MA in English

Admission Contact Information
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Admission Criteria
Fall deadline: January 1

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<th>Internet-based test (iBT)</th>
<th>Paper-based test (PBT)</th>
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MA and MA/PhD

To be admitted to the MA program, a candidate should have majored in English as an undergraduate, with at least 18 hours in upper division courses in literature or linguistics. Students with other undergraduate majors may be admitted provided their background in English studies is suitable and provided they complete an appropriate course of preliminary study. The candidate should have an overall undergraduate average of at least a B (3.0), with a higher average in courses in the major.

Application Process and Materials

Apply online through the Office of Graduate Studies (http://gradstudies.missouri.edu/admissions/apply)

- The University requires a $65 fee and one set of transcripts from all colleges or universities you have attended.
- If already enrolled as a PBS student or as an undergraduate student at MU, you must file a transfer of division form with the admissions office.

The following items are needed to complete your application for the MA, MA/PhD, and PhD programs.

- GRE scores. The general test is required.
- Three letters of recommendation (at least two of which must be academic).
- One transcript from all colleges or universities you have attended.
- CV
- List of any previous graduate classes taken (for PhD candidates)
- Statement of purpose (approximately 500 words): The admissions committee is interested in your past academic interests, including specific papers and projects you have worked on, and what you wish to accomplish as a graduate student. Please explain why you wish to pursue a particular emphasis (poetry, Romanticism, etc. . .), in this department. The Statement of Purpose serves as your request to be considered for a Graduate School fellowship.
- Writing Sample: One 15-20 page scholarly paper for students applying for Literature Studies or for English Language and Linguistics. Creative Writing applicants should submit one critical/scholarly paper and one of the following: a sample of your fiction (15-30 pages), creative non-fiction (15-20 pages), or poetry (15-20 pages).

Your application cannot be read until all of these materials have been received. All materials must be received by the departmental deadline of January 1.

Plan of Study

The MA program is a two-year program with 30 hours of coursework, including at least 15 hours in graduate seminars at the 8000-level. Coursework builds on a student’s Bachelor’s-level knowledge of her or his field to provide a broad perspective on literature and culture while allowing for specialization and advanced research work. Funded students receive tuition benefits and stipend each year. In their first year, funded students receive teaching training in their first semester, and teach one section of English 1000 while taking three courses per semester. In their second year they teach two sections of English 1000, complete coursework, and write an MA Thesis.

Degree Timeline

First Year: 18 hours of coursework and a ¼-time assistantship in the fall with training to teach composition through shadowing in the Composition Program and through tutoring in the Writing Center. In spring semester, teach one section of English 1000.

Second Year: Complete coursework and teach two sections of English 1000 per semester. Write MA Thesis.

Throughout their time in the department, students will be advised on designing programs of study not only to achieve their personal goals but also to enter the job market as successfully as possible. No grades of C will be counted toward the completion of the required number of hours for the MA. Although the lowest passing grade for graduate credit is B, graduate students should achieve A grades in a significant portion of their courses, and students with a B or near-B average are not encouraged to pursue graduate work beyond the MA.

Degree Requirements

30 hours total of coursework of which 15 hours must be at the 8000 level; the remaining hours may be either 7000 or 8000 level.

3 hours in critical theory (English 8060, English 8050, or English 8070)

Introduction to Graduate Study (English 8005): 1-credit class required in Fall semester of the first year

3 hours are required in 2 of the following 3 areas of literature at the 8000 level. However, for students concentrating in literature, 3 hours are required in each of the following 3 areas:

- pre-1700
- 1700-1900
- 1900-present

9 hours at the 8000 level are required in one of the following concentrations (7000 level courses can be substituted with the approval of the DGS):

- Literature
- Creative Writing (6 hours must be in one genre, 3 hours must be in another genre)
- Language and Linguistics
- Folklore Studies
Students can take up to 9 hours outside the English Department with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

English 8090 is only available during the semester(s) they are writing a thesis.

8010: The Theory and Practice of Composition is required in the fall of the first year for students who will teach English 1000.

**MA Thesis**

The thesis requires independent research at the graduate level in a sustained consideration of a critical or creative project. The MA thesis may build on work produced in coursework but must also include significant new work.

Students present and defend their theses to a committee (composed of two members in the department and one outside member) in an oral defense.

Required length: 40-60 pages

**The successful thesis in Literature will:**

- support an argument with insightful textual analysis.
- show a command of clear academic prose.
- demonstrate awareness of current critical, theoretical trends and/or historical contexts relevant to the project.
- use library resources to locate and select critical and/or historical sources, and connect them meaningfully to the central text(s).
- show proficiency in documentation and bibliography.

**The successful thesis in Creative Writing will:**

- constitute a polished piece or collection of creative work in the candidate's genre of specialization.
- demonstrate a nuanced understanding and practice of the genre and/or form in question.
- by including an annotated bibliography of at least 10 entries or a critical introduction of no more than 15 pages, demonstrate a critical engagement with the practice, history, and/or theorization of creative writing.

**The successful thesis in Language and Linguistics will:**

- identify and investigate a problem or question that is relevant to current debates in the field.
- situate the investigation within the relevant scholarship with appropriate citation of the literature.
- demonstrate command of methodological and analytical tools suitable for the investigation.
- demonstrate command of effective writing in an appropriate academic register.

In their first year, students should discuss possible thesis topics with the Director of Graduate Studies and faculty members likely to constitute the student's MA Thesis Committee.

The MA Thesis includes up to 6 hours of English 8090. Students generally take 6 hours of thesis credit in one semester while doing research and writing. Some will take 3 hours in the fall and then 3 more in the spring semester if they are working closely with an advisor at the outset of the second year. English 8090 counts towards the total number of course hours required for the MA, but does not count towards the required number of 8000-level courses.

**MA/PhD Track**

The MA/PhD program is intended for especially well-prepared students who have BA degrees and know they wish to pursue the PhD. It offers enhanced financial aid and an accelerated time to degree. In their first year in the program, students take three courses per semester. In their first semester, they receive teaching training through shadowing in the Composition Program and through tutoring in the Writing Center and in their second semester, they teach one section of English 1000, receiving a substantial stipend to ensure that they complete their work in a timely manner. In their second, fifth, and sixth years in the program, MA/PhD students teach a reduced schedule of two classes in the fall and one class in the spring without a reduction in pay from our regular PhD package. Students complete MA requirements and begin taking PhD coursework in their second year in the program. Academic requirements for the two degrees are identical with the academic requirements for the separate MA and PhD degrees.

**Self-Funded MA in English**

Students can be accepted into our MA program without the aid of a university fellowship or assistantship. If accepted, students must fulfill all degree requirements, but they do not have to take English 8010, the Theory and Practice of Composition, and do not teach English 1000.

Self-funded students will take seminars, workshops, and other courses with the rest of the graduate student population; permission will be required for participation in the creative writing courses.

Students can pursue the MA either part time or full time, but all students must complete the MA program in the five-year time limit mandated by the Graduate School.