for approval by the DGS at the beginning of the semester. Students may not take an independent study for seminar/700 level credit except in extreme circumstances and only after receiving permission from the DGS.

Students may also elect to take a course in another discipline (Communication, iSchool, Education, Classics, etc.). The course must be approved by the DGS and by the Rhetoric and Writing advisor prior to the start of the semester.

At least three seminar-level courses are required, which may be counted toward any of the above requirements. The student who chooses to complete the MA Capstone Project will complete 30 credits of coursework. The student who chooses the MA Thesis option will take a total of eight courses (24 credits) and will register for six credits of thesis research (English 799).

Critical Writing Component: MA Capstone or MA Thesis

In the second year, students will choose to pursue either an MA Capstone Project or an MA Thesis. The student who chooses the MA Capstone Project will complete 30 credits of coursework. The student who chooses the MA Thesis option will take a total of eight courses (24 credits) and will register for six credits of thesis research (ENGL 799).

MA Capstone Project

The MA Capstone project is a graduate-level piece of critical inquiry that contributes to an established area in English language, literary studies, composition studies, or rhetoric. The MA Capstone can take various forms, including an article-length critical essay based on a traditional seminar paper, revised in collaboration with the student's faculty advisor; a pedagogy portfolio with a critical component; a digital project with a critical component; a personal essay or literary ethnography with a critical component; or a translation or edition with a critical component. The form of the project should be determined collaboratively by the student, his or her faculty adviser, and the DGS.

To emphasize the above statement: please discuss the format of the Capstone Project with your advisor. It does not have to be a traditional paper, but can take many forms so long as your advisor approves it. Please keep that in mind as you prepare your project.

Completion of the MA Capstone Project does not involve any additional registration beyond the 30 credits of coursework. An independent study to revise an existing paper cannot be used as one of the 10 required classes for the MA.

Committee

The committee consists of a Director, a Reader, and a representative of the Graduate Office (the DGS or a member of the Graduate Steering Committee). In cases involving a paper revision, the Director will be the professor for whom the paper was written and the Reader will be a professor in the same field of study. In all cases, the Director and Reader oversee the Capstone project; the representative of the Graduate Office reads only the final version of the project.

Timing

Full-time MA students will begin the process of selecting their advisor for the Capstone Project during the beginning of their second semester. Their advisor will be selected by the First Year Meeting held at

the end of the second semester. During the third semester, students will work with their advisor to establish their project and begin work on it for defense in the fourth semester.. Part-time students should consult the DGS about the timing of the Capstone Project. Students should try to defend the Capstone Project sometime in the first ten weeks of their final semester in the MA program. Students work with their Directors to schedule the defense and must submit the project to their committee members at least two weeks before the defense. You must contact the GSO at least 6 weeks prior to your intended defense date to arrange the defense on the DGS's schedule.

Defense

The one-hour defense of the Capstone Project begins with the student giving a brief presentation of the project, focusing on the work completed for the Capstone. In the cases of revised papers, this includes a focus on the revision process. For other projects, consider discussing the formation of the project, what work was done to complete the project, and discuss the finished product. For example, if you are doing a podcast you could discuss the writing, editing, and sound engineering processes.

The presentation is followed by an open discussion of the paper by the committee members and the student. At the conclusion of the discussion, the committee assigns to the Writing Project one of three grades: "High Pass," a recognition of truly exemplary work requiring agreement of all committee members; "Pass," a judgment by at least two committee members that the paper fulfills the main goals of the Writing Project; and "Fail," a judgment by at least two committee members that the paper does not fulfill those goals. Students who receive a "High Pass" or "Pass" will make final revisions at the discretion of the Director; the final revision must be submitted to the Director no later than the end of the semester. Students who receive the grade of "Fail" may resubmit a revised paper in a subsequent semester. A second "Fail" will disqualify the student from receiving the MA.

MA Thesis

The MA Thesis is a critical and scholarly work (approximately 75 pages in length) produced under the close supervision of a Director chosen by the student in consultation with the DGS.

Committee

The student must identify and secure the agreement of a faculty member who will direct the MA Thesis. Two additional members of the faculty, chosen by the student in consultation with the Director, comprise the Thesis Committee. The Committee reads the completed thesis.

Timing

Full-time MA students should begin the process of choosing a project and finding a Director and Reader in their third semester of study. Part-time students should consult the DGS about the timing of the thesis. Unlike the MA Capstone Project, the MA Thesis must be deemed ready for defense before the defense is scheduled. The student who chooses the Thesis option must submit to the Graduate School the [Nomination of Thesis Committee form](#) by the appropriate [deadline](#).

Students should work with their Directors to schedule the defense well in advance of its anticipated occurrence; the GSO should be notified **at least 6 weeks in advance** of the defense date.

