# Table of Contents

**Contact Information** ........................................................................................................... 5

**Jared Colton** *(he/him/his)* ......................................................................................................... 5

**Beth Buyserie** *(she/her/hers)* .................................................................................................... 5

**Phoebe Jensen** *(she/her/hers)* .................................................................................................. 5

**Sara Johns** *(she/her/hers)* ......................................................................................................... 5

**Nicole Cracroft** *(she/her/hers)* .................................................................................................. 6

**Carol Hatch** *(she/her/hers)* ....................................................................................................... 6

**Annie Nielson** *(she/her/hers)* .................................................................................................... 6

**Purpose of the Handbook** ........................................................................................................ 7

**USU/Engl Dept. General Guidance** .......................................................................................... 7

**Tips for Success** ........................................................................................................................ 7

  - General Tips ‘Don’t just Survive Grad School, Flourish!’ ......................................................... 7

**Faculty** .................................................................................................................................... 8

**Insurance** .................................................................................................................................. 8

**Office Space** .............................................................................................................................. 8

**Keys** ......................................................................................................................................... 9

**Financial Aid** .............................................................................................................................. 9

  - Scholarships .................................................................................................................................... 9
  - Graduate Instructorships .................................................................................................................. 9

**Travel** ......................................................................................................................................... 9

**Residency and Status** ................................................................................................................ 10

  - Utah Residency for Tuition Purposes ............................................................................................. 10

**Non-Military Exemptions:** .......................................................................................................... 11

**2022-2023 Residency Deadlines:** .............................................................................................. 11

  - Fall 2022 Deadlines: ....................................................................................................................... 11
  - Spring 2023 Deadlines: ..................................................................................................................... 11

**Full-Time Graduate Status** ....................................................................................................... 12

**Grades and Academic Standing** ............................................................................................. 12

  - P-Grade Policy ................................................................................................................................ 12
  - Incomplete Policy ............................................................................................................................ 12

**Student Leave of Absence** ........................................................................................................ 13

**Graduate Instructor Leave Policy** ............................................................................................. 13

  - Short Term Unplanned Absence ........................................................................................................ 13
  - Short Term Planned Absence .......................................................................................................... 14
  - Multiple and Long-Term Absence ................................................................................................... 14

**Information about Resigning from a Gi-ship** ......................................................................... 14

**Face-to-Face Graduate Classes Via Remote Access** .................................................................. 15

**Disability Accommodations** ...................................................................................................... 15

  - Requesting and using accommodations ....................................................................................... 15
Submitting course accommodation requests using Aggie Access ................................................................. 15

GENERAL GUIDANCE, GRADUATE CULTURE, AND TRAVEL ...................................................................... 17

HOUSING .................................................................................................................................................... 17
TECHNOLOGY ................................................................................................................................................ 17

Email ............................................................................................................................................................ 17
SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ................................................................................................................................... 17
OFFICE SPACE ............................................................................................................................................... 18

WORK/SCHOOL BALANCE .......................................................................................................................... 18
Self-Care .................................................................................................................................................... 18

RESPECT AND POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION .................................................................................. 18

Notice of Non-Discrimination .................................................................................................................... 18
Inciivility ...................................................................................................................................................... 18
Workplace Bullying .................................................................................................................................. 19

HARASSMENT ............................................................................................................................................. 19
Sexual Harassment .................................................................................................................................... 20
Racial Harassment ..................................................................................................................................... 21
MICROAGGRESSIONS ................................................................................................................................. 21
Religious Harassment .................................................................................................................................. 22

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE NOT BEING TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT: ........... 23

DISCIPLINARY ACTION .................................................................................................................................. 23

A WARNING ABOUT RETALIATION .......................................................................................................... 23

GRADUATE FACULTY MENTORING ............................................................................................................ 25

FOR THESIS/DISSERTATION CHAIRS ....................................................................................................... 25
GENERAL CHAIRING RESPONSIBILITIES: ................................................................................................. 25
Thesis/dissertation chair checklist ............................................................................................................. 27
Helping Form a Committee ......................................................................................................................... 26
PLANNING FOR A THESIS DEFENSE ...................................................................................................... 26
GENERAL MENTORING ADVICE: ............................................................................................................ 29

DEGREE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ........................................................................................................... 31

THE MASTER’S PROGRAM(s) ..................................................................................................................... 31
MASTER OF ARTS VS. MASTER OF SCIENCE (MA VS. MS) ......................................................................... 32
NOTE: ....................................................................................................................................................... 32
LENGTH OF THE MASTER’S PROGRAM ...................................................................................................... 32

CREDIT HOURS ............................................................................................................................................ 33
CREDIT REQUIREMENTS ............................................................................................................................ 33

MASTERS THESIS (PLAN A & PLAN B) ........................................................................................................ 33

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT ......................................................................................................................... 33

FOR THE MASTER OF THE ARTS DEGREE ................................................................................................. 33
SUMMER COURSES .................................................................................................................................. 34
INTERNSHIP POLICY ................................................................................................................................. 34
MA/MS TIMELINE TO GRADUATION .......................................................... 35
  First Year MA/MS Timeline ................................................................ 35
  Second Year MA/MS Timeline .............................................................. 36
THESIS GUIDELINES .................................................................................. 37

THE SUPERVISING COMMITTEE ................................................................ 38

THE COMMITTEE ....................................................................................... 38
THE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION AND RHETORIC (TCR) PROGRAM .......................................................... 39
OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM ................................................................. 39
PHD PROGRAM DEGREE INFORMATION ................................................ 39
COURSEWORK ........................................................................................... 39
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE ...................................................................... 39
RESEARCH INTERNSHIP ........................................................................... 40
  Prerequisites to the Research Internship Project .................................... 41
  Research Internship Requirements ....................................................... 41
THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION ........................................................... 42
ANNUAL REVIEW ...................................................................................... 42
THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION ................................................... 43
DISSERTATION ........................................................................................... 45
  The Dissertation Proposal ................................................................. 46
  The Dissertation ................................................................................. 46
  Timetable for the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation ................... 48
  The Oral Defense ................................................................................. 50
  Timeline to Graduation ...................................................................... 51
THIRD YEAR ............................................................................................... 51
  Fourth Year .......................................................................................... 51
FORMS ....................................................................................................... 51
IMPORTANT POLICIES ............................................................................ 52
  Length of Program ............................................................................. 52
  Residency Requirements .................................................................... 52
  Class Attendance ............................................................................... 52
Dr. Jared Colton is your advisor while you are a graduate student. You will meet with him regularly to discuss your academic and professional plans, including your coursework.

Dr. Beth Buyserie is the Director of Composition and is the instructor of ENGL 6820, which is the course requirement of first year graduate instructors (GIs). She is also the supervisor for graduate instructors.

Dr. Phebe Jensen is the chair of the English Department.

Sara Johns is a staff assistant in the English department. Contact Sara if you need assistance with registration, new hire paperwork, office space, keys, USU emails, insurance information, or IDEA evaluations.
NICOLE CRACROFT *(she/her/hers)*

**STAFF ASSISTANT | nicole.cracroft@usu.edu | (435) 797-2733**

Nicole Cracroft is a staff assistant in the front office in the English department. Contact Nicole for general department questions.

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CAROL HATCH *(she/her/hers)*

**GRADUATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR (GPC) | carol.hatch@usu.edu | 435-797-2734**

Carol Hatch is the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC). Carol processes all forms related to graduation and coursework.

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ANNIE NIELSON *(she/her/hers)*

**BUSINESS MANAGER | annie.nielson@usu.edu | 435-797-2454**

Annie Nielson is the business manager in the English department. Contact Annie with any questions regarding payroll, travel funding/reimbursement, tuition waivers and scholarships, finances, and computer lab questions.
PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is a guide for graduate students admitted to the Department of English graduate programs. Students should regularly consult the handbook for information about the English graduate programs, including policies and information on financial aid, degree milestones, etc.

The handbook can be thought of as an initial resource for questions about the program, but students are also welcome (and encouraged) to consult directly with the director of graduate studies and the graduate program coordinator, etc., for questions or concerns.

Once admitted to the Department of English, students are also added to an email listserv to receive important information about deadlines, scholarships, jobs, workshops, and events in the Department of English. Graduate students who are not receiving emails should email Carol.hatch@usu.edu to be added to the listserv.

The policies listed in this handbook are from the Department of English and are specific to the English department and its programs.

This handbook is updated annually. Grad students will be notified via the listserv when major updates are made.

USU/ ENGL DEPT. GENERAL GUIDANCE

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

To succeed as a graduate student, you will need to be self-motivated and to take responsibility for completing your degree. Don’t wait to be told what to do. That means carefully reading all available resources, including course syllabi, program websites, and this handbook to understand what’s expected of you and when it’s due—including paperwork to be filed with the Graduate School along the way to your degree; and it means registering for the courses appropriate to your specialization and degree, as well as the appropriate number of credits each semester.

Full-time MA/MS students are expected to take 9 credits each fall and 6 credits each spring, thus completing the 30-credit degree in two years. MTC and TCR enrollment expectations are explained on the websites for those programs.

GENERAL TIPS ‘DON’T JUST SURVIVE GRAD SCHOOL, FLOURISH!’
Read this handbook. It contains important information on how to navigate through the forms, policies, and procedures of the Department of English and the Graduate School.

Check your mailbox in RWST. A good way to keep informed about meetings, seminars, talks, and other important matters is to check your graduate student mailbox regularly.

Check your email. All USU students are given an email address, which your professors (and students if applicable) will use to send you important information. Check it daily!

