GRADUATE HANDBOOK
MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING
2014-2015

http://www.pdx.edu/mfa-creativewriting/

All information is subject to change.
Students are responsible for checking University web sites
for current deadlines and updates.

August 6, 2014
MFA in Creative Writing Handbook
2014-2015

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MFA Directory
2014-2015

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Spring 2015
Mary Ruefle
TBD

Visiting Distinguished Writer
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The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at Portland State University

Located in the center of one of the country's most vibrantly literary cities, the Creative Writing MFA at Portland State University provides writers with opportunities for creative development with a core faculty of prominent authors: Diana Abu-Jaber, Charles D'Ambrosio, A.B. Paulson, and Leni Zumas in fiction; John Beer and Michele Glazer in Poetry; and Paul Collins and Michael McGregor in Nonfiction.

Our two-year degree emphasizes workshops and close mentorship by core faculty, while also offering the flexibility of a part-time option and the rich course offerings of Oregon's largest university. MFA students also work with acclaimed visiting and resident writers through our partnership with Tin House.

MFA program alumni have won Stegner and Fulbright fellowships and have written for publications ranging from Tin House and the New Yorker to The Believer and Iowa Review. But above all, our program is part of Portland: long after graduating, many students stay on to make the city of Powell's and Wordstock their home.
I. Applying to the MFA in Creative Writing

Students apply to the genre in which they wish to work: fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. In compiling your application, consider that the most important part of it is your writing sample. We are looking for promise, which takes different forms and varies according to the genre, but in all cases includes an engagement with language. While many students enter the MFA program with a background in English literature, writing, or journalism, it is not required, and many of our strongest students come from backgrounds in the sciences, social sciences, and other areas in the humanities.

1. Admission & Application Requirements

There are two separate applications required, one to the University and one to the MFA Program in Creative Writing and applicants should refer to each website for specific application requirements. The annual admissions deadline to the MFA Program is January 3rd.

Applications should include all departmental application materials. All materials are received through the online application process, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to see that letters of recommendation are also received by the deadline.

2. Conditional Admission

While the MFA Program requires a cumulative 3.25 GPA in undergraduate work, the committee looks at other factors including the writing sample, letters of recommendation, statement of purpose, and transcripts. If the committee feels that an applicant shows sufficient promise, they may offer conditional admission, allowing a student to demonstrate the capability to succeed at the graduate level.

A student with conditional admission will be expected to earn regular admission, which is achieved by taking 8 credits of 500 (graduate) level English courses (ENG or WR), with grades in each of B+/3.25 or better. You and your contact person must file form GO-7 Petition for Change of Status with the Office of Graduate Studies. At that point you will be converted to regular admission status and your graduate credits applied towards your program requirements.

3. International Students

An applicant whose native language is not English and who has not received a baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an equivalently accredited non-U.S. institution with instruction exclusively in English must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600 (100 on the internet-based test or 250 on the computer-based test). The International English Language Testing System exam (IELTS) may be substituted for the TOEFL; the minimum acceptable score is 7.5.
4. Establishing Residency Status
Before you register for classes, there are important considerations to know about establishing in-state residency status. To be considered a resident, you must have lived in Oregon for 12 consecutive months, and if you have moved from out of state, for those 12 months to count towards your establishment of residency you must be taking 8 credits or fewer and be self-supporting outside of the University. See http://www.pdx.edu/admissions/residency-requirements.

5. Graduate Assistantships, Financial Aid, and Employment

**English Department Graduate Assistantships:** The Department has available a limited number of Graduate Assistantships. Graduate Assistants teach in a variety of contexts: composition courses at all levels, tutoring in the Writing Center, and assisting faculty in English courses. During their second year, MFA GAs may also have an opportunity to teach the undergraduate introductory creative writing course in their strand. Graduate Assistants may also help with Department programs such as the Portland Center for Public Humanities, serve as assistants to faculty administrators such as the Director of Rhetoric and Composition or the Director of Literary Studies, or perform other administrative or research duties that foster their career development. Graduate assistants receive both tuition remission and a stipend for the academic year. In recent years we have also been able to offer teaching employment in the summer, but this is not guaranteed. To apply, students check the field on their online application to the program. The Graduate Admissions committee awards assistantships. The Department also occasionally has assistantships to offer students in their second year of study. These and other positions are announced over the graduate student listserv.