Defense

The defense runs approximately one hour. Typically, the defense begins with a statement by the student on the project, which is then followed with either consecutive questioning by the examiners or a more

open discussion. At the conclusion of the discussion, the committee assigns to the MA Thesis one of three grades: "High Pass," a recognition of truly exemplary work requiring agreement of all committee members; "Pass," a judgment by at least two committee members that the finished product fulfills the main goals of being a fully realized critical and scholarly work; and "Fail," a judgment by at least two committee members that the paper does not fulfill those goals. Students who receive a "High Pass" or "Pass" will make final revisions at the discretion of the Director; the final revision must be submitted to the Director no later than the end of the semester. Students who receive the grade of "Fail" may have a second defense in a subsequent semester. A second "Fail" will disqualify the student from receiving the MA.

Satisfactory Progress

Annual Report Form

Every semester the student is expected to meet with your faculty mentor to discuss progress through the program and your course of study. You should use these meetings to discuss what courses to take each semester and your progress towards completing the critical writing component of the MA. By the end of each academic year, you will complete an annual report that is filed with the GSO. The annual report is designed to inform the department of your progress each year, including courses completed, awards received, and any academic presentations or papers you may have published in the last year. This form is an important part of keeping the Department apprised of your activities and for us to get feedback from you each year.

Minimum Grade Point Average (GPA)

According to university policy, every graduate student must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 for all courses taken at the University.

Time to Degree

The anticipated period for completion is two years of full-time study. The degree must be completed in five years.

Incompletes

If a student is unable to finish the assigned work for a course due to illness or other circumstance beyond their control, they may be given an "Incomplete." This grade necessitates a contract between the student and the instructor as to when the work will be completed. Although we recognize emergencies can occur that may warrant a student's requesting an Incomplete, we discourage students from taking this option as it can increase time to degree. Requests for an Incomplete must be made to the GSO before the end of the semester in which the Incomplete is taken. The required Incomplete contract form can be found [here](#).

The Incomplete contract must be signed by both student and instructor and returned to the graduate studies coordinator. If an Incomplete is necessary in the first fifteen credits of coursework, the DGS must be consulted in addition to the instructor of the course. Coursework related to the Incomplete must be finished by the end of the next semester.

4: Mentoring

Academic advising vs. mentoring

Graduate students participate in several separate but complementary mentoring schemes: a peer-to-peer buddy system, a faculty mentoring program, and a pedagogical mentoring program for those students whose funding package includes teaching experience.

Academic advising differs from mentoring in that its purpose is to help you complete degree requirements and graduate on time. Academic advising for ENGL MA students is done by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the Coordinator of Graduate Studies (GCS). Mentoring is intended to provide you with more personalized guidance from faculty members whose scholastic interests align with yours. Students can expect their faculty mentors to help demystify graduate school, model professional and pedagogical responsibility, guide their professional development, help them cultivate good writing and research skills and habits, and (where applicable) assist them in finding other mentors and advisors.

Peer mentoring

The Graduate English Organization (GEO) assigns all incoming graduate students a “buddy,” a more advanced graduate student in the same degree program who shares similar academic interests. The GEO buddy is available to answer questions about the program, about settling into College Park and the UMD community, and about graduate student life generally. These assignments are made prior to students’ arrival on campus. If you have not been assigned a GEO buddy by the time you arrive on campus, please contact the GEO Social Chair. You can figure out who the Social Chair is by going to the [GEO website](#), or by contacting the CGS.

Faculty mentoring

The English Department faculty is composed of Visiting, Assistant, Associate, Full, Distinguished, and Emeritus Professors (an honorific conferred on retired faculty who may continue to work at the University on a part-time basis). They have many responsibilities, which include teaching graduate and undergraduate courses, conducting research, writing and publishing academic articles and monographs, and advising students. They may also be involved in academic conferences, publication of journals, or management of campus organizations such as CLCS. Faculty service requirements dictate that they should be available to work with students with similar research interests, and you are encouraged to reach out to them, usually via email. Faculty expect to hear from students. They are one of your best resources on campus, so you should not hesitate to talk to them. However, please be aware that faculty members on leave or sabbatical may have limited availability.

ENGL MA students are assigned a faculty member who will act as a mentor and with whom you should meet at least once a semester. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss your intellectual experience and progress in the program relevant to your particular field(s) of interest, your participation in the department's intellectual life as relevant to your field(s) of interest, as well as your professional plans for the remainder of the program and beyond. The faculty mentor will be available to discuss any questions or concerns with regard to your professional and intellectual development. We intend this program to be a service to you, not as an additional requirement. While it is preferred that you meet with your mentor in person, we recognize that some of you are in the program as part-time students who have jobs outside the department that may make it difficult for you to meet with your mentor in person. As such, you have the option of conducting these meetings by phone, Skype, or Zoom. After the

conversation, your mentor can simply forward your self-evaluation form to the GSO in lieu of your submitting a hard copy with his, her, or their signature.