Know the professors. Meet and talk with the faculty members. Learn what they teach and their areas of scholarly interest.

For thesis and dissertation writing students, meet regularly with your chair (once you have chosen one). Try to meet with your chair at least three times per semester.

Attend talks, lectures, and other social events/activities. Graduate school is the place where you will form many long-lasting professional relationships.

Faculty

Being a successful graduate student also means taking the initiative to contact your professors or the DGS or appropriate staff members if you are unsure about what to do; it means taking advantage of (virtual) office hours to meet with professors to discuss assignments and your standing in the class; and it means looking for potential Supervisory Committee members as soon as you begin taking classes and then contacting those professors as your thesis or dissertation topic starts to come into focus.

Insurance

USU offers an injury and sickness insurance plan for graduate students through First Student. The plan is underwritten by the United Healthcare Insurance Company. Please refer to the first student website for more information. You can also contact Sara Johns (sara.johns@usu.edu) with additional questions.

Office Space

The English Department has desk space available for all Graduate Instructors. Desk space is assigned by Sara Johns in the main office. As a GI, you should work to maintain the desk space and respect the working habits of those around you. The office is a professional workplace.

Refer to “General Guidelines and Graduate Culture” below for more on professional workplaces.
KEYS

Graduate Instructors will receive a key to the shared office space where their desk is located and a building key card that will allow them entry into the Ray B. West building on the Logan campus only. As a result, you will be required to pay a one-time key deposit of $25 (replacement keys are an additional $25).

FINANCIAL AID

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are limited amounts of scholarships available for graduate students in the English Department. You should apply for all scholarships (department and university) through Scholarship Universe. Deadlines are usually early February, and the scholarship application is a lengthy process, so it’s recommended to begin the process early.

GRADUATE INSTRUCTORSHIPS

A limited number of graduate instructorships (GI-ships) are available within the department each year. These are awarded on the basis of merit. A GI-ship pays an annual salary plus benefits as well as a tuition waiver in exchange for teaching one-to-two courses each semester (as assigned by the department) and performing other responsibilities. All new GI’s will be invited to attend a weeklong teacher training before the semester officially begins, with Dr. Beth Buyserie.

Instructors who sign contracts are expected to fulfill their contractual obligations. Should an instructor wish to resign their instructorship, there is a formal process for this; please contact the DGS (jared.colton@usu.edu) for instructions.

First-year students who do not have graduate instructorships and who are in face-to-face master’s programs may apply for an instructorship for their second year (which would begin in the fall of their second year); these applications are due January 15th to be considered for an assistantship for the following fall semester. Contact the DGS (jared.colton@usu.edu) if you are interested.

TRAVEL

There are limited travel funds available for graduate students who are attending academic conferences to give presentations.

You will need to complete an online travel authorization at a minimum of 2 weeks prior to your trip departure date. The dashboard for travel authorization requests and travel reimbursement requests can be accessed by going to this link: banner.usu.edu >
ServiceNow Travel dashboard. When you return from your trip, you will need to go back to the travel dashboard and complete a travel reimbursement for your travel expenses (do not exceed the amount of funding available to you). Be sure to upload itemized receipts that show a form of payment.

Please note the following policy travel funding:

Graduate Student Travel
- Graduate students are required to apply for matching funds from the Office of Research in order to be eligible for English Department travel funds. However, they do not need to receive Office of Research funds in order to be eligible.
- Graduate student travelers are eligible for funds if they are presenting research or creative work.
- Master's students are eligible for up to $500.00 in departmental travel grant during the two years of their degree.
- Ph.D. students are eligible for up to $500.00 in departmental travel grant funding in each year of their degree.

Refer to the “Graduate Travel Funding” page for up-to-date information, including the relevant forms to apply for funding. Additionally, please contact Department Business Manager Annie Nielson in the English office for issues and information.

Residency and Status

Utah Residency for Tuition Purposes

For face-to-face graduate programs, you have the opportunity to apply for Utah residency within one year. Out-of-state graduate instructors and PhD students must apply for residency after their first year.

The state of Utah residency policy determines that a student who has come to Utah for the purpose of attending an institution of higher education may gain residency for tuition purposes if they meet the criteria of an exception listed below. Many students will file under “non-military exemption,” but refer to the Tuition Residency Exemptions and FAQ page for other exemptions and information on if you may be eligible.

For further information, refer to the Office of Admissions website or email your questions to residency@usu.edu. Additionally, GPC Carol Hatch has information on residency and can be reached through email at carol.hatch@usu.edu.
**Non-Military Exemptions:**

To achieve residency under “non-military exemption” you must meet one of the criteria below:

**Live for Twelve Continuous Months in Utah and Declare Financial Independence**

- Twelve continuous months of physical presence in Utah and declaring financial independence
- Be a U.S. citizen or have permanent resident, asylum, or refugee status in the U.S.
- Obtain a Utah driver’s license, vehicle registration and voter registration at least three months prior to the semester to which an individual applies:
  - Fall Semester: May 1
  - Spring Semester: October 1
- Verification of financial independence showing that you are not claimed as a tax dependent on the most recent federal tax return of any person who is a not a resident of Utah.
- Proof of physical presence in Utah for the most recent 12 continuous months. Cannot be out of the state of Utah for more than a total of 30 days during the 12-month period.
  - Acceptable documents include:
    - An academic transcript verifying you were enrolled in on-campus classes at a Utah college or university.
    - A rental contract/agreement that shows your Utah address, the rental period, and your signature(s).
    - Copies of pay stubs, one per month, or a letter from a Utah employer (letter must be on company letterhead, dated, include from and to dates of employment and be signed by someone authorized to verify your employment)
    - The office of Admissions does not accept W-2 forms or letters from friends/family as verification of physical presence in Utah.

Most students will apply under the non-military exemption. However, there are other exemptions. Make sure you refer to the residency website when applying to make sure you are applying under the correct exemption.

**2022-2023 Residency Deadlines:**

**Fall 2022 Deadlines:**
- Priority deadline to meet the tuition and fee payment: August 1, 2022
- Final deadline: September 19, 2022

**Spring 2023 Deadlines:**
- Priority deadline to meet the tuition and fee payment: December 1, 2022
• Final deadline: TBD

* There is no application for summer residency.

NOTE:

• University-sponsored programs and internships do not count as part of the 30 days out of state.

• Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) recipients are not eligible to apply for residency for tuition purposes using the time spent receiving the waivers since they are still considered to be residents of their former state while participating in these programs.
  o Nonresident Alumni Legacy Waiver recipients may have an option to gain residency.

FULL-TIME GRADUATE STATUS

To be considered a full-time graduate student, you must be enrolled in at least 6 credits.

• MA/MS graduate instructors are expected to take 9 credits in the fall and 6 in the spring to complete 30 credits in two years.
  o PhD students are expected to take 9 credits each semester of their coursework, so they complete their coursework in 2 years.

• Graduate instructors who want to work in addition to their instructorship must fill out a Work 20+ hours form and have it approved by the department head.

• Students in their last semester who have completed all the requirements on their program of study except for three thesis/dissertation credits may also be considered full-time with 3 thesis/dissertation credits; contact the DGS for details.

GRADES AND ACADEMIC STANDING

All students in the MS/MA and PhD degrees must meet the School of Graduate Studies' requirements. Only grades of B- (80-82% in a course) or better will be accepted for credits in support of the degree programs, and students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 to remain in the program.

For full information on academic standing refer to the USU Academic Progress Policy.

P-GRADE POLICY

P (Pass) will be used for thesis or dissertation research and continuing graduate advisement.
INCOMPLETE POLICY

According to university policy:

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances. The term “extenuating” circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter course schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by employer, (5) judicial obligations, or (6) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor. The student may petition the instructor for time beyond the end of the semester to finish the work. If the instructor agrees, two grades will be given, an “I” and a letter grade for the course computed as if the missing work were zero.

For incomplete grades: you are required to complete the work by the time agreed upon (which may not be longer than 12 months). If no change of grade is submitted by the instructor within the prescribed period, the “I” will be removed, and the letter grade originally submitted with the “I” will remain as the permanent grade for the course.

For further information refer to the “Incomplete (I) Grade” policy.

STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

In rare circumstances, you may need to request a leave of absence. If this is the case, contact the DGS, Dr. Jared Colton at jared.colton@usu.edu.

GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR LEAVE POLICY

Below are guidelines for handling both short- and long-term planned and unplanned absences.

SHORT TERM UNPLANNED ABSENCE

Short-term sickness and family illness; no longer than one week of class:

- Notify the DoC, Dr. Beth Buyserie, and the Assistant Director of Composition (ADoSC) via email or phone immediately (refer to Contact Information).
- Notify your students electronically regarding assignments, due dates, and other course work.
**Short Term Planned Absence**

Professional commitments or planned medical leave; no longer than one week of class:

1. Notify the DoC and ADoC in advance.
2. Plan with a substitute instructor to carry out in-class activities or plan with students to do meaningful online work. *Classes may not simply be cancelled;* students must complete work that fulfills course and particular unit goals. Possible work could include online peer review and revisions, online discussion forums, or other.

**Multiple and Long-Term Absence**

Instructors should first follow the procedures above under Short-term Unplanned/Planned Absence.

If for any reason the absence will be longer than one week (semester total), the absences must be discussed with the DOC and ADOC, who will, if necessary, contact the Department Chair. Extended absences may have implications for health coverage, substitute pay, and more.

To avoid student complaints, it is vital that you contact the relevant parties (including your own students) about an absence longer than one week.