**University Studies Graduate Mentor:** University Studies Mentors come from all academic backgrounds and work with Sophomore Inquiry courses. Mentors plan and facilitate 50-minute mentor sessions for Freshman Inquiry, Sophomore Inquiry or Transfer Transition courses. New mentors receive training prior to the start of school. Mentors work 10-20 hours per week. Graduate Mentors receive graduate tuition remission for up to 9 credits and a monthly stipend. The deadline to apply is in January, before students receive word on their admission to the MFA program. This should not stop you from applying; you can be granted a Graduate Mentorship contingent on your admission to the MFA program. For more information: http://mentors.unst.pdx.edu/content/mentors-and-mentored-inquiry

**Other Graduate Assistantships:** Many non-academic divisions of the University also offer Graduate Assistantships, including: University Communications, Campus Recreation, University Housing, The Office of International Affairs, the Women’s Resource Center, the Queer Resource Center, and Student Health and Counseling. Unfortunately there is no centralized listing of these non-academic Assistantships; each office must be contacted individually (the Graduate Studies office does not keep a list of available Graduate Assistantships each year). Students with non-English language skills may want to contact the Department of Foreign Language about teaching opportunities.
Financial Aid: Information on graduate financial aid is available on the University website at: http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/

The Laurels Graduate Award is available to current and incoming students at Portland State University. Information about the Laurels Graduate Award is available at: http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/laurels-program. Additionally, other competitive scholarship information is available on the Graduate Studies website at: http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/funding. English department nomination is required for three all-University competitions: the Oregon Sports Lottery, the University Club, and the Underrepresented Minority Graduate Student Pipeline scholarships. Any student who would like to be nominated for one of these scholarships should speak to their advisor or the Student Affairs Committee about their qualifications. A computerized database of national and local scholarships is also available in the Millar Library.

Other University Employment: The University may also offer the following employment /professional development opportunities:

Writing Center Tutor: Tutors assist students in individual sessions. To qualify for this position you should take ENG 413/513 (Teaching and Tutoring Writing). Tutors are part time hourly employees paid by monthly timecard submission and assigned term by term. Contact the Writing Center Coordinator, Dan Deweese at deweesed@pdx.edu, for further information.

PSU/WITS Intern: The PSU/Writers in the Schools (WITS) intern position is available to students who have completed one year of the MFA program. The intern will work from the office of Literary Arts (http://www.literary-arts.org) on a range of projects that support the WITS program; WITS hires local professional writers to teach creative writing residencies in Portland’s public high schools. The intern's responsibilities may include updating the WITS blog; coordinating author visits in the schools; working on the annual student writing anthology; coordinating WITS readings. Depending on the intern’s interests and skills, there also may be opportunities to assist in the classroom with a teacher teaching creative writing. You can expect to work 6 to 8 hours per week in 3- to 4-hour increments for 10 weeks, with the precise number of hours dependent on WITS program’s needs and the student’s schedule. The position is flexible, and may begin in winter or spring. The award is $1,500, paid through monthly timecard submissions. To apply, send a letter of interest and your CV or résumé to the MFA Director. Include in your letter as references the names of two of your English Department professors.

Learning Center Tutor: The Learning Center is housed on the second floor of Millar Library and hires tutors for subjects other than writing on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year as existing tutors graduate. You may pick up an application at the center or email Assistant Director Liane O'Banion: obaniol@pdx.edu

FWS Work-Study Positions: If you qualify for the federal work-study program, you may apply for a variety of jobs with the English department or elsewhere on campus, including writing, website development, and office work. These jobs are also posted on the Career Center website at: http://www.pdx.edu/careers/
6. Admission Deferment
Students who do not enroll in the term to which they were admitted will be dropped from the program by the University. While a deferral may be requested for up to one year from the term for which you were originally admitted, deferrals are rarely granted, and students should expect to reapply to the program. To request a deferment, download a graduate Admission Application Update Request:
The form must be filled out, signed, and sent to:
  Department of English
c/o Graduate Coordinator
re: DEFERMENT
Portland State University
Department of English - ENG
PO Box 751
Portland, OR 97201-0751