Your mentor can also be your Capstone Project advisor, and participate in your First Year Meeting if you so choose. However, you are not required to work with your mentor on your Capstone, and in fact we encourage you to meet with faculty members during your first year in the program to get a sense of who you would like to work with. In the second semester, you will meet with the DGS and CGS to discuss a potential advisor for your work, and from then on that person will serve as your faculty mentor and project advisor.

Basic expectations for student mentees

Students are expected to meet with their mentors at least once every semester, but you are encouraged to meet with them more often—whatever best suits both parties. It is up to you to contact your mentor to arrange meetings. If you have difficulty contacting your mentor or if you want to change your mentor, please contact the CGS and DGS, and they will help you find an alternate mentor or approve the alternate you have already chosen. For more about mediating mentor conflicts, please see the *Troubleshooting* section of this Handbook. It is also a good idea to take your program's plan of study and share it with your mentor so that everyone is on the same page about timelines and expectations. Meetings will be most productive when you accept responsibility for leading the meeting. Your role is to raise the issues and questions, while the professor's role is to respond.

Basic expectations for faculty mentors

Mentoring is consistently cited by graduate students as an important aspect of graduate programs. A good faculty mentor will take an active interest in all aspects of the professional life of their mentees. Faculty mentors should meet frequently with students, at least once a semester; preferably more often. This is a time to discuss the student's goals, to share resources and fellowship opportunities, information about conferences and publications opportunities, new library resources, etc., as well as to offer intellectual and professional guidance. Mentors should review and return student work promptly, with explicit feedback, establishing a timeframe for responding when the student turns in the work.

In addition to frequent mentoring, faculty mentors are expected to take part in the First Year Meeting for MA students at the end of their second semester in the MA program. The student, at the start of the second semester, will meet with the GSO to determine a faculty member that they would like to work with for their critical writing component of the program. The GSO will then inform that faculty member and set up a meeting with the student prior to the First Year Meeting. At the end of the semester, the GSO, the faculty mentor, and the student will sit down to discuss their progress through the MA, their goals for after completion of the MA, and what work they would like to do for their final project. Faculty should be knowledgeable of the MA handbook and the expectations for the critical writing component, whether thesis or capstone, and be prepared to work with students more closely in the spring semester of their second year on.

The department encourages students to have a conversation about expectation setting when they ask a faculty member to be their capstone or thesis chair. A list of recommended conversation questions can be found in Appendix 4 of this Handbook.

If there is ever a moment when you feel that your advisor or committee member is not meeting your expectations well enough, you should discuss it with them sooner rather than later. If that is not a

possibility or the professor is uncommunicative, please reach out to the DGS, whose primary concern is to support students and help them to complete their program successfully.

Pedagogical mentoring

If you have a funding package that includes teaching, you will also be assigned a pedagogical mentor in those semesters when you are teaching. These mentors are assigned on a semester-by-semester basis by the Director of Academic Writing (101 sections), the Director of Professional Writing, or the DGS.

Academic Writing Program (AWP) and Professional Writing Program (PWP)

New teachers are individually mentored by one of the assistant directors, administrative fellows, or the director. The mentor is available to answer course questions and concerns. Additionally, the mentor observes one or two of the mentee's classes and reviews the mentee's responses to student essays at two different points over the course of the semester. Mentees also meet regularly in larger groups to discuss the semester's work (specific assignment goals and related class activities), to address any issues that may arise, and to help plan for future classes.

200-level and lecture courses

All graduate students assigned as TAs for large lecture courses or instructors of record for 200-level courses are assigned teaching mentors (usually either the course lecturer or a member of their capstone/ thesis committee). Mentor groups for the lecture courses meet regularly to discuss grade-norming, topics for discussion sections, and student progress. Mentors and mentees for free-standing courses meet to discuss aspects of pedagogy that are relevant to the particular needs of the instructors. Mentors visit instructors' individual 200-level classes or discussion sections at least once per semester. The classroom visit is followed by an informal meeting with the instructor to discuss pedagogy and a brief written report is shared with the student and filed with the Graduate Studies Office (GSO).

Questions or concerns about the mentoring process

You may find that the faculty member(s) initially assigned to you (or later chosen by you) may not end up being the best for advising your course selection or chairing your research project. If this turns out to be the case, please contact the DGS to discuss the situation and/or change your mentor(s). More details and a fuller sense of expectations can be found on [the Mentoring page](#) on our departmental website. Additionally, please peruse the *Troubleshooting* section of this Handbook.

5. Teaching and Professionalization

Some opportunities for teaching are provided for those MA students who enter with a half TAship. Funding packages are structured so that students will not have to teach during the first semester in the program. Students will then TA (depending upon availability of teaching opportunities and need for TAs) one course during the three succeeding semesters.