**Information About Resigning From a GI-ship**

When circumstances mean that a student has to give up a GI-ship, they need to be aware of procedures and consequences. Should the need arise, notify the following department members as soon as possible and in writing:

- Dr. Beth Buyserie, DoC
- Dr. Jared Colton, DGS
- Carol Hatch, GPC
- Sara Johns, Staff Assistant
- Annie Nielson, Business Manager
- Dr. Phebe Jensen, Department Head

Because it is so difficult to replace teachers at the last minute, timeliness is crucial. Leaving a GI-ship means you are terminating a signed contract, and in such cases, professional courtesies like timeliness and in-writing notification are in order. How you leave a position reflects as much on your professionalism as how you conduct yourself during the terms of your position.
FACE-TO-FACE GRADUATE CLASSES VIA REMOTE ACCESS

Students in the face-to-face master's programs (e.g., Creative Writing, Folklore, LCC) and the PhD program should be aware that all graduate classes are face-to-face. A student's physical presence is expected in all classes. On rare occasions with the proper documentation from medical professionals, a student may petition an instructor to attend a particular class meeting via Skype or other video platform because of extenuating medical conditions. Such periods should not typically last longer than the equivalent of two weeks of class time. The student should seek permission from the instructor in writing prior to the class meeting, and the instructor has the right to refuse based on the particular class activities planned for that meeting if those activities aren't conducive to remote attendance.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

REQUESTING AND USING ACCOMMODATIONS

Utah State University is committed to providing students with disabilities reasonable accommodations to provide equal access. In order to make the University aware you are in need of an accommodation, please follow the instructions on the Getting Started page to set up a meeting with an accessibility consultant. Accommodations are determined on an individualized basis through an interactive process that begins during a student's initial appointment with their Accessibility Consultant.

Accommodation decisions are based on the impact of a student's disability, any relevant academic policies, and an assessment of the essential elements of a course or program of study.

Accommodations can be requested for anything related to the university experience. Students should let their Accessibility Consultant know immediately if an accommodation is not working or if additional accommodations are needed.

SUBMITTING COURSE ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS USING AGGIE ACCESS

Students who have been approved for accommodations should follow the instructions on Aggie Access to submit their Course Accommodation Requests each semester. After students submit their Course Accommodation Request, written notification of approved accommodations will be sent to the course instructor.

Students needing assistance submitting their request should call or visit the DRC for help.
GENERAL GUIDANCE, GRADUATE CULTURE, AND TRAVEL

HOUSING

On campus housing is available for both single and married graduate students. For more information, visit Housing Services.

TECHNOLOGY

Computer and network use must conform to USU’s existing policies and procedures regarding appropriate use of computing, networking, and information resources. If you are concerned that your legitimate research needs require something that is not compatible with these policies and procedures, contact the DGS for guidance.

EMAIL

Check your university email regularly for all essential university communication. Colleagues, students, and faculty will use your USU email to contact you, particularly about USU related things. Do not use a private email for USU-related business.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

While the department encourages online collaboration, particularly with the department via social media, it’s important to remember that anything you say and do on online is available to others. Therefore, the following are guidelines for appropriate online conduct.

First and foremost, do not post anything personal about a colleague or student on any form of social media, and do not post anything criticizing USU, which could also affect your colleagues and students. If you have a complaint or concern, please contact the DGS, and they will do their best to advise you on whether or not to file a formal complaint or seek other action. Online can mean forever, and comments and posts can be forwarded or copied. Years from now current or prospective employers could find posts that you create now. This could not only affect you but your students, colleagues, and professors as well. So, above all else, respect others. Don't infringe on the privacy of your friends, colleagues, and faculty.

Do not post about confidential or proprietary information on social media such as student grades or sensitive information. Use good ethical judgment and follow university policies.

Refer to USU's Social Media Guidelines for more information on social media usage.
OFFICE SPACE

The office is a professional workplace and should be upheld as such. Respect the working habits of your colleagues.

WORK/SCHOOL BALANCE

SELF-CARE

Throughout grad school, it’s important to take care of yourself. Graduate school can be overwhelming and can quickly take over your life. Make sure you sleep well each night (all-nighters will only hold you back!).

If you are ever feeling overwhelmed, make sure you contact the DGS or talk to a mentor. There are professional services on campus that can help.

RESPECT AND POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

As a member of the Department of English at Utah State University, your responsibility is to:
- Be aware of your role in upholding dignity and respect at work;
- Make sure your own behavior does not cause offence or misunderstanding;
- Be prepared to offer support to a colleague affected by this type of situation.
- You are expected to act in a civil manner. Civility involves treating others with dignity.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In its programs and activities, Utah State University does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, genetic information, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, disability, status as a protected veteran, or any other status protected by University policy or local, state, or federal law.

For more information, please refer to the office of equity’s information on non-discrimination.

INCIVILITY

You are expected to avoid incivility. Incivility includes a long list of unprofessional behavior such as (but not limited to):
- Rudeness
- Yelling
• Intimidation or bullying
• Threatening comments or behaviors/actions
• Unsolicited and unwelcome conduct or comments (oral or written including email communication) that cause offense, humiliation, or physical or emotional harm to any individual.
• Unsolicited and unwelcome gestures, actions, or contact that cause offense, humiliation, or physical or emotional harm to any individual.

Incivility can be subtle or overt. It may be a single event or may involve a continuing series of incidents and may involve the abuse of authority or position. Uncivil behavior may be unintended or deliberately directed at another individual. In any case, the impact on that individual is what must be addressed. Incivility can also create a poisoned workplace.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying is defined as behavior of a physical, verbal, or a psychological nature that is unwanted and unwelcome and that could reasonably be regarded as offensive. The bully, intentionally or unintentionally, misuses the power of position, knowledge or personality to domineer, intimidate or humiliate others.

The following are common examples of bullying behavior (this is not an exclusive list):
• Open aggression, threats, shouting abuse or the use of obscene, inappropriate, language.
• Frequent or repeated humiliation; repeatedly putting another colleague down.
• Sneering at, mocking, or ridiculing another colleague.
• Teasing about a physical, mental, or emotional condition.
• Unreasonable scrutiny or unreasonable demands.
• Taking credit for another person’s work.
• Undermining a person’s authority.
• Spreading malicious rumors and gossip.
• Isolation, non-co-operation, or exclusion within the workplace.
• Inappropriate comments on appearance.

Harassment

Harassment is defined as any act or conduct that is unwanted and unwelcome and that could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating on any of the following discriminatory grounds: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and race.

The following are common examples of harassment (this is not an exhaustive list):
• Treating people less favorably or subjecting them to ridicule.
- Demeaning and derogatory remarks, name-calling, and using potentially hurtful nicknames.
- Isolation, non-cooperation, or exclusion within the workplace.
- Inappropriate comments on appearance.
- Inappropriate criticism of work performance, including teaching or research performance.
- Undermining the authority of a colleague in the workplace; this includes gossiping about the colleague.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted and unwelcome conduct that could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating. Sexual harassment undermines the dignity of the recipient, and adversely affects work performance. You are encouraged to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the USU Title IX Coordinator at any time.

University employees have different obligations, depending on their job title, in how they are required to respond to disclosures of sexual misconduct. An employee’s obligations are based on whether the employee is a designated confidential resource, reporting employee, or resource connection employee.

New employees will receive an email from the Office of Equity within their first 30 days of employment notifying them of their designation and training obligations. All employees will receive an email from the Office of Equity at the start of each fiscal year reminding them of their designation and annual training obligations. A full list of reporting employees is available on USU's Policy 340: Required Reporting of Sexual Misconduct.

The following are common but not exclusive examples of sexual harassment:
- Sexually suggestive jokes or comments.
- Innuendo or jokes about a person’s sexual orientation.
- Insults or inappropriate questions about one’s private life.
- Display of offensive material.
- Leering, offensive gestures or whistling.
- Groping, patting or unnecessary touching.
- Suggestions that sexual favors may further someone’s career, or that refusal may damage it.
Racial Harassment

Racial Harassment is defined as unwanted or unwelcome conduct based on a person’s race, which is offensive to the recipient, and which might threaten a person's security or create a stressful, hostile or intimidating work environment. Harassment on the grounds of race may include:

- Verbal harassment: offensive jokes or remarks about a person’s race or ethnic origin, ridicule or assumptions based on racial stereotypes.
- Visual harassment: production, display, or circulation of materials offensive to particular racial or ethnic groups, such as cartoons or racial propaganda.
- Microaggressions: indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group (typically a statement or specific action).

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory,
or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group” (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, et al., 2007, p. 273).

Although this definition focuses on racial microaggressions, microaggressions can target any marginalized group identity, such as race, socioeconomic class, gender, sexuality, nationality, citizenship, ability, etc.

USU’s Social Climate Support Team
The Social Climate Support Team works with students and employees to provide support when an individual has experienced bias, racism, or microaggressions. As an institution of higher education, we welcome a broad array of expression and thought from many different perspectives. Behaviors and speech that show bias hate are harmful to not only those who experience them, but to our broader university community.

Complete this form if you would like to seek support for yourself or another in our university community.

Religious Harassment
Religious Harassment is defined as unwanted or unwelcome conduct based on a person’s religion, which is offensive to the recipient, and which might threaten a person’s security or create a stressful, hostile or intimidating work environment.

You are encouraged to report incidents of religious harassment to the office of equity at any time.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL YOU ARE NOT BEING TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT:

As part of the commitment to an environment which upholds dignity and respect, the Department of English has a number of resources available to those who feel that they are the subject of bullying and harassment and has established procedures to deal with formal complaints.