7. Leave of Absence
A student in good standing may petition for a leave of absence, which assures the student a continuation of admission in the program during a period of absence. A leave constitutes one or more terms during the academic year of no enrollment, the cumulative amount of leave may not exceed one calendar year Students on an approved leave of absence do not register for courses and are not required to pay instructional or other fees. During a leave of absence, access to University or program facilities and services and use of faculty or staff time is restricted according to policies established by the University and each program. A leave of absence does not constitute a waiver of the time limit for completion of the graduate degree at PSU, nor does it extend the regular one-year limit for completion of a course.
A leave is not automatic, but is only awarded to a student in good standing and must be approved by the student's advisor and Program Director. Students wishing to take a leave should fill out a Request for Leave of Absence form and have it signed by their advisor and Program Director before submitting it to the Graduate Administrator. If the student fails to submit this form, s/he will be listed as inactive and administratively withdrawn from the program. Students are responsible for keeping their contact information current with the Department’s Graduate Administrator during their leave. A student planning to return from a leave of absence should contact the Graduate Administrator and his/her advisor at least three months prior to returning to school. Students who fail to return to the graduate program within 12 months of initiating a leave of absence may be administratively withdrawn from the program.
II. Orientation & Advising

1. Computer Accounts and MFA Listserv
Early on, you should make sure that you have a university ODIN account and email address. To get started, read the instructions on your university letter of admission or, for help, call 503-725-HELP (4357), email help@pdx.edu, or stop by Smith Memorial Student Union room 18. Our program will use a listserv to communicate important information to our graduate students. We will add your official PSU email address to our listserv for all correspondence, so if you prefer to use a non-PSU email account for your routine business, you will need to set up your PSU email to forward to your personal e-mail. If you choose to set a mail forward, you may follow the instructions found at http://goo.gl/uj2uTz.

2. Orientation
You should plan to attend the orientation for graduate students in the English Department, usually held the Friday before classes begin in September. You will meet other students in the MFA Program, as well as MFA and English Department faculty and other graduate students. You will learn more about the program and its requirements, and become acquainted with resources available at the University and in Portland.

Other important campus resources include the Graduate Studies Office, which provides information on University requirements; the Career Center, which offers valuable guidance on graduate education and professional development; and the Writing Center, which can help you with any stage of your writing process (from coming up with an idea for a paper to proofreading).

3. Advising
When you are accepted into the program you will be assigned a faculty contact person, with whom you should communicate as early as possible. Your faculty contact will help you plan your preliminary program of study, and answer questions you have about the program and the process. If you have questions that your contact cannot answer or if s/he is on leave, email the English department’s Graduate Administrator or the MFA Director. This Handbook, the MFA website, and the English Department website may also provide answers to many of your questions.
III. Course of Study
The heart of the MFA curriculum is the Core Workshop. These are restricted to MFA students in
the genre, with rare exceptions. Through writing, reading, and critical discussion, students gain
mastery of techniques and intimacy with conventions and issues specific to the genre. The small-
group format also helps students develop a strong cohort. Seminars often focus on aspects of craft,
and the literature coursework helps students understand their own work in the context of literary
history and develop a scholarly perspective on a range of relevant work.

1. Degree Requirements
The degree requirements are 48 credit hours of coursework, as listed below: a creative thesis of high
literary merit (students may work in long or short form, and the thesis may be a collection of short
pieces or a full-length work); a written examination based on the thesis and an advisor-approved list
of 30-40 texts; and an oral examination in defense of the written examination and creative thesis.
Students may take as many as six core workshops in their primary genre, and are required to take a
minimum of four. Students are also encouraged to use at least one of their writing electives to
explore another genre. The MFA program can be completed in two years of full-time coursework;
however, many students take additional courses or attend part-time. You have a maximum of four
years to complete the degree.

Requirements for the MFA:
4 Core Workshops in your genre [WR 521 (Fiction), 522 (Poetry), and 523 (Nonfiction)]
2 writing seminars in your genre
2 courses in literature, one of which may be in critical theory or rhetoric & composition
2 electives in Writing, one of which must be a workshop or seminar in the MFA. While
you may take the Core Workshop as many as six times (one each term, if you are a full-time
student), you are encouraged to take at least one of your writing electives outside of your
primary genre
8 credits of Thesis
Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25

All first-year students must take the MFA Core Workshop in their strand in Fall and Winter
terms. When there is more than one core workshop in a strand offered in a term, faculty will assign
students to a workshop. MFA core workshops meet Tuesdays at 2:00 p.m; most 507 seminars meet
Thursdays at 2:00 p.m.