ENGL611 and ENGL101

ENGL611, Approaches to College Composition, is a required course which helps prepare students to teach their first ENGL101 course. The goal of ENGL101 is to familiarize students with the kind of writing they will have to do in college, broadly referred to as academic writing. While characteristics of academic writing vary across university disciplines, successful academic writing incorporates inquiry and rhetoric to engage in a scholarly conversation. These three concerns—*inquiry, rhetoric, and conversation*—are the three major concerns of ENGL101. The goal of the course is to teach students how to participate thoughtfully, critically, and persuasively in academic conversations.

The [Academic Writing Office](#) (Tawes 1116) assigns a mentor for your first semester teaching ENGL101—usually but not always the Fall semester of your second year—who observes your class during the term and provides an assessment of your work for your record. A second observation may take place if the observing faculty member or director of the Academic Writing Program (AWP) deems it necessary. During your first semester as a 101 instructor, the AWP requires that you attend weekly discussion sessions in which program mentors discuss teaching strategies and provide guidelines for ensuring your adherence to the established curriculum. See also the *Pedagogical Mentoring* in the *Mentoring* section of this Handbook.

The best option for finding your way through the curriculum and preparing for teaching is by talking to fellow graduate students. Many of them will be happy to meet with you several times before and during the semester to discuss teaching. The Academic Writing Office also assigns you a mentor for the semester, and they will observe your class twice during the term, providing at the end an assessment of your work and progress for your record. During your first semester as a 101 instructor, the Academic Writing Program will require that you attend weekly discussion sessions in which program mentors address teaching strategies and questions, as well provide guidelines for ensuring your adherence to the established curriculum.

The University's Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (<http://tltc.umd.edu/>) also organizes workshops, round tables, and lectures, as well offers several programs for enrichment.

The Graduate English Organization, together with the Graduate Placement Committee, organizes enrichment activities that support graduate students in their professionalization.

Scheduling Office

Course request form

In December of each year, students receive a link in their email connecting them to the Enrolled Graduate Student Schedule Request Form, where they indicate which sections they would prefer to teach in the following academic year. Because course assignments must be made on a yearly rather than semester basis, students should indicate their schedule to the best of their knowledge at the time of filling out the form. Should any changes to your schedule that would affect your teaching availability arise, please notify the Scheduling Office immediately, as they may be able to avoid future scheduling conflicts.

Scheduling conflicts

Should you encounter a scheduling conflict, you have two options for resolution. The first is to find another graduate student instructor to swap assignments with, which you may be able to do via the GEO Facebook page or listserv. (In order to post on the page, you will need to join the group. If you have any difficulty, you may reach out to GEO officers.) The second is to discuss resolutions with the Scheduling Office directly, by emailing the Associate Chair. Feel free to include the DGS on the email to keep them in the information loop.

Other Resources

The University's [Teaching and Learning Transformation Center](#) (TLTC) organizes workshops, roundtables, lectures, and other enrichment programs. For example, the Graduate Teaching Assistant Portfolio Retreat encourages students to write their statement of teaching philosophy in the company of other graduate students who seek to enter the job market. International students might also be interested in the [International Teaching Fellow Program](#), a one-year program which pairs first- and second-year international graduate TAs with a faculty mentor outside of their department to foster their teaching skills and help them build their teaching portfolio. The Graduate School also provides its own series of events around professionalization, which can be found [here](#).

[The Graduate English Organization](#) (GEO) regularly offers enrichment activities to support MA, MFA, and PhD students in English, Creative Writing, and Comparative Literature. Major GEO programs include the annual GEO conference, professionalization events, reading and study groups, and social gatherings. GEO represents the interests of graduate students on matters of policy in governing bodies of the English Department, including the Departmental Assembly. GEO fosters ties between graduate students and other important campus organizations, including the English Undergraduate Organization. GEO acts primarily through an elected executive committee, each of whose members has a specific role in its governance and programs. Students in all degree programs administered by the English Department, including Comparative Literature, are welcomed to participate in GEO events and to serve on the executive board.

Certificates, Symposia, and Opportunities for Intellectual Community

Graduate students are eligible to complete [interdisciplinary certificates in Critical Theory](#), Digital Studies in the Arts and Humanities, Jewish Studies, and Women's Studies. Every semester, the English Department offers a one-credit Critical Theory Colloquium as part of the [Critical Theory Certificate Program](#). In order to be eligible for these certificate programs, a student must be accepted into or currently enrolled in our master's or doctoral degree programs.

Students interested in film also have the opportunity to participate in the Film Studies Curriculum, organized by the Graduate Field Committee in Film (<http://film.umd.edu/>). The Committee supports student research through its Graduate Colloquium in Cinema and Theory each spring and film-related events such as symposia, screenings, and seminars throughout each year and its faculty are also available to advise graduate students on their research in Film Studies.