INFORMAL PROCESSES

If you feel you are being harassed or bullied, you should:

- If possible, endeavor to make it clear to the person, or persons, causing offence that such behavior is offensive and unacceptable.
- Keep a record of incidents so that you can be specific about the behavior or actions that are causing offence.
- Report this behavior to a faculty member in an administrative position; this includes the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Head.
- You may also speak with the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity office (AAEO). Please note that all instances of sexual harassment MUST be reported to the AAEO office.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the employee continues to disrespect others, disciplinary actions may be taken by the Department of English. If found to be acting unprofessionally, graduate instructors may be placed on a probationary period; if still in violation during the probationary period, instructors may not be reappointed to teaching.

A WARNING ABOUT RETALIATION

It is a violation of USU policy to retaliate in any way against a person(s) because he/ she have filed a complaint, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation or proceeding. This includes action taken against a bystander who intervened to stop or attempt to stop discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, domestic violence and/or dating violence. Retaliation may take many forms and may include intimidating, threatening, coercing or in any way discriminating against an individual because of the individual’s complaint or participation. Action is generally deemed retaliatory if it would deter a reasonable person in the same circumstances from opposing practices prohibited
by the University. USU will take immediate and responsive action to any report of retaliation and may pursue disciplinary action as appropriate.
GENERAL CHAIRING RESPONSIBILITIES:

While every mentor/mentee relationship will look different, here are some guidelines for best practices.

When a faculty member considers chairing a student’s thesis or dissertation, they should talk to the student about work habits. For example, the faculty member should let the student know how often the faculty member responds to emails. The student should share their work habits with the potential chair. Things students and potential chairs should discuss: how will the potential chair view and support the student's work? How will the potential chair's epistemology affect their reading of the student's work? I.e. How well do the potential chair’s values match up with the student's? If the potential chair subscribes to any specific schools of thought that might inform how they read a student’s work, then the student should know that from the onset.

Once a faculty member agrees to chair a student's thesis or dissertation, they should start meeting together at least once a month until the thesis/dissertation is defended. If the faculty member is not going to meet or at least chat/email over the summer, they should let the student know. If possible, monthly communication over the summer between the student and chair is encouraged.

Meetings between the student and chair could happen in lots of ways. If possible, meetings should be held on campus during regular business hours (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m). There may be times when the student and chair need to be flexible about this, but chairs should try their best to meet these criteria to set a good standard for professionalism and boundaries for the student.

As part of these meetings, the chair should be sure to communicate with the student on the following:

- **Forming a thesis/dissertation committee** (refer below for more advice)
- **Forming Thesis/dissertation ideas.** Many students are often confused and uncertain about how to come up with a thesis topic, and a mentor can play a key role in guiding them through this process and introducing them to faculty who can help them, depending on their research interests.
- **Drafting a thesis/dissertation.** Including the differences between Plan A or Plan B thesis (for master’s students) and the differences between an article-based dissertation and a monograph for PhD students.
- **Developing a thesis/dissertation timeline** (based on student’s specific academic plan). Best practice is to schedule the thesis/dissertation defense as soon as possible for early March in their last semester.
Working with IRB processes (if applicable) If, in your thesis conversations, it sounds like your mentee might be interested in pursuing a project that requires IRB approval, you should alert them to this and make them aware of what the IRB process is and what it involves.

- Chairs can also direct students to faculty who have experience with IRB approval (e.g., Afsane Rezaei, Jared Colton, Lisa Gabbert, Joyce Kinkead, Rebecca Walton, Ryan Moeller, Avery Edenfield)

Professionalizing as a graduate student including professional behavior in academic spaces like conferences (refer below for more advice)

A student’s chair will be an integral part of the students’ academic career. Faculty members should work to empower their mentees to make their own decisions and take confidence in those decisions in their graduate career. While the mentoring relationship is a wonderful way to provide advice and support, faculty members should make sure that they are also encouraging students to think and act independently and provide them with opportunities to listen to advice and then make their own decisions.

Helping Form a Committee

Once a faculty member has agreed to chair a thesis/dissertation, they should also be helping the student find committee members.

This might happen in a lot of ways, but chairs should work to help their students talk about their thesis with other people, and coach them on how to ask faculty members to be part of their committee. To facilitate these conversations, the chair might consider an email to introduce their student to faculty members in the English department or a department related to their scholarly interests whom they have not met before.

Help prepare the student for these introductions by discussing useful questions and conversation topics that will be productive for meeting a new faculty member or colleague. For example, chairs should help the student prepare their “elevator pitch,” or how to discuss their research in two minutes or less (i.e., balancing information with conciseness).

Planning for a Thesis/Dissertation Defense

Going into a students’ final year, chairs should remind their student to speak with the DGS to ensure that they have the necessary paperwork completed to graduate. There are multiple forms to fill out in a timely matter; chairs should refer to https://gradschool.usu.edu/forms/ for an idea of how much paperwork each student must complete to graduate.

Chairs should help their student plan a defense date in early March, if possible, to
ensure they will be able to graduate on time.

**Students should not have many revisions after a successful defense**—little if any, really. The thesis chair should have read and approved the version of the thesis that is being sent to the rest of the committee for the defense. Most of the coaching should happen before the defense and before the other members of the committee read the thesis/dissertation. The thesis/dissertation sent to the committee should be a polished document. The thesis/dissertation should be sent to the rest of the committee at least two weeks (preferably 3-4 weeks for dissertations) before the scheduled defense date.

**Thesis Chair Checklist**

The checklist below will be given to faculty when they agree to chair a thesis. Ideally, a student establishes their thesis chair, forms their thesis committee, and writes their proposal before the end of their first year in the graduate program. This will not always happen. You may need to adapt the checklist below due to the student's needs. For example, if you do not agree to chair their thesis until their third semester, then each task in the first year will need to happen as soon as possible. It is still very possible for your student to finish on time, even if they don't get this process started until their third semester. So don't panic!

After agreeing to chair a student's committee, you need to do the following within their first year:

- Begin meeting with your student at least monthly.
- Help the student choose additional committee members as soon as possible. Remember that two members of the committee come from within the student's program while one member must come from outside the student's program. Ideally, choosing committee members happens early in the student's second semester. Once committee members are chosen, instruct the student to complete their Supervisory Committee Approval Form (SCAF) with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) Jared Colton as soon as committee members are chosen. Ideally, this happens mid-second semester.
- Advise the student in writing their thesis proposal, usually a 7-12 page document, depending on the predicted length of the thesis. This proposal usually includes an introduction to the project topic, a lit review, the student's project exigence, timeline for project, etc. The area of interest and the committee's preferences will impact what the proposal looks like. For example, a creative writing proposal will look different than a folklore proposal.
- Once the student's proposal is in good shape, send it to the other committee members and schedule a proposal approval meeting where the committee can give the student feedback and writing advice. There is no form required for this meeting to take place. Meeting in-person is encouraged but meeting over Zoom is permitted.
• After the committee verbally approves the thesis proposal, instruct your student to contact the DGS to complete the Thesis Proposal Approval form, which requires the student to submit an abstract; if IRB approval is necessary, discuss this with your student. Thesis credits cannot be registered for until this is done. Ideally, this happens by the end of the second semester.
• Be sure to discuss summer communication expectations with your student. Many faculty members are on 9-month contracts and should not be expected to maintain communication about the thesis over the summer; however, some thesis chairs may want to check in with the student a few times because it can make starting back in the fall a smoother process.

The second year requires the following:
• Continue meeting with your students at least monthly, though meetings may be more or less frequent given the stage of the project.
• The student should start drafting their thesis by the beginning of their third semester, so that they have a completed draft by early in their fourth semester. Have your student contact graduate program assistant Jenny Mansfield for thesis formatting guidance.
• Encourage the student to attend at least one thesis information session from the grad school (available online and in-person), as well as the monthly graduate student information sessions with the DGS, where thesis processes, requirements, and forms will be discussed regularly.
• Once you think their thesis is ready for defense (i.e., you anticipate minimal revisions, if any), contact the other committee members to schedule the defense. Try to hold your student’s defense the first half of March of their fourth semester.
• If your student is not close to a defensible thesis by the end of February/early March, then contact the DGS to discuss an alternate schedule of events.
• Advise your student to contact the DGS in order to schedule the defense using the Appointment for Examination form, which also must be submitted to the graduate school at least 10 business days before the defense date. The other members of the committee should receive a copy of the thesis to read at least two weeks in advance of the defense date.
• Once the student defends successfully, you must inform the DGS in an email. A Record of Examination (ROE) form will then be sent around to the student and committee to be signed.
• Once students have defended their thesis and completed any required revisions, they must submit the thesis to the graduate school and/or Digital Commons. Instruct your student to contact graduate program assistant Jenny Mansfield for more information. Jenny will guide the student through the formatting and submission process.
• Advise your student to continuing working with the DGS to complete all forms required for graduation. After the graduate school has been informed of your student’s successful defense, they will send your student a graduation checklist. Please advise your student to complete the items on the list as soon as possible.
You may be asked to (digitally) sign additional post-defense documents as part of this checklist, so continue to check your email.

- Finally, remember that your student is taking thesis credits with you listed as the instructor of record. You may even need to submit a grade for a previous semester if the student took thesis credits before the current semester. P/F/T are your options: pass/fail/temporary. If you have a student taking thesis credits in the fall who has not finished their thesis, award them a T grade until their thesis is successfully completely and defended. (Note: The thesis credits in Spring will not show up in your regular list of courses to grade, so you will need to use Service Now to change the thesis grade from a T to a P in Spring.)