2. The Bibliography
The scholarly aspect of your coursework is reflected in the bibliography. With your thesis advisor,
you will develop a list of 30 to 40 titles, including works required by your strand as well as books you
read in classes, books suggested by your advisor or other faculty or peers, and books you discover
on your own that are important in your development as a writer. You are not expected to cram these texts before your examinations; you are, however, expected to be able to knowledgeably refer to them in your written exam and oral defense.

3. Independent Study
Independent study, practicum or internship credits may be arranged (1 to 4 credits per term) under several course titles (see below). There is no single CRN for these course numbers; to register, fill out a By Arrangement Request, available in the Department or on the PSU website, have it signed by the instructor, and leave it with Department staff to be signed by the Chair and forwarded to Registration. Please keep in mind that faculty choose to take on these courses on top of their regular workload. The options for independent study include:

WR 501: Research: This can be used for special research projects in which the student has arranged to work with a faculty supervisor. If the research will lead to a writing project, students may also want to consider WR 505.
WR 503: Thesis (See Thesis Credits on page 12)
WR 504: Cooperative Education/Internship: For students doing an internship or engaged in a community-based project.
WR 505: Reading and Conference: For students engaged in one-on-one work with a faculty advisor or mentor on a student writing project; this may also include reading and discussion.
WR 508: Workshop: For students participating in a topic-specific group with a faculty sponsor.
WR 509: Practicum: Students may assist a professor in teaching an undergraduate course. You should work out your duties with the professor in advance of the course.

Students wishing to pursue independent study should seek the approval of a faculty member willing to undertake the arrangement. Faculty time to supervise independent study during any given term is limited. By University policy, a maximum of 12 hours of WR 501 and WR 505 coursework may be applied toward the degree. Independent study credits may not be used to substitute for required MFA coursework.

4. One-credit Courses
Graduate Assistantships, some student loans, scholarships, and grants require full-time status. At PSU, a fulltime graduate course load is 9 credits or more, part time is 8 credits or fewer. Thus, if you enroll for two 4-credit courses you will not have full-time status. However, in addition to Independent Study (explained above), the department offers a range of 1-credit graduate course options. Each term the department will generate a list of 1-credit courses faculty will offer. The list will be emailed and posted outside the English Department; classes will also be listed in the Schedule of Classes. Except for those options already listed in the online Schedule of Classes, you will need to fill out special registration forms and obtain the professor’s signature in order to take these courses.
Individual professors will let you know which course number and title is the most appropriate. Please be aware that professors teach these extra credits voluntarily in order to meet student needs.

**Discussion/reading groups attached to an existing course:** Some of our literature courses are offered at the 400/500 level, and thus include both advanced undergraduates and graduate students. Graduate students often want a separate discussion, reading, or workgroup to augment their work in the course. Some of these 1-credit groups may be listed in the Schedule of Classes; otherwise, you will probably need to have the professor fill out a By Arrangement Request form, likely for WR 508: Workshop. For details on the nature of the group and how to register, contact the professor directly.

**Freestanding Discussion/Reading Groups:** These are groups organized around a shared area of interest between a professor and a group of students (and sometimes additional faculty). The aim is for an enriching, pedagogically and academically sound experience that challenges graduate students without generating substantial extra work for faculty. These groups need supervision, but are expected to produce their own discussions, with faculty members as guides. Some of these courses may be listed in the Schedule of Classes; otherwise, you may ask the professor to fill out a By Arrangement Request form, likely for WR 508: Workshop. For more details on the nature of the group and how to register, contact the professor directly.

**Student-Organized Reading Groups:** Graduate students may also decide to organize a 1-credit reading group. For this you will need to obtain a faculty sponsor who is willing to help the group formulate a reading list, mentor the group leader, and sit in on at least 3 group meetings. Please inform the director of the program if you would like to organize such a group.

**One credit of graduate work should equal no more than an average of 5 hours of work per week for the student.** If you think that your workload exceeds this, please inform your supervising professor. You may also negotiate with the professor to take any of these options for more than 1 credit, with workload adjusted accordingly. Keep in mind that according to University policy, you can apply a maximum of 12 hours of WR 501 and WR 505 coursework towards the graduate degree, and you may not substitute WR 501 or 505 for required MFA coursework.

5. **Coursework Outside the MFA Program**

Students may take required literature courses in the [Department of World Languages and Literatures](#), with their advisor’s approval. If you have questions about whether other classes meet the requirements, contact your advisor or the MFA director.