The English department also houses the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies (CLCS). CLCS provides grants to support academic programming—conferences, symposia, reading groups, speakers and other events. Graduate students are encouraged to become involved with CLCS, to attend their [events](#), and to develop their own multidisciplinary projects with the Center's support.

The department runs many lecture series and reading groups. Represented areas include British Performances on Stage & Screen, Digital Studies, Eighteenth Century Studies, Language, Writing, and Rhetoric, LGBT Studies, Local Americanists, Marshall Grossman Lecture Series (Medieval and Early Modern), Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Studies, Transatlantic Poetics, Washington Area Romanticists Group, and Writers Here and Now.

Other avenues for becoming involved in the intellectual life of the University include participation in its many interdisciplinary programs. Here are just a few are:

Center for Global Migration Studies <http://www.newamerica.umd.edu/>
David C. Driskell Center for the Study of Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora <http://www.driskellcenter.umd.edu/>
LGBT Studies <http://www.lgbts.umd.edu/>
Medieval and Early Modern Field Committee <http://www.arhu.umd.edu/memum>
Maryland Institute for Technology and the Humanities <http://mith.umd.edu/>

The [Maryland Institute for Technologies in the Humanities \(MITH\)](#), located in Hornbake Library, was founded in 1999 as collaboration among various camps in the College of Arts and Humanities, the Libraries, and the Office of Information Technology. MITH has grown to become one of the leading institutes of its kind in the country. MITH is the University's primary support center for scholars and practitioners of digital humanities, electronic literature, and cyberculture, as well as the home of the Bill Bly Collection of Electronic Literature and Deena Larsen Collection of early-era personal computers and software. Graduate students interested in digital studies will find a vast range of materials and intellectual support through MITH, including fellowships that help students advance their research and dissertation work. In addition, MITH and the College of Arts and Humanities cosponsor the [Digital Studies in the Arts and Humanities](#) graduate certificate program.

The University of Maryland is also a member of the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](#). Other institutions currently associated with the consortium include American University, The Catholic University of America, the University of the District of Columbia, Gallaudet College, George Mason University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Howard University, Marymount College, Mount Vernon College and Trinity College. Students enrolled in any one of these institutions are able to attend certain classes at the other institutions and have the credit considered "residence" credits at their own institutions. In order to take courses at one of these universities, you will need the written permission of both the DGS and the professor whose course you wish to take. Please contact the CGS directly for more information about Consortium courses.

Appendix 1: New Student Checklist

Graduate School Checklist

The Graduate School provides a general checklist for all incoming students, which can be found [here](#). If you have any questions about the items on this checklist, you can contact the Graduate School directly by phone at (301) 405-3644, by email at gradschool@umd.edu, or in person at the Lee Building, Room 2123.

The English Department

In addition to the guidelines provided by the Graduate School, there are several steps new PhD students in the English Department should take before or soon after the start of the fall semester.

1. **Contact your GEO buddy.** Over the summer before your first semester, GEO will reach out to pair you with a “GEO buddy” who is more advanced in the program and can help guide you through the early stages of the program. If you haven’t received a GEO buddy assignment by August, please reach out to GEO leadership.
2. **Explore housing options.** Graduate students at the University have a number of housing options available to them. While many students elect to live in off-campus housing, there is some limited graduate student housing on campus. There are two all-graduate student apartment communities on University property. The Graduate Gardens and Graduate Hills communities are owned by the University of Maryland and managed on the University's behalf by a property management company. Information about these and other housing options can be found [here](#). If you are interested in living off-campus, the GSO recommends that you reach out to current students about resources and advice. If you’re unsure who to contact, start with the GSO, your GEO buddy, or GEO leadership.
3. **Explore transportation and parking options.** For more information, please see the *Parking and Transportation* subsection of *Introduction* to this Handbook. If you will require a parking space, you should register with DOTS as soon as possible; the DOTS website can be found [here](#).
4. **Set up your university email.** Instructions for setting up your UMD email accounts can be found in the *University email* subsection of the *Introduction* to this Handbook.
5. **Set up direct deposit.** The Department strongly recommends that you set up direct deposit so your biweekly paychecks and any fellowship money you have been awarded can be deposited directly into your bank account. To find instructions for setting up direct deposit, see the *Direct Deposit* subsection of the *Introduction* to this Handbook.
6. **Meet with the DGS to discuss the terms of your offer letter and course credits.** To ensure you understand the terms of your offer letter, you should review the terminology provided in the *Understanding your offer letter* section of this Handbook and make a list of any further questions you have for the DGS. Additionally, if you are entering the program with a terminal MA, you should discuss your academic record with the DGS, who will decide which requirements your previous graduate study will satisfy. Before this conversation, you should carefully read the *Degree requirements* section of this Handbook. To arrange a meeting with the DGS, please contact the Coordinator of Graduate Studies.
7. **Meet with your advising team to discuss enrollment.** As soon as possible, you should reach out to your advising team to discuss your coursework and the best approach to ensure you satisfy degree requirements in a timely manner.