**General Mentoring Advice:**

**Communication with Students**

- As a faculty mentor, faculty may remind students (if applicable) that faculty members are on a nine-month contract, especially if they will not be able to respond to emails during the summer months.
- If faculty members don’t reply to a student’s email within a few days (excluding weekends), a student should feel comfortable sending a reminder email to them, and faculty members should communicate this to their student.

**Helping Students Find a Balance Between Teaching and Scholarship**

Our graduate students who are also instructors often struggle with finding a balance between the demands of teaching and the demands of their coursework and research.

Faculty members should emphasize that graduate students **are students first** (though obviously, their teaching is very important as well!). For GIs, teaching should be 50% of their time. Chairs should listen to the students they are working with and invite them to talk about their struggles and strategies when it comes to balancing their teaching and scholarship. The better time management they have, the better they’ll be able to write a strong thesis/dissertation.

Of course, any specific questions about teaching ENGL 1010/2010 should be directed to the Director of Composition (Dr. Beth Buyserie).

**Advising on Courses and Registration**

The DGS will make sure that students are taking the courses needed to graduate; however, you should welcome the chance to be involved in these decisions, especially with electives, internships, etc.

Students may ask for advice on which electives will be most helpful to their graduate career and you should offer what you feel comfortable saying about which courses may be helpful.
ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO PRESENT THEIR WORK AT CONFERENCES

As appropriate, encourage your graduate students to present their work before they graduate, whether locally at USU, regionally, or nationally; for PhD students, encourage them to attend at least three national academic conferences during their time in the program.

If your students are presenting, consider supporting them in the following ways:

- Give some feedback on proposals for conferences
- Provide general advice for presenting and networking at the conference
- Talk to students about the conferences that you regularly attend and share your own experiences of applying to conferences and writing conference papers, providing examples of your proposals, abstracts, and conference papers
- Help students locate conferences and CFPs in their areas of interest, pointing them to useful websites, listservs, etc.
- Host a “practice session” for students to give conference presentation(s) and provide feedback and advice.
  - You might talk to the DGS and others about hosting a larger, collective “practice session” if there are several students who have a conference coming up.

Students should reach out to the DGS for information on what is currently available for funding for academic conferences.

CAREER GOALS AND PLANNING

Talk to your students about their career goals—what do they want to do after they graduate? How can they focus their coursework and thesis/dissertations in ways that will prepare them for these career goals?

You might provide students with resources for exploring careers, which might include getting them in touch with alumni or former students and colleagues, introducing them to the resources available at Career Services, and others, such as exploring opportunities for jobs, fellowships, and internships.

In particular, if a master’s student is applying to PhD programs directly after graduating with their master’s degree, applications can be due as early as December of their second year, and they should begin preparing their applications as soon as possible. Please help them on their materials in the fall; provide feedback on letters of intent and writing samples, and advise them on soliciting recommendations, for example.
DEGREE SPECIFIC INFORMATION

THE MASTER’S PROGRAM(S)

THE MS/MA DEGREE PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH AND IN FOLKLORE & AMERICAN STUDIES

Our master’s degree programs provide a broad education beyond a bachelor's degree. They prepare students for a variety of careers, including teaching at a two-year college, pursuing a PhD, working in or with museums or archival collections, or doing writing-intensive work outside academia.

Students in English choose one of two available specializations: 1) Literature, Culture, & Composition (LCC), or 2) Creative Writing. Refer to the English website for more details on choosing a specialization.

The master’s programs in English with a specialization in Literature, Culture, and Composition (LCC) allows students to do advanced work or teach in the fields of literary criticism, cultural studies, and/or rhetoric & composition. The specialization is designed to supplement and build upon student’s prior work in the discipline of English. Refer to the LCC website for more details.

The master's programs in English with a specialization in Creative Writing allows students to do advanced work in creative writing—concentrating on poetry, fiction, and/or creative nonfiction. Refer to the Creative Writing website for more details.

Folklore is located between the disciplines of literature and anthropology, and it includes the study of traditional beliefs, stories, legends, songs, festivals, and arts of a given group. Refer to the Folklore website for more details.

All master's students in English and in Folklore & American Studies are admitted to the Master of Science degree. Those who wish may switch to a Master of Arts degree if they can demonstrate proficiency in one or more foreign languages (the MS degree is identical except for the language requirement). Refer to Language Requirement below for details. Both the MS and the MA degrees require 30 credits, including a thesis.

THE MASTER OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION (MTC)

The Master of Technical Communication (MTC) is a 33-credit professional degree that can be completed entirely online and has no thesis or language requirement. Students in the program include practicing professional/technical writers—people who do communication-intensive work in a variety of commercial or non-profit organizations, including editors, publications managers, proposal writers, documentation writers, etc. The program also includes secondary education teachers who are interested in expanding their skills and knowledge, adding technical communication to their teaching...
repertoire, and/or teaching at a two-year college. Other students in the MTC are preparing for careers as practicing professional communicators, and some plan to earn PhDs and become scholars of technical communication.

Since the program is taught entirely online, students need sufficient motivation to participate in ongoing online discussions, and they need to be technologically self-reliant. To accommodate students in different time zones or with different work schedules, classes are taught asynchronously, with interactions happening in the Discussion forums in the class Canvas site. See the MTC website for more details.

MASTER OF ARTS VS. MASTER OF SCIENCE (MA VS. MS)

Those wishing to pursue an MA degree will need to provide proof of language requirement fulfillment by the beginning of their fourth semester (refer to specific information below). For those pursuing an MS degree, there is no language requirement.

If you obtained the designated course work during your bachelor’s degree, it is possible this course work will meet the graduate school language requirements. Contact the DSG for details.

NOTE:

- If you plan on applying to a PhD program, an MA degree is often preferable in English and American Studies.
- The Graduate School allows students a maximum of six years to complete their MA/MS program.
- Coursework that is more than eight years old may not be used for a graduate degree without recertification of the coursework.

LENGTH OF THE MASTER’S PROGRAM

The English master’s programs are designed to be completed in two years.

The Graduate School allows six years from the time you matriculate (i.e., from the time you are accepted into the program) to complete your program. Taking longer than six years requires special approval from the Grad School. Courses on your transcript have a “shelf life” of eight years, after which they may not be counted toward your degree. For example, if you took a course in fall 2014, in spring 2023 it will no longer count toward your degree.
CREDIT HOURS

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

- You must earn a minimum of 30 credits for your master's degree.
- All Graduate Instructors must take ENGL 6820 (Teaching Practicum).

MASTER'S THESIS (PLAN A & PLAN B)

For any MS/MA degree you must complete a thesis. You do not complete a thesis for the Master of Technical Communication program.

The thesis Plan A requires 6 credits, while Plan B requires 3 credits. You must complete a thesis proposal defense with the accompanying form prior to registering for thesis credits. These credits will usually be taken in the fourth semester.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

FOR THE MASTER OF THE ARTS DEGREE

An MA degree signifies proficiency in one or more foreign languages. You must pass a language requirement in order to receive an MA degree. To do this, you must demonstrate current ability in one or more foreign languages. Without a foreign language, you will receive an MS degree.

Specifically, the MA language requirement may be completed in one of the following ways:

- Pass a test of written and oral comprehension in an approved foreign language through USU’s Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies (LPCS). Students may seek testing outside of USU if LPCS does not offer a specific language test.
- Demonstration of proficiency in one foreign language by successful completion of one course at the 2020-level or higher (or its equivalent).
- Demonstration of proficiency in two foreign languages by successful completion of the 1020 course level in one language and the 2010 course level in the second language (or its equivalent).
- Completion of an upper-division (3000-level or higher) foreign language grammar or literature course requiring the 2020 course level (or its equivalent) as a prerequisite.
NOTE:
- All coursework counting toward the MA language requirement must be taken for letter grade. Courses taken as pass/fail cannot count. (You can take as many or as few of these course as you need, provided you pass the final class in the two-year sequence with a C or better)
- Students who have passed coursework within the last 5 years from the date of matriculation in the department’s program may petition for acceptance of coursework to fulfill the requirement. Contact the DGS.

SUMMER COURSES

You can only count 12 credits of summer coursework toward your degree. You may take the Bennion Teachers' Workshop (no more than twice) if the course number is offered with an ENGL prefix. If the course is not offered with an English prefix (ENGL), permission will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the DGS.

INTERNSHIP POLICY

USU English master's students can complete an internship (ENGL 6900) as part of their program of study, though only the Folklore program specifically encourages it. Internships for master’s degrees are for 3 credits (50 hours per credit = 150 hours worked for the internship).

The supervisory committee chair and the DGS must approve the internship prior to its start and determine the work that comprises the internship. Please note: the internship cannot be made up of unpaid departmental or programmatic work.

ONLINE COURSES

You may take online courses toward the degree, but you may not take the entire degree online.

DIRECTED STUDY

Directed Study credits (ENGL 6920) are granted only in exceptional cases because they take students out of scheduled graduate seminars (which can cause a class to be cancelled because of low enrollments) and because they place an extra supervision burden on faculty (who are not paid for their supervision). If you want to apply for Directed Study credits, you must make a case in writing to the DGS and...
the professor who would supervise the Directed Study. You may not take more than 3 credits total of Directed Study toward the degree.

**Transferring Between Programs**

Occasionally a student admitted to one program/specialization finds it necessary to transfer to another program/specialization within the department. If you should find yourself in this situation, contact the DGS.