6. **Pre-admission Credit and Transfer Credit**

A maximum of 16 approved credits earned before admission to the program may be applied to the MFA degree. This “pre-admission credit” limit applies to both transfer credits earned outside PSU and at PSU prior to admission to the program.

A separate 16-credit allotment of transfer credit may be approved for coursework taken after admission to the MFA program (courses taken elsewhere over the summer, for example).
However, a maximum of one-third of your 48 credits may be taken outside PSU, so only 16 of the possible combined 32 transferred credits (pre-admission and post-admission) may be from outside PSU. (The one-third limit is actually 15 credits but we are allowed an extra credit because of our four-credit course structure).

Students must download a Transfer and Pre-approved Credit form (GO-21) from http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.ogs/files/media_assets/forms/go-21.pdf, and meet with their advisor and the Director of the MFA for credit evaluation and approval.

All Pre-admission and Transfer credits must be graduate level and must: 1) be letter graded B- or higher; 2) not be used for any other degree at any institution, 3) be no more than seven years old at the time the Master’s degree is awarded; 4) be applicable to an MFA degree at the originating institution without qualification.

If you have questions, see your advisor and the program director.

7. GPA

Students must maintain a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA throughout the program. Students who fail to maintain a minimum 3.25 cumulative GPA, and/or maintain a GPA above 3.25 for any given term will be placed on academic probation. Students must earn a B- or higher in their classes and will not earn graduate credit for a class in which they receive a C+ or below unless they have specific written approval from the Program Director or Department Chair.
IV. Thesis & Examination
Each student completes a creative thesis, a written exam, and finally an oral defense.

1. The Thesis
Towards the end of your first year, you will select a thesis advisor with whom, in your second year, you will work on developing and writing your thesis—a substantial and cohesive body of creative work of high literary merit. The form it takes may include, for fiction, a novel, a collection of stories, or a novella-length work (approximate 80-page minimum); for nonfiction a long piece or a collection of essays (approximate 100-page minimum); for poetry a book-length collection of poems (48-page minimum). Shorter projects may sometimes be appropriate; this would be determined in consultation with your advisor, who must approve it. The thesis adheres to format requirements described by the Graduate Office. (For poetry, there are no format requirements as to indentation and spacing.)

During your first year you will develop a sense of which faculty member you would like to have work with you as your thesis advisor. Faculty will be as accommodating as possible so that students can work most closely with the faculty member of their choice, but keep in mind that you may not get your first choice, and that students’ selections are balanced against the necessity for a shared and equitable workload. When you ask a faculty member towards the end of your first year to be your thesis advisor, you must complete and give to the Graduate Program Manager the Thesis Advisor Appointment Form, available online at http://www.english.pdx.edu/pdf/MFA_Thesis_Advisor_Form.pdf

Thesis Credits:
Students must be taking WR 503 (Writing Thesis) credits in each term that they are working on their thesis and for at least one credit in the term in which they will do their oral defense and graduate, including summer term. Students must take a total of at least 8 credits over at least two terms. If a leave of absence is taken while a student is working on a thesis, the student may not consult his thesis advisor or committee, and no paperwork will be processed by the Graduate Studies Office until the student is registered again. There is no single CRN for WR 503 Thesis; to register, fill out a By Arrangement Request, have it signed by your thesis advisor, and leave it with Department staff to be signed by the Chair and forwarded to Registration.

Assembling a Thesis Committee:
In your final term you will submit and defend your thesis to your thesis committee. The committee must include a minimum of three PSU faculty members, including your thesis chair, who is also your thesis advisor. Only the committee chair must be a full-time tenure-track PSU faculty, Assistant Professor or higher in rank with a Master’s or Doctoral degree. Other members may be fixed-term
or adjunct, but keep in mind that part-time faculty are not compensated for committee work and thus may be hesitant to serve. Students may have up to five committee members; if a fourth or fifth member who is not on the PSU faculty is requested, a CV for that member should be attached to the GO-16M form when it is submitted to the English Department Chair for approval and forwarding to the Graduate Studies Office.

The thesis committee must be approved with a GO-16M form that is filled out by the student and signed by the thesis advisor. The form is due in the term prior to when you plan to graduate. Check for deadlines at: http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/graduate-candidate-deadlines.