8. **Request stamps from the GSO.** Once you've had the chance to meet with the DGS and your advising team, you should email the CGS to request stamps for the courses you wish to enroll in for the fall semester. For more about stamps and registration, please see the *Enrollment and registration* subsection of the *Degree requirements* section of this Handbook.

Appendix 2: Recommended Timetables

Sample Course of Study for a Full-Time MA with Capstone Project

Year 1	Semester 1 Take 3 courses (9 credits) Begin to make connections with your professors, and those you may not have classes with.	Semester 2 Take 3 courses (9 credits) Prepare for your First Year Meeting by scheduling times to meet with a potential advisor. First Year Meeting with GSO and potential advisor
Year 2	Semester 3 Take 2 courses (6 credits) Begin working on Capstone with your advisor	Semester 4 Take 2 courses (6 credits) Write and defend Capstone Congratulations—you have an MA!

Sample Course of Study for a Full-Time MA with a Thesis

Year 1	Semester 1 Take 2 courses (6 credits) Begin to make connections with your professors, and those you may not have classes with.	Semester 2 Take 2 courses (6 credits) Prepare for your First Year Meeting by scheduling times to meet with a potential advisor. First Year Meeting with GSO and potential advisor
Year 2	Semester 3 Take 2 courses (6 credits) + ENGL799 Thesis Research	Semester 4 Take 2 courses (6 credits) + ENGL799 Thesis Research

		Congratulations—you have an MA!
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Note: Please consult 'Degree Requirements' section for each concentration. It is important to plan ahead as some required courses are only offered once a year.

Appendix 3: Advisor Expectation Setting & Meetings Guide

The department encourages students to have a conversation about expectation setting when they ask a faculty member to be their advisor/capstone chair. To start off, you might consider reminding the professor of what your interests are or where they are now since you arrived. The professor may know you well, but it never hurts to remind them of your interests and how they are developing. You could begin by saying, “As may know, my primary areas of interest are...”

Discussion Questions

The additional questions listed below should be discussed when requesting that a faculty member work with you as an advisor or as chair of your capstone committee. If you require any clarification, please reach out to the GSO.

Do you have space to take on another advisee or to chair a capstone?

Sometimes faculty members have the availability to serve as a reader but not a chair. It is important to give the faculty member the latitude to decide in what way they can best work with you.

When I turn in drafts of my writing, when might I generally expect to hear back from you with feedback? Is your feedback generally written or is it oral?

Faculty members have different practices in offering feedback. Some have a quick turnaround of a week or two, while others will tell you that you should expect to hear back a month from receiving a draft. Sometimes faculty members are swamped generally and take a while to reply. It's important to have a sense of how your potential advisor offers feedback and how that might relate to your own practices and personality.

How often do you expect for us to be in contact and/or meet prior to the defense?

Some advisors expect to meet with you regularly before the capstone defense. Others prefer to meet to give specific kinds of feedback based on a draft. Try to get a sense of the frequency and kind of meetings you should expect to participate in—whether in person, over email, or over the phone/video calls.

How/when should I think about presenting at conferences? Are there any upcoming conferences you would recommend?

If you have written a seminar paper for the professor, you might use this question as a way to begin a conversation on revising that essay toward presentation at an academic or student conference. Your advisors should help you find relevant professionalization opportunities in addition to providing feedback on your written work.

Are there any possibilities of collaborating with you on a project or possibly serving as a research assistant for you?

You advisors may be involved in editing journals or collections, or research projects of their own including articles and monographs. Some professors prefer to hire graduate students as readers or assistants, which can provide valuable experience in addition to paid administrative or editorial work in your field. You should not expect or demand that faculty offer these opportunities, but you are encouraged to ask!

If you are heading toward a thesis defense, you should discuss expectations with potential committee members in advance.

You should establish early on what (potential) committee members' expectations for your defense are so you can prepare yourself accordingly. In addition, you should ask if the potential advisor has their own recommendations for preparing for this presentation. What do they see as the defense's purpose? What are their expectations for you?

These questions are meant to be talking points, and you do not need to ask them all. Of course, you might feel it is important to ask them all early on. What matters most is that you understand how your possible mentor operates and what they expect of you. This conversation also allows you to help them understand your own expectations and goals.

Appendix 4: Troubleshooting and FAQ

Meeting degree requirements

The timetables in *Appendix 2* and the outline provided in the *Degree Requirements* section of this Handbook are intended to help you meet program benchmarks on a reasonable timeline. If you need help deciding which courses you should enroll in, you should consult both your academic advisors and the DGS.

While students are expected to follow the timeline laid out in their offer letter, if your studies are disrupted by circumstances beyond your control, you should reach out to the Graduate Studies Office to discuss your options for advancing in the program and graduating in a timely manner.