**MA/MS Timeline to Graduation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year MA/MS Timeline</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>August</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you are a graduate instructor (GI) or have another assistantship, you need to pick up your office key from the Key Office, meet with Sara Johns to complete paperwork, and attend the pre-semester teaching workshop. All these things must be completed before the first day of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>GIs are automatically enrolled in First Student health insurance. If you qualify for a <a href="#">health insurance waiver</a>, you must complete it by mid-September.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meet with the DGS and the GPC to discuss your <a href="#">Program of Study (PoS)</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Register for spring semester classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apply for <a href="#">department scholarships</a> between January 1st and mid-February.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose your major professor/thesis chair. Meet with them to choose additional committee members and schedule a proposal review date. Committee should be chosen by the end of this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>March</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with the DGS and the GPC to discuss and update your <a href="#">Program of Study (PoS)</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete <a href="#">Supervisory Committee Form (SCAF)</a> with GPC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>April</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Register for fall and/or summer semester classes. If you are a writing a plan A thesis, you should register for 3 thesis credits in the fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee should review your thesis proposal. When approved, complete <a href="#">Thesis Proposal Approval (TPA)</a> form with help from DGS and/or</td>
</tr>
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GPC. You cannot register for thesis credits until this is done. Thesis proposal should be defended by the end of the semester.

**May**  
Complete [Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training](#) through CITI.

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**SECOND YEAR MA/MS TIMELINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
<td>GIs are automatically enrolled in First Student health insurance. If you qualify for a <a href="#">health insurance waiver</a>, you must complete it by mid-September.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>October</strong></td>
<td>Meet with DGS and GPC to update/submit PoS form. If you are changing from an MS to an MA, you must fill out a <a href="#">Transfer Request</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November</strong></td>
<td>Register for spring semester, including thesis credits, which requires completing a thesis credits form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **January** | Attend at least one [Thesis Information session](#) offered by the Graduate School (sessions available online and in-person).  
Meet with DGS and GPC to make sure you are on track with forms for graduation. |
| **February** | Complete a draft of your thesis and submit the draft to your committee. If the committee decides the draft is defensible, contact DGS in order to schedule defense with the grad school using the [Appointment for Examination form](#) (form must be submitted 10 business days before defense). |
| **March** | Defend your thesis. Your committee chair needs to let the DGS know that you successfully defended your thesis. This is usually done via email.  
After your thesis defense, contact Jennifer Mansfield for help submitting thesis to the grad school (Plan As and dissertations).  
Plan B's need Jennifer to approve formatting via email. Once she approves formatting, you need to upload your thesis to [Digital Commons](#). |
| **April** | Confirm that you have completed all forms necessary for graduation, including the [Authorship and Copyright form](#) and [Thesis/Dissertation Format and Style and Electronic Publication Approval form](#). Don't forget to [apply for graduation](#). |
May | Move out of your office and return key(s)!

**Thesis Guidelines**

Students who intend to pursue Plan A or Plan B options should have their master’s Thesis/Project Approval Form signed by their committee and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies at the end of their second semester.

Before you start writing even the roughest draft of your Plan A thesis or your Plan B project, do the following things:

- Change the left margins on your document to 1.5” and verify that the top, bottom, and right margins are 1”.
- Learn what page breaks are and how to use them. Do not use multiple returns to create page breaks. Use the actual page break feature. For example, table of contents, copyright page, and the first page of your writing should all have a page break.
- Learn how to use headings and associated section breaks. Using headings and section breaks keeps your table of contents accurate as you write and edit. It also makes your work more accessible to people with disabilities.
- Consult with your major professor/thesis chair to determine which style guide (e.g., MLA, APA, or Chicago) you’re going to use. If it involves footnotes, put those in as you go!
- Learn how to use tab stops. You should not be using tab repeatedly to create an indent other than a general paragraph indent.

If you are writing a non-traditional thesis (such as incorporating a podcast or a website or incorporating a multi-paper format), make sure your thesis committee approves the structure/format at your proposal defense.

If you are writing a creative writing thesis, most likely you will wish to preserve the intellectual property rights for future publication. If so, you will need to complete an **Embargo Request form**. Your thesis chair will inform the GPC to send the form around for signatures.

Contact the English Department’s Thesis Reviewer, [Jenny Mansfield](mailto:jenny.mansfield@usu.edu) as you begin writing your thesis for help with formatting your thesis in accordance with **USU publication guidelines**. Jenny will also check your completed thesis before you submit it to the Graduate School.
THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

THE COMMITTEE

A master's thesis committee must be comprised of at least three members. Once a faculty member has agreed to serve as chair (major professor), you should work with the chair to select the other two committee members.

Each member of the committee must have at least a master's degree, and at least one member of the committee should be from outside your area of emphasis (whether inside or outside of the department). If you request a non-tenure-line faculty member to chair or be a member of a thesis committee, and this faculty member has not previously been approved by the area (folklore, etc.) committee to do so, the DGS must receive written approval from the area committee.

The committee should be approved by the end of the second semester of your graduate study.
THE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION AND RHETORIC (TCR) PROGRAM

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The PhD in Technical Communication & Rhetoric (TCR) is a 60-credit, 4-year, post-master’s degree program designed primarily to prepare students for careers as research-active university professors. All students accepted into the TCR program are given funding packages for four years, provided they remain in good standing. There is no foreign language competency requirement in the TCR program.

The TCR program is known for addressing issues of social and environmental justice, community engagement, diversity, and service learning—issues that can be explored with partners from a variety of fields and backgrounds. See the TCR website for more detail.

PHD PROGRAM DEGREE INFORMATION

COURSEWORK

The TCR PhD degree requires a minimum of 60 approved semester credits beyond a master’s degree.

In your first two years of the PhD program you will complete your coursework (36 of 60 credits). In order to make sure that you are taking courses that will count toward your PhD degree, be sure to consult with the DGS (Dr. Jared Colton) on a regular basis. Please note that coursework used to fulfill the requirements of a master's degree may not be used to fulfill the requirements for this PhD program.

The remaining 24 credits (of 60) will be comprised of your Research Internship (ENGL 7900; 6 credits) and Dissertation Research (7970; 18 credits).

In addition to the minimum 60 credits of coursework, you must take Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training, a brief online training on ethical conduct in research that the university requires of all PhD students.

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

When you complete your 36 credits of coursework, you must form a Supervisory Committee composed of faculty members willing to supervise your Comprehensive Exam and dissertation. This committee will consist of:

- A chair (aka major professor or advisor by the graduate school)
- Two members from within the core TCR faculty (Profs. Chen, Colton, Edenfield, McLaughlin, Moeller, and Walton)
• A fourth member from within the department but outside of the core TCR faculty (i.e., a professor from Folklore, creative writing, or LCC).
• A fifth member from outside of the English department

All members of this committee must have doctoral degrees and be approved by the Associate Vice Provost of Graduate Studies in accordance with the Utah State University General Catalog. Once you have received verbal commitments from faculty willing to serve on your committee, immediately inform the DGS in order to make sure the official paperwork is completed.

RESEARCH INTERNSHIP

ENGL 7900 (Research Internship) allows you to apply workplace field research theory and methods in an actual workplace setting. The questions that follow define the research internship, state prerequisites prior to beginning the internship, identify the time requirement, and outline student and supervisor responsibilities.

The research internship requires primary research—the systematic collection of information, data, or specific other source material, or the carrying out of research which can only be done in a specific location. Broadly defined, this component of our PhD program exists to:

• Provide you with research opportunities outside the context of the graduate coursework and immerse you in the processes of an actual professional communication culture.
• Involve you in primary research related to how professionals communicate in the workplace.
• Allow you to practice identifying, collecting, and analyzing evidence of specific communicative acts that frame professional communication.

Although the list below is not comprehensive, possible research projects could be envisioned in one or more of the following ways:

• Working for an extended period of time on-site in an organization as a participant-observer (e.g., a traditional internship with a research component).
• Working for an organization as a consultant, not necessarily at the physical site of the organization (e.g., telecommuting, again with a research component).
• Visiting the site of an organization regularly over a period of time as an observer, gathering data about communication as it happens (e.g., sitting in on meetings, monitoring email conversations, interviewing people who work in the organization) or studying the on-site archives (print or electronic) of the organization, but not necessarily operating as a productive member of the organization.
• Visiting a library or other archival site regularly over time to conduct primary research on a particular record of professional communication.
**Prerequisites to the Research Internship Project**

You will need to complete the following steps prior to beginning the research internship:

- Complete 7410 (fall).
- Complete 7000 (spring).
- Develop an acceptable proposal with research questions.
- Select a research supervisor from your Supervisory Committee.
- Receive approval of the project by the selected research supervisor.

You should aim to complete the research internship as soon as possible after completing your fourth semester. You will then give a public report (presentation) on your internship and how it connects to your dissertation in your fifth semester. This should be scheduled with your dissertation committee chair.

The research internship must be completed and graded before you may register for dissertation credits.

**Research Internship Requirements**

Research Internships constitute six credits of your program of study. To earn these six credits, you should plan to work approximately 300 hours on the research project. These 300 hours should include the time spent at the research site and work completed there, time spent collecting and analyzing data, and time spent creating the required research internship documentation.