2. The Written Exam
The written exam typically consists of one or two questions, and requires the student to consider formal, structural, aesthetic and thematic aspects of his or her own work, as well as consider the work of published writers. Your advisor will provide you with the most current requirements and deadlines for the written exam in the last term of your first year of study.

3. The Oral Exam
The oral exam lasts approximately one hour, and must be scheduled to take place at least six weeks prior to the end of the term in which you will graduate. Committee members must receive a complete copy of the thesis at least two weeks prior to the oral defense and receive your written exam at least one week prior to the date of your oral. All members of the thesis committee appointed on the GO-16M must participate in the oral exam.
After the oral exam, the committee may request some revisions, which you will have two to three weeks to make, depending on the date of your oral. The written exam and the oral defense are based on the student's text list, and include literary history, theory, craft, and technique. A successful exam requires both original thinking and some research. At the defense, students may be asked questions about both the exam and the thesis.

4. Submitting the Final Thesis:
In the approximate two-week period between the deadline for your thesis defense and the deadline for submitting your thesis to the Graduate Office for final approval, make changes and address any concerns about your thesis raised by your committee, then upload your thesis according to OGS requirements. Please note that PSU has now fully transitioned to electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs). Paper submissions will no longer be accepted. Additional information can be found with the Office of Graduate Studies: http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/thesis-and-dissertation-information. Once this process is complete, your advisor will submit the GO-17: Thesis/Dissertation Submission for Final Approval to the Office of Graduate Studies.
When MFA students in Creative Writing file an Electronic Thesis, they will be asked by the university to (a) file an [ETD Publication Form](#) specifying PSU library access, and (b) to submit their thesis to the UMI/Proquest thesis and dissertation database.

(a). On the ETD Publication Form, you will be asked to choose one of three options:

- **Open Access.** This grants full public access to the text via the internet.
- **Open Access with Delayed Release.** This grants full public access via the internet after an initial embargo period of either one or two years.
- **Campus Restriction.** This provides access online only via an ODIN password login.

While MFA students may select any access option, the MFA faculty strongly recommends that students select Campus Restriction.

Please note that while the Campus Restriction option normally requires permission from the Office of Graduate Studies, MFA students are exempt from this requirement. Creative writing theses are often written with an expectation of eventual commercial publication, and the open availability of a complete text online has been viewed by many publishers as damaging to the acquisition of such manuscripts. There are also concerns, particularly in nonfiction, of possible liabilities incurred by texts that have not had the customary legal vetting process of periodical and book publishers.

(b). Additionally, you will need to submit your thesis to the UMI/Proquest thesis and dissertation database. UMI offers two options:

- **Open Access,** which grants full public access to via the internet.
- **Open Access with Delayed Release.** This grants full public access via the internet after an initial embargo period of either one or two years.
- **Traditional Publishing,** which uses a nonexclusive license to make single academic bound copies of the work available for a fee.

While MFA students may select either option, the MFA faculty strongly recommends that students select the Traditional Publishing option.

For more information visit the Office of Graduate Studies website or contact a representative directly at grad@pdx.edu or 503-725-8410.
V. Graduation Procedures & Deadlines

1. Preparing to Graduate
Students are responsible for meeting all Graduate Office deadlines. For exact dates, see the table below and verify on the OGS website: http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/graduate-candidate-deadlines. All forms (with the exception of the degree application form) must be submitted to the Department so that they can be signed by the Chair and copied to the student’s file before they are submitted to Graduate Studies.

| 2014 - 2015 Deadlines for Master's Degree Candidates |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                             | Fall 2014       | Winter 2015     | Spring 2015     |
| **GO-16M**  
Appointment of Thesis Final Oral Examination Committee  
To be submitted by the Advisor for all master's students completing theses. | September 22, 2014 | December 1, 2014 | March 9, 2015 |
| **Application for Degree**  
For all Graduate Students.  
No student will graduate without submitting this form. | October 3, 2014 | January 9, 2015 | April 3, 2015 |
| **Thesis Defense Deadline**  
Last day to schedule thesis defense | November 7, 2014 | February 13, 2015 | May 8, 2015 |
| **Thesis Submission for Final Approval**  
Last day to electronically submit thesis | November 21, 2014 | February 27, 2015 | May 22, 2015 |
| **GO-17M**  
Recommendation for Master's Degree Completion Form  
To be prepared by the department and submitted by the Advisor for all graduate students completing theses or dissertations. | December 16, 2014 | March 24, 2015 | June 16, 2015 |
2. Forms and Deadlines

**Degree Completion Form:** Adviser approved, this form should be started in the students 3rd term and must be finalized at least two terms before the student plans to graduate (i.e., in fall for spring term graduation). This form is completed and approved by the adviser, kept in the students academic file in the English Department and is in place of the no longer required Office of Graduate Studies Form GO12. No changes in the degree completion plan should be made after the Application for Degree Completion has been submitted.