Frequently asked questions

How do I sign up for classes?

When you are ready to enroll in classes each semester, you should check Testudo to ensure that there are no holds on your account that may block you from registration. You should then email the CGS with your chosen courses, as all graduate courses are blocked for registration until you receive permission for them (this permission is known as a "stamp," so if you've been stamped for something it means that you've been given electronic permission to take it). If you are taking a course in another department, you need to get stamped by them to take it (please reach out to the DGS or CGS in those departments for more information on how to get those stamps).

If you have any questions or concerns during enrollment, please contact the CGS. For more information, see the "Enrollment and Registration" in the *Coursework* subheading of the *Degree Requirements* section of this Handbook.

Who do I go to with questions about course selection?

You should discuss your course selections with CGS. For more information, see the *Coursework* subheading of the *Degree Requirements* section and the *Mentoring* section of this handbook.

Can I count a 600-level course for 700-level credit?

Yes, but you will have to make arrangements with the instructor to do additional work to have that course count as a 700-level course. Students may *not* take an independent study for 700-level credit except in extreme circumstances and only after receiving permission from the DGS.

I do not feel like there are enough courses for my interests. What do I do?

Graduate course offerings are limited by departmental resources and faculty availability. However, the program provides for many opportunities to learn both within and outside the English department, including independent studies, enrolling in undergraduate classes for graduate credit, enrolling in relevant courses in other departments at UMD, or enrolling in courses at other Consortium universities and institutions. You should discuss these options with the DGS and your academic advising team.

Can I get placed on a waitlist?

If you are interested in a course which is already full, please reach out to the CGS, who maintains a waitlist for each course. The GSO doesn't use the waitlist option in Testudo.

Can I email faculty to get permission to join class if it's full?

No. You should reach out to the CGS to get placed on the waitlist. Faculty refer to the CGS to see if space is available, so you will be placed on the waitlist regardless.

I am taking a class in another department and I'm having issues. What can I do?

Please refer to the CGS in that department and then the English CGS if the issues are still unresolved. You may also want to consult the Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson is an impartial, independent and confidential resource for graduate students at the University who helps to surface and resolve school issues. The Ombudsperson provides confidential and informal assistance in resolving these conflicts and promotes fair and equitable treatment within the university. See more information on their website here: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/about-us/ombuds-office>

Why can't I do an Independent Study with a faculty member in another department?

Independent Studies in the English department are registered under specific faculty section numbers. Faculty get certain service requirements based on how many times their section number is used for courses like Independent Studies. However, faculty in other departments are unable to use their section numbers for our department and are not able to use them for service requirements. If possible, you may take an Independent Study with them in their department.

Advisors and mentors**My advisor has a lot of students they mentor and I sometimes feel that I'm not given the same consideration as others. What can I do?**

The GSO assigns initial advisors with their overall advising load in mind, but some of our faculty do have a larger advising load than others. Faculty may give priority to students writing dissertations or preparing for exams, given the urgency and timeliness of their students' needs. Please know that this does not mean that faculty are not interested in meeting with you or talking about your needs, just that they may be facing deadlines or other time-sensitive activities at certain times of the year. However, if you feel there is a difference between the type of mentoring you receive compared to others in your same circumstances, please contact the CGS and DGS to resolve communication issues or help you find a more appropriate and responsive advising team. Students are free to change advisors whenever it suits their needs, but they must inform the GSO of any changes.

What if my teaching mentor hasn't observed me?

If you are having issues with your ENGL101 teaching mentor, please contact the director of the AWP.

Why do I need to pay student fees? Is there any way I don't have to pay them?

The University requires that students pay fees for certain services. These fees are determined by certain student governmental assemblies.

I think my direct deposit/paycheck is incorrect. Who do I go to?

If you think you received less in your paycheck than you should, please contact the Business Office to see if your wages are correct or if more taxes/deductibles were taken out than you expect. If you receive less in your fellowship disbursement, please contact the Business to ensure they have the correct fellowship

information for you. If you received fewer funds for an ARHU or Graduate School fellowship, the Business Office may be able to help you navigate the process to find the appropriate office.

My remission didn't pick up a course and now I have to pay for it. What do I do?

Please contact the CGS. Most likely, you either didn't drop and add the same number of credits within the same day or it was added to your schedule after the University Human Resources Benefits Office processed the remission requests. The CGS can backdate your registration to the correct date and the next time remission requests are processed, it will be picked up.

I am an international student. Who do I go to for registration/funding letters that either ISSS or my consulate needs?

Please contact the CGS for these letters for ISSS. Your consulate may request official letters from either the GSO, the Registrar's Office or ISSS themselves.

Appendix 5: Directory

General

Below you will find a brief outline of departmental administration structure and contact information for the personnel you are most likely to interact with during your time in the program.