Student and supervisor responsibilities for the research internship are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops proposal, including timeline for documentation and project completion.</td>
<td>Approves proposal; agrees to supervise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes and maintains work documentation, including required progress report.</td>
<td>Reviews documentation and responds to progress report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consults with supervisor on a regular basis in one or more of the following ways:</td>
<td>Provides consultation, as needed and as appropriate to the student’s fieldwork project. Typically, supervisor and student will consult on a bi-weekly schedule, but this schedule may be modified, as the supervisor deems necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Email correspondence</td>
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<td>- Telephone conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Face-to-face meetings</td>
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<td>- On-site visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writes final fieldwork report, which may take a variety of forms (for example, publication-ready article, pilot study, dissertation chapter).</td>
<td>Assesses report and determines fieldwork experience grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presents the fieldwork orally, with visual aids, in a public forum (usually a classroom in the English Department with faculty and other students in attendance).</td>
<td>Assesses oral presentation</td>
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THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

At the end of your first year in the PhD program, you must pass a Qualifying Exam, which is a formal evaluation of your progress by the Qualifying Exam committee, consisting of the entire TCR faculty, the Writing Program Director (if you are employed as a Graduate Instructor), and the DGS.

You are evaluated on the criteria listed below, based on the evidence of your transcript, your Curriculum Vitae (CV), your Program of Study worksheet, and your Annual Progress Report Form. You will also be evaluated based on testimony from the faculty who have observed your performance as a graduate student and Graduate Instructor.

If you receive a “pass with probation,” you will be evaluated again by the Qualifying Exam committee the following year. If you fail to meet the conditions of the remediation plan after a year of probation, the committee will recommend that you be dismissed from the program.

Once you have passed the Qualifying Exam, you will be reviewed each spring semester by your Supervisory Committee. If you have performed poorly since the previous review, the committee may recommend to the Qualifying Exam committee that you be put on probation or dismissed.

ANNUAL REVIEW

Each April each PhD student will undergo an annual review. You will submit a program of study worksheet, a current CV, a brief scholarly bio, and an annual progress report to be evaluated by the TCR faculty. If the student has already selected a committee, only those committee members should be in attendance.

For first year students or those who have not yet formed a committee, all TCR faculty should attend. (For first-year students, the annual review constitutes their Qualifying Exam.)

After each review, students should be assigned “probation” or “pass.”

**Definition of “Probation”**

Student has not met the standards of a progressing doctoral student.

**Definition of “Pass”**

Student has met the standards of a progressing doctoral student.

The progress report should be signed either by the student’s committee chair or the Ph.D. coordinator if that student does not yet have a committee. The names of all committee members should be included on the report, but only the signature of the chair
or TCR Ph.D. coordinator is required.

Students who are graduating the same year do not need to participate in the annual review process.

**THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

At the end of your formal course work, you will take the Comprehensive Exam. The Comprehensive Exam allows you to meet the following learning objectives:

1) convey broad knowledge of your academic field and situate yourself as a scholar within that field,
2) convey deep knowledge about a particular area of the field that will become your area of expertise,
3) identify and read scholarship relevant to your interests beyond what you read for your coursework,
4) revisit the most relevant of your course readings
5) respond to questions about your field and your scholarship in the moment based on knowledge you’ve developed and internalized.

The comprehensive exam has two parts: a written component and an oral component.

**Written Component:** For the written component, you will produce two essays of ~4,500-5,000 words each.

In your third year (coursework must be complete) you will write and defend your comprehensive exam essays. These essays are due to your Supervisory Committee by November 10 (to defend in the fall) or April 10 (to defend in the spring). We encourage students to begin writing their exam essays as soon as they are done with their coursework and internship.

Your essays should address the following prompts:

**Essay 1:** Please describe your research interests at two levels: 1) the broader ‘umbrella’ issue or problem that all of your work addresses and 2) two or three specific research questions that might inform particular research studies. Then situate your research interests within the broader field of technical communication and rhetoric. Characterize the field and explain why your work should be considered TCR scholarship. In what ways does your scholarly work inform the field of technical communication and rhetoric and extend existing scholarly conversations? Illustrate your answer with material from your reading list.

**Essay 2:** Design a 15-week undergraduate technical communication course on your area of scholarly expertise. You may design a traditional seminar course, an
online course, or a hybrid course. Be sure to include the following details and a rationale behind each:
- course description
- student learning outcomes
- syllabus (a brief outline of topics and assignments each week)
- reading list
- assignment descriptions

In your rationale, be sure to refer to specific works on your reading list for the best practices represented by research in the field. How will your course design engage students’ interest and prompt them to interact?

**Oral Component:** Your Supervisory Committee will review your essays before meeting with you for the oral component of the exam. This meeting will take place before the end of the semester in which you submit your essays. You should coordinate with the chair of your Supervisory Committee to schedule this meeting. (For students taking the Comprehensive Exam in the spring, the oral component of your Comprehensive Exam will typically occur during your annual review meeting.) Your Supervisory Committee members will provide feedback on your essays and will ask questions that allow you to expound upon your essays, to further characterize yourself as a scholar, to discuss the scholarship of the field, and to further demonstrate your knowledge. At the end of the oral component of the exam, the chair of your Supervisory Committee will notify you of the results. At this time, you will be told whether you are ready to proceed to the dissertation research phase of the TCR program.

If you do not pass the Comprehensive Exam, you will be allowed to retake the exam within one calendar year. If you do not pass the exam the second time, you will be asked to discontinue the program.

**Reading List:** Although you take the Comprehensive Exam at the completion of coursework, you should begin preparing for this exam upon starting the program. To complete the exam, you are responsible for generating a reading list and four contextualizing paragraphs which characterize the four themes below according to your own scholarly perspective. Given the scope of the Comprehensive Exam, the reading list should equally exemplify breadth and depth in the field.

You will work with your supervisory committee chair to develop a Comprehensive Exam reading list around four themes central to TCR:
- Theory & Rhetoric
- Technology & Design
- Pedagogy
- Research Methods

For each of the four themes, you will write a contextualizing paragraph, defining the
theme and situating your specific research focus within the broader theme. In these four paragraphs, you will contextualize and explain your approach to the themes, highlighting how your own research focus fits within the fields of technical communication and rhetoric and explaining your strategy for selecting appropriate works to include on the reading list.

These paragraphs and reading lists will help you define or articulate your scholarly identity, which will also help prepare your dissertation committee for the work you are going to submit to them.

You are strongly encouraged to draw from foundational, well-cited, and award-winning works relevant to technical communication and rhetoric, such as those that have won CCCC Technical and Scientific Communication awards, the Nell Ann Pickett award, and the Frank R. Smith award, as well as those in Central Works in Technical Communication (Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber, Eds.), and in Elizabeth Overman Smith’s 2000 article, “Points of reference in technical communication scholarship,” as well as other scholarly publications specifically applicable to your research focus.

The reading list will have approximately 100 works total, comprised of a well-balanced mix of scholarly books and articles. Many of these readings should come from your coursework. The reading list must address all four themes in a proportion to be negotiated with the committee chair.

After submitting your reading list, you should meet with the members of your Supervisory Committee to discuss your readings.

**Dissertation**

The PhD dissertation is a book-length written project based on original research undertaken by you as the candidate. It serves two purposes:

- Expand the knowledge of the field.
- Demonstrate that you are capable of original and meaningful research.

You should be working toward the selection of a dissertation topic from the moment of matriculation in the program, if not before. By the end of the first year in the program, you should have a good sense of the direction your research will take.

**First Year**

During your first year, you should take the opportunity to meet with the members of TCR core of professors as well as folks in English outside of the program (your committee will consist of three TCR faculty, one English, and one outside the department) to get a sense of which of them might be most compatible with your research aspirations.
As you are considering your options for your dissertation, you should keep in mind that your research topic needs to be somewhat compatible with at least one of the faculty's. For example, if the dissertation project is more based in rhetorical theory, then you might choose Dr. Colton, Dr. Moeller, or Dr. Chen.

If not, you may have to adjust your topic.

The idea is that the advisor you select will mentor you as you advance your research ideas. If none of the faculty is familiar with or interested in your topic, there is no one to mentor you.

SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS

During your second year, you should select a dissertation advisor and begin thinking about your research topic (you are strongly encouraged to do this before the end of the third semester).

Often, you will be able to advance your research in the courses you take over the next few years. Your advisor can help you select these courses and help you advance your research in them. Work in these classes can often be adapted to conference papers and journal articles, giving you the opportunity to see what others, in the profession, think about your ideas and giving you the opportunity to integrate their suggestions. After you complete your coursework, you will do a research internship worth 6 credit hours. Students often use this internship as an opportunity to examine the problem they will address in the dissertation.

The formal dissertation proposal is your opportunity to refine the problem to be researched and design the research methods. It is also the Supervisory Committee's opportunity to review and evaluate your research plans and advise you about the value and feasibility of the proposed project.

THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

The dissertation proposal is required to be between 11-12 double-spaced pages in length, not including references, with 1" margins and 12 pt. font. In it, you must:

- Define the scope of the research
- Convince the Supervisory Committee that your research project will produce knowledge valuable to the field
- Demonstrate that the research methods are valid and appropriate to the question at issue

A Supervisory Committee's signature to the Application to Candidacy Form, signals that the dissertation proposal has been approved and attests that you are ready to conduct
independent dissertation research (though completion of the requirement is not
guaranteed). Once your form and dissertation proposal have been approved you are not
a PhD candidate.

Because the choice of a topic and research design is so critical to your success,
Committees will rigorously review these proposals and may require multiple revisions.

In general, the proposal will consist of the following components (which may be tailored
somewhat for each project):

- **Research Question:** What problem or question have you identified as the focus of
  your research? Provide a brief overview of the theoretical and methodological
  frameworks within which you intend to work. You will explicate these in more
detail later.