**GO-16M: Appointment of Thesis Committee:** The GO-16M form is due in the term prior to when you will graduate, and must be completed in consultation with your advisor. Make sure that your committee members have agreed to serve and will be present during your final term. Your committee will consist of at least three faculty members. Your thesis advisor is also your committee chair, and must be regular full-time PSU faculty, tenured or tenure-track, assistant professor or higher.

**Application for Degree & DARS Report:** Submit an Application for Awarding of Master’s Degree form in the Office of Graduate Studies in the first week of the term you will graduate. This form does not need a Departmental signature so you may submit it directly. At this time you should also consult with your Advisor about submitting a DARS report to verify that all your degree requirements have been met. Please note that DARS have replaced the GO-12 form, and that a request for a DARS report must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by the student or their advisor; there is no self-service DARS reportage for graduate degrees at this time. For further information please visit the DARS page of the OGS website.

**Scheduling Your Defense & Submitting your Thesis:** Contact your committee members early in the term in which you intend to graduate to schedule your oral defense. The deadline by which the oral defense must be completed varies; check the schedule for the term in which you plan to graduate, and aim for the final week before the deadline. However, it is advisable to reserve the date early in the term since faculty sit on multiple committees. Also, reserve the MFA conference room, allowing about one-and-a-half hours.

Check with your advisor to confirm when you should distribute your thesis to your committee. You can expect to distribute your thesis to committee members a **minimum** of 2 weeks in advance of your scheduled defense. Confirm with your committee via email a week to ten days prior to your oral.

You will receive your written exam about two weeks before your defense. You have one week to complete it. Distribute both hard and electronic copies to your committee. The written exam is graded pass/fail.

See section IV-4 above for information on the electronic submission of your final thesis.
3. Early Term Graduation
A student who misses the listed thesis submission deadline may graduate in the following term without registering in that term if she/he submits the completed, defended, approved and formatted thesis no later than 5:00 p.m. on the GO-17 (Recommendation for the Degree form) deadline.

4. MFA Graduation and PSU Commencement
The MFA in Creative Writing Program hosts a gala Graduation Reading at the end of Spring term at which students who have graduated in the previous year read from their work. Those graduating Fall 2013, Winter 2014, and Spring 2014 are eligible to read in Spring 2014. This event is a way for students to celebrate their accomplishments with family, friends, and the entire MFA community. Please contact MFA Program Coordinator Cornelia Coleman if you would like to participate.

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at PSU holds their general commencement exercises at the end of finals week in spring. Check commencement deadlines on the University’s commencement web page, http://www.pdx.edu/commencement/, if you wish to take part in the ceremony.

VI. Resources

1. Student Checklist

The checklist assumes a full-time schedule (9 credits per term)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>CHECKLIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FALL</td>
<td>Confirm that the English Department staff has your contact information, including email address. Meet with your assigned faculty contact person to plan a preliminary program of study. Register for Core Workshop in your strand. Sign up for ODIN and OAM accounts. Familiarize yourself with the program information in the MFA Handbook, and the PSU Bulletin found at <a href="http://www.pdx.edu/oaa/psu-bulletin">http://www.pdx.edu/oaa/psu-bulletin</a> Transfer any previous graduate credits from non-PSU institutions by submitting a GO-21 form. Previous graduate credits taken at PSU are now tracked via the DARS system. Read your MFA Program Handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEAR 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINTER</td>
<td>Meet with your advisor prior to registration. Register for a Core Workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YEAR 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING YEAR 1</td>
<td>Identify a faculty member to be your thesis advisor. If you have questions, consult with your contact person, other students, or the MFA director. Work with your contact person to develop your bibliography. Consult with your thesis advisor to form your thesis committee. Develop a summer writing plan, perhaps a writing group to keep on track. If you were admitted conditionally and have fulfilled the conditions, submit a GO-7 form to the department. If you have not met the conditions, consult your advisor. Start working on your Degree Completion Plan Form for your student file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMER YEAR 1</td>
<td>Assess your progress toward completing your degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALL YEAR 2</td>
<td>Consult the timeline for submitting forms to the Graduate Office and to the Department. Assemble your thesis committee and consult with your advisor on how to proceed. Work with your thesis advisor to submit your GO-16M form. By the end of this term you should have a Degree Completion Plan form finalized and approved by your adviser.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WINTER YEAR 2</td>
<td>Consult with your thesis advisor and run a DARS report to confirm that by the end of next term you will meet all the requirements for graduation. Consult with the Graduate Office on proper formatting and the process for submitting your thesis. If you have questions, consult with your thesis advisor about the Open Access thesis options. Apply for graduation. At this point, you should not make any alterations to your Degree Completion Plan unless you intend to postpone graduation to a later term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRING YEAR 2</td>
<td>Consult with your thesis advisor on when you will be given your written exam and what to expect from it. Remind your thesis committee of the date of your term oral and reserve the MFA conference room.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Professional Development**