- **CHAIR:** responsible for overall leadership of the department, coordinating with administrative offices and key staff for guidance and strategy of the department
- **ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, ARHU:** responsible for interpretation and implementation of academic policies for all departments in ARHU
- **DIRECTOR, CW:** responsible for directing the Creative writing MFA program
- **DIRECTOR, AWP:** responsible for the Academic Writing Program, including the ENGL101 course
- **DIRECTOR, CMLT:** responsible for Comparative Literature PhD program
- **ASSOCIATE CHAIR:** responsible for teaching assignments and assists Chair with teaching and academic policies within department
- **DIRECTOR, ENGL HONORS:** responsible for undergraduate English Honors students
- **DIRECTOR, WRITING CENTER:** responsible for directing the drop-in Writing Center
- **DIRECTOR OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES:** responsible for directing the undergraduate English major and minor and assisting undergraduate students
- **DIRECTOR, CLCS:** responsible for directing the Center for Literary and Contemporary studies, which runs many events, workshops and conferences

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL	EXTENSION	ROOM #
Bailey, Amanda	Chair	abailey7@umd.edu	5-3807	2119B
Bauer, Ralph	Associate Dean for Academic Affairs	bauerr@umd.edu	5-3847	3244
Bernal, Linday	Coordinator, CW	lbernal@umd.edu	5-3820	2116E
Bertram, Lillian-Yvonne	Director, CW	lyb@umd.edu	5-3819	3103
Enoch, Jessica	Director, AWP	jenoch1@umd.edu	5-3761	1116C
Balachandran Orihuela, Sharada	Director, CMLT	sbalacha@umd.edu	5-3839	2116D
Wong, Edlie	Associate Chair	edlie@umd.edu	5-3806	2119C
Fleming, Julius	Director, ENGL Honors	flemingi@umd.edu	5-9657	3124
Wilder, Sara	Director, Writing Center	swilder@umd.edu	5-3786	1205C
Trudell, Scott	Director of Undergraduate Studies	trudell@umd.edu	5-7689	1128E
Ray, Sangeeta	Director, CLCS	rays@umd.edu	5-3801	2120A

Graduate Studies Office

- **DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES:** responsible for running the Graduate Studies Office, leading the Graduate Studies Committee, and directing the admissions and recruitment process and the various fellowship applications
- **COORDINATOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES:** Responsible for day to day operations of the office, key contact for students, faculty and staff, maintain records, including benchmarking
- **GRADUATE ASSISTANT:** responsible for providing front-desk support and other tasks as assigned by the DGS and CGS

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL	EXTENSION	ROOM #
Rudy, Jason	Director of Graduate Studies	jrrudy@umd.edu	5-3810	2116B
Burgard, Robert	Coordinator of Graduate Studies	rburgard@umd.edu	5-3798	2116D

Other

NAME	ROLE	EMAIL	EXTENSION	ROOM #
Bleach, Alexa	ClassRm/lab support	akbleach@umd.edu , or tawes_support@umd.edu	5-3781	0210
	Business Office		5-0466	2119H
Roper, Kit	Academic Program Specialist, UG	sroper1@umd.edu , or english@umd.edu	5-3825	1128
	Graduate Assistant, Bus.	english_business@umd.edu	5-3200	2119J
Crussiah, Grace	Coordinator, PWP	gjc@umd.edu	5-3760	1220C
Deinert, Emily	Librarian for English	edeinert@umd.edu	5-9820	5101D McK
Drummond, Michele	Assistant Director of Scheduling	mdrummon@umd.edu	5-2076	2119G
Earles, Thomas	Assistant Director, WC	tearles@umd.edu	5-3695	1205E
Eklund, Scott	Administrative Coordinator, AWP	seklund@umd.edu	5-3771	1116
Greenwell, Jennifer	Business Office	jgreenw@umd.edu	5-1	2119

Hilliard, Lyra	Blended Learning, AWP	lyrahill@umd.edu	No phone	2201
Yao, John	Program Management Specialist, MEO	johnyao@umd.edu	5-3805	2119
Thurston, Cameron	Coordinator, MEO	cthursto@umd.edu	5-3805	2119
Lewis, Karen	Assistant Director, UG	lewiske@umd.edu	5-3758	1128C
McClung, Helen	Academic Program Specialist, PWP	hmcllund@umd.edu	5-3763	1220
Nelson, Karen	Center for L&C	knelson@umd.edu	5-3185	2120B
Nesline, Kevin R.	Director of Operations & Technology	remmell@umd.edu	5-3808	2119A
Saremi, Shawn	IT Coordinator	saremi@umd.edu	5-8514	2103
Wible, Scott	Director, PWP	swible@umd.edu	5-3760	1220D
Woldekidan, Sarah	Scheduling Coordinator CAARES Committee Chair	smwold11@umd.edu	5-3804	2119