- **Literature review:** The literature review accomplishes several things:
  - It helps provide a context in which to locate your project, showing the
    existence of a scholarly conversation in which you are about to participate.
  - It provides evidence that the subject is important enough to your field to
    have generated discussion.
  - It establishes your authority to enter the conversation, showing that you
    are knowledgeable about the discussion and would be a credible
    participant.
  - It allows you to formulate an argument for the exigency and value of the
    project you are about to undertake. In addition to showing that your topic
    has generated scholarly debate, you need to shape your review to show
    that your topic represents a gap in current knowledge, an area that has
    been inadequately or incompletely researched, and/or an area that
    warrants a revisit because new theoretical perspectives or research tools
    might provide new knowledge.

- **Procedures:** This section of your proposal explains how you will go about your
  research.
  - What methods of gathering data will you use, and why?
  - What methods will you use to analyze the data and why?

- **Contextualize your collection and analysis methods in the theoretical assumptions
  and approaches that guide your research.**

As you construct your research methodology, be aware that any research involving
human beings (referred to as ‘human subjects’ by IRB) must receive approval from the
Institutional Review Board (IRB). You must have IRB approval before your dissertation
proposal can be accepted by the committee.

- **Outline:** Provides a tentative outline of your dissertation, with chapter headings
  and a few lines of explanation under each. Add forecasts and transitions to help
  explain the rationale for your organization. Your readers will want to know why
  you have divided it this way and why you have chosen this sequence for the
  sections.
• **Timetable:** Presents a schedule that you plan to follow for completing the research and writing the dissertation. Bearing in mind the deadlines published by the School of Graduate Studies and your own plans for graduation, identify a tentative defense date and work backwards from that.

• **Completion:** You should plan to complete your proposal as soon after passing the Comprehensive Exam as you are able, but no later than one semester after completion.
  - Work with your major professor to develop your proposal, consulting with him/her about essential literature to read, about focusing your topic effectively, about selecting research and analysis methods, and about a feasible timetable.
  - You should also meet with other members of the Supervisory Committee, especially those who have specialized knowledge in areas important to your work.

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**The Dissertation**

You will meet with your full Supervisory Committee once each Spring semester for a formal review of progress on the dissertation. You will also meet informally with the major professor/chair on a regular basis and with other Committee members as necessary.

You must consult the Utah State University *Thesis/Dissertation requirements* for style rules and relevant forms.

You and your major professor will decide when the manuscript is ready to submit to the Supervisory Committee for final review *prior to the oral defense.*

The oral defense consists of a 90-minute public discussion of your research. All members of the Supervisory Committee must be present. The Supervisory Committee must unanimously approve the dissertation.

According to University regulations, you have 8 years from matriculation to finish the PhD degree.

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**Timetable for the Dissertation Proposal and Dissertation**

**To-do List:**

**First Year:**

- *If you are a GI,* attend the GI training with Dr. Beth Buyserie to discuss relevant
tasks and responsibilities of the GI position.

- **Throughout your first year in the program**, focus on your coursework.
- **In your first and second semesters**, start thinking about what your dissertation topic will be and who you might want to work with from the beginning.
- **In the classes you take your first year**, wherever possible, try to apply your coursework to potential ideas for your dissertation project.
- **By the end of your first year**, begin preparing for your qualifying exam/annual review by completing the annual review progress report, your CV, and your Program of Study.
- **By the end of your first semester and end of your second semester**, begin drafting comprehensive exam framing paragraphs (typically assigned by graduate faculty as coursework).

**Second Year:**

- **Before the end of your third semester in the program**, invite an eligible faculty member to serve as your major professor, and consult with them to form the Supervisory Committee.
- **Throughout your third semester**, continue drafting comprehensive exam framing paragraphs (typically assigned by graduate faculty as coursework).
- **In the Spring semester of each year after choosing your supervisory committee**, meet with the Supervisory Committee (now replacing the Director of Graduate Studies and the Exams Committee as advisors) to discuss the direction of your research, possible methods and essential literature.
- **During Spring semester of your second year**, prepare to begin your research internship to be completed over the summer.
- **By your second year**, if you are focusing on completing the degree in four years, you should be done with your coursework*.

*Please note that during your coursework you are a PhD student; you are not a PhD candidate until you defend your dissertation proposal.

**Third Year:**

- **By your third year**, you should have an established body of resources that you will turn into your literature review for your dissertation, as well as a more refined research question.
- **After passing the Comprehensive Exam**, write your dissertation proposal.
- **As you begin writing your dissertation proposal**, submit a request for approval of your research to the IRB Board, if using human subjects.
- Schedule the proposal review with your Supervisory Committee.
- **At least two weeks before the scheduled review**, submit copies of the proposal to the Supervisory Committee.
- Meet with the Supervisory Committee to discuss approval of the proposal. The Committee may require extensive revision of the proposal.
- **When the proposal is approved**, submit the Application for Candidacy for Doctoral
Degree Form to the School of Graduate Studies*

- **After approval of proposal**, begin collecting data for the dissertation.
- **After approval of your proposal**, you are now a PhD candidate! Candidacy is sometimes referred to as ‘All but Dissertation’ or ABD.

*Research using human subjects must have been approved by the IRB before the School of Graduate Studies will approve the Application for Candidacy. No human subject research may be implemented before approval.

**Fourth Year:**

- **Begin to write the dissertation.**
- **Submit chapters as they are completed to your major professor.** He/she may require revision, and will determine when the chapters are ready for circulation to other Committee members.
- **With the major professor,** determine when the completed, revised manuscript is ready for final review by the Committee.
- **Schedule the oral defense of the dissertation at least 7 weeks before the anticipated degree-completion date.** You will submit the completed dissertation to the Committee at least one month before the defense. Each committee member must read and approve the dissertation before signing the Appointment for Examination form. Signed by all Supervisory Committee members, this form affirms that the members believe the dissertation is ready for defense (see the General Catalog). You will circulate the Appointment for Examination Form to the Supervisory Committee and submit it to the School of Graduate Studies a minimum of 10 working days prior to the oral defense (see the General Catalog).
- **After scheduling the oral defense**, receive several forms for completion of the degree process (see the General Catalog).

**The Oral Defense**

The Supervisory Committee records the results of the defense and any additional requirements on the Record of Examination Completion form and submits it to the Graduate School Office.

You submit the dissertation to the thesis coordinator for final review of format, style, and mechanics. You must revise in compliance with the thesis coordinator’s requirements before the thesis coordinator will submit the dissertation to the graduate dean for approval.

The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies gives final approval to the dissertation, and has the authority to require further review.

All graduation forms must be completed, fees paid, and forms submitted to the School of Graduate Studies before a degree can be completed.
**Timeline to Graduation**

As a student in USU’s TCR PhD program, you will typically be able to complete your doctorate in four years if you follow the schedule below.

Note that before your first semester begins, you should immediately meet with the Department’s DGS (jared.colton@usu.edu) to plan coursework for the first academic year. Plan to take 18 credits your first year by either taking 9-credit hours each in the fall and spring, or by taking a lesser combination in fall and spring plus additional credits over the summer to make up the difference.

**Third Year**

**Third Fall Semester**

Use this semester to prepare for your Comprehensive Examination. Your coursework and reading list will be your foundation for taking the exam, but your research idea for your dissertation should be your guiding principle.

**NOTE:** Students must complete their Comprehensive Examination by the end of the semester (not including summer) immediately following the semester in which coursework is completed and reading list is approved. Failure to complete the Comprehensive Examination within this timeframe could be grounds for probation.

**Fourth Year**

**Fourth Fall and Spring Semesters**

Submit a fourth-year annual review progress report by April 1 to your Supervisory Committee or to the TCR committee if required. Use this time to research and write your dissertation. You should be able to defend it in the spring. If you defend it early enough, or if it is clear it will be approved by your committee, you may walk (go through the graduation ceremony) in May of your fourth year.

**NOTE:** The date and time for the oral defense of the dissertation must be scheduled with the School of Graduate Studies at least 10 working days before the defense.

**Forms**

[Forms for Doctoral Students](#)
IMPORTANT POLICIES

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

The Grad School allots eight years from the time you matriculate (i.e., from the time you are accepted into the program). Coursework that is more than eight years old may not be used for a graduate degree. If permitted by the departmental or interdepartmental degree program policy, a supervisory committee may allow revalidation through testing, following a plan developed by the supervisory committee and approved by the dean of the School of Graduate Studies. The results must be verified in writing to the graduate dean by your major professor or other person(s) responsible for the testing. Work experience cannot be substituted for out-of-date coursework or used for revalidation.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

PhD students will establish residency in their first year. They must remain in residence at least until achieving doctoral candidacy (ABD) and be engaged as active members of the USU academic community. Please note that students must be Utah residents to maintain their GIship.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students in the TCR PhD program should be aware that while portions of some PhD classes are online, there is a once-a-week, in-person, face-to-face meeting that is required of PhD students in all TCR courses. A student’s physical presence is expected at these meetings.

On rare occasions, with the proper documentation from medical professionals, a student may petition an instructor to attend a particular class meeting via Zoom or other video platform because of extenuating medical conditions. Such periods should not typically last longer than the equivalent of two weeks of class time. The student should receive permission from the instructor in writing prior to the class meeting, and the instructor has the right to refuse based on the particular class activities planned for that meeting if those activities are not conducive to remote attendance. This policy is part of our residency requirement for PhD students.