The MFA degree is extremely versatile, and we have developed courses, workshops, and other activities designed to assist students in preparing for a variety of careers. Our professional development offerings include:

**Teaching Writing Workshop**

This is a one-day workshop on strategies for teaching others to write. It includes demonstrations, discussions, and teaching handouts on everything from invention and revision strategies to dealing with special issues such as non-native speakers. Contact Susan Kirtley (skirtley@pdx.edu) for more information.
WR 394, Writing Careers for English Majors
This course is also available for graduate credit if you enroll as ENG 505 (Reading and Conference). The course covers career possibilities, internships and community service. Each student gets individual attention and the goal is to identify possible career paths. This course is particularly helpful for those who wish to pursue non-teaching careers. Contact Dan Deweese, deweesed@pdx.edu for more information.

ENG 513, Teaching and Tutoring Writing
This course offers theoretical and practical strategies for teaching composition and tutoring. The focus is on preparing participants to teach in a variety of contexts. Contact Dan Deweese, deweesed@pdx.edu for more information.

The PSU Career Center
The Career Center has an impressive collection of resources, especially for English and Writing majors. The center will help you with planning a job search, preparing job search materials, and exploring career options. Visit both their website http://www.career.pdx.edu/ and the actual center in 402 University Services Building.

3. Office of Graduate Studies Forms
All of the forms listed below are on-line as Adobe Acrobat PDF files at http://www.pdx.edu/ogs/forms.

GO-7, Request for Change of Status
If you were admitted conditionally you must file this after meeting the conditions for regular status. This must be done before you can submit graduation paperwork.

GO-10, Reservation of Graduate Credit – DARS audits have now replaced the GO-10. Please see the OGS website for further information.

GO-13, Change in Graduate Degree Program – DARS audits have now replaced the GO-13. Please see the OGS website for further information.

GO-15, Validation of Out-of-Date Graduate Credit
If any of your coursework exceeds the 7-year PSU time limit (4 years for the MFA), you can request a validation exam to approve the use of that credit.

GO-16M, Appointment of Final Oral Examination Committee (Masters)
This form must be submitted to have your thesis committee approved by the Graduate Studies Office. You should do this before beginning your thesis credits or submitting your prospectus.
GO-17M, Masters Recommendation for the Degree
This form is signed by your committee after your final oral exam is completed. Students are not allowed to handle this form once it has been signed.

GO-21, Proposed Pre-Admission and Transfer Credit
This form must be completed if you have taken any courses before admission to your graduate program that will be used to fulfill its requirements (at PSU or elsewhere). It must also be filed if you take any courses after admission that will be used to fulfill your requirements.

Degree Completion Plan
Adviser approved must be submitted at least two terms before the student plans to graduate (i.e., in fall for spring term graduation). This form is completed and approved by the adviser, kept in the students academic file in the English Department and is in place of the no longer required Office of Graduate Studies Form GO12. No changes in the degree completion plan should be made after the Application for Degree has been submitted.

Dual Degree Memo
This form is used to define which courses will apply to both degrees in a dual degree program. Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator, grdstudy@pdx.edu for details.

Graduate Petition
This form is used to petition the Graduate Council for a waiver of a University graduate academic regulation or degree requirement. Please be aware that in no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because of ignorance of the regulation or of the assertion that the student was not informed by the adviser or other authority.

August 6, 2014