

PhD Handbook, Literature Program  
English Department  
Kent State University

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(Updated Fall 2020)

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## Program Description

The Doctoral Major in English develops the capabilities of students as scholars, teachers, and writers who investigate and enhance functions of language that are essential in human affairs. These functions of language are:

- Communicating with others and achieving a meeting of the minds despite differences,
- Understanding and articulating how the material and social worlds work and how to operate within them, contribute to them, and effect change within them, and
- Understanding, forming, and re-forming ourselves and others.

Our graduate major contributes to this cultural and social work by developing advanced language, literacy, and literacy practices that are essential or responsible, productive, and fulfilling global citizenship in the twenty-first century.

Faculty and students in **Literature, Cultural Theory, and Social Practice (LCTSP)** identify, investigate and theorize the social functions of texts in a variety of contexts both within and outside the academy. The program features a faculty of scholars and teachers with diverse interests and whose work crosses increasingly fluid boundaries that characterize the profession of literary and cultural studies. Drawing on a variety of cultural theories--deconstruction, feminism, gender theory, historical materialism, post-colonialism, and psychoanalysis, to name a few--the program provides sustained focus on the social functions of all categories of text (both literary and non-literary), including the conditions of their production, distribution, and consequent use.

The doctoral major in English is based on a curriculum that requires course work in one to two majors: **Literary Traditions** (the historical study of British, Irish, American, minority and ethnic literatures) or **Literary Criticism and Theory** (encompassing critical theory and textual studies). See the Worksheets on pages 6 and 7 of this Handbook for required and elective course work.

## Academic Advising Overview

**Course Work:** The Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Literature Program Committee Chair act as the advisers for incoming and continuing doctoral students. Students are also encouraged to meet and seek advising from professors, especially those working in the student's subject areas. For more information about course requirements, see the distribution worksheets with the heading "PhD Concentration in Literature: Literary Traditions" on page 6 and "PhD Concentration in Literature: Literary Criticism and Theory" on page 7 in this Handbook.

**Qualifying Exams:** The qualifying examination, which comprises two exams, one in a major area and one in a minor area, tests the student's preparation for the dissertation. During the fall term of the second year in the program, and no later than the spring term of the second year, students select two graduate faculty to serve on the Examination Committee and meet with both graduate faculty individually. The examination committee members advise students on all aspects of the exam. For more information, see "Qualifying Examination Guidelines" on page 13 in this Handbook.

**Dissertation:** Students select a dissertation advisor and form a dissertation committee, from graduate faculty, during the fall of the third year in the program. The Dissertation Committee may be comprised of the same faculty members who served on the Examination Committee, though this is not a requirement. The Dissertation Advisor and committee members will advise students on all matters related to the dissertation. For more information, see "Dissertation Process" on page 19 in this Handbook.

**Job Market:** The Graduate Coordinator organizes a series of yearly workshops to prepare students for all aspects of the job market: vita, application letter, mock interview, etc. Additionally, students receive advising about the job market from the Dissertation Advisor and Dissertation Committee members. More information will be posted on the Graduate Student LISTSERV.

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## PhD Concentration in Literature: Literary Traditions

*(Revised Fall 2020, Effective Fall 2020)*

**Required Core Course:** (3 hours) \_\_\_\_\_

ENG 76706, Methods in the Study of Literature

**Required only for students on appointment:** (3 hours) \_\_\_\_\_

ENG 61094, Introduction to Research in Teaching College Writing

**Literary Traditions:** (12 hours)

4 Literature Courses

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Literary Criticism and Theory:** (3 hours) \_\_\_\_\_

**Electives:** (9 hours;<sup>1</sup> 3 hours of “Research” may be used to fulfill elective requirement)

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Independent Investigation: The Dissertation Prospectus** (3 hours) <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Hours:** 30 hours (may include 3 “Research Hours”)

**Qualifying Examinations:**

Major Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Area: \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Students may fill 3 credit hours of Electives with an Independent Investigation approved by the faculty member supervising the course. For additional Independent Investigation hours, the student must request graduate faculty approval.



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## Four-Year Doctoral Plan (Recommended)

The literature doctoral major requires the following:

- 30 seminar hours beyond the MA
- Passing the qualifying examinations
- Filing a prospectus
- Completing the dissertation

Doctoral advising activity is integrated throughout the program. Ideally, students complete the program in four years: two years of course work, followed by two years on exams and dissertation.

The following timeline sets out a Teaching Fellow's recommended four-year plan for completing the degree. For full information about graduate assistantships, see "Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships," page 24. For Teaching Fellow scheduling of research hours during Program Years 1 and 2, see "Teaching Fellow Course Scheduling," page 11.

The recommended four-year plan may not be suitable for all students. Students not on fellowship are permitted to set their own pace, but they should consult college guidelines on time to degree.

### Program Year 1: Fall Semester

- Take ENG 76106, "Methods for the Study of Literature"
- Take two other courses (1st year fellows teach 1 course)
- Review program requirements for selected concentration

### Program Year 1: Spring Semester

- Take two seminars: review Literary Traditions concentration requirements or Critical Theory concentration requirements, as necessary.

### Program Year 2: Fall Semester

- Take three seminars (or two if you are on appointment and teaching two classes)
- Begin assembling Qualifying Exam Committee (two graduate faculty)

### Program Year 2: Spring Semester

- Take "Individual Investigation: Prospectus" and one additional seminar (or two if you are teaching one class)
- Form Qualifying Exam Committee
- Develop reading lists and rationales for exams with advice from committee



## Program Year 3 and 4

- **Complete Qualifying Exams:** While studying for exams, sign up for research hours. Take both qualifying exams in fall semester (recommended and required for some fellowship applications) or spring semester.
- **Register for Dissertation I or Dissertation II:** After passing qualifying exams, students register in the following semester for the section that was created for his or her dissertation director. Students who have completed 30 hours (two semesters) of Dissertation I register for Dissertation II every semester until graduation.

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## Registering for Courses

Registration for graduate students for spring semester begins in mid-October, and registration for the fall semester begins in mid-February. Check the University Registrar's website for exact dates when students can register.

8 hours is full-time for a graduate student. The 70000 and 80000 level classes are for PhD students. PhD students should not register for 60000 level classes, which are for MA students.<sup>3</sup> Students on fellowship (TF) MUST register for at least 8 hours each semester, which can be accommodated with additional non-instructional research hours. For example, register for two 3-hour courses and 2 research hours. A TF covers up to a maximum of 17 hours of tuition per academic year, but may not be applied to summer tuition. Students who will take a graduate language course should also consult "Foreign Language Requirement" below.

Contact the Graduate Secretary for assistance with any of the following:

- Navigating the registration process
- Assistantships and Research Hours
- Classes that are filled

## Research Hours and Half-Time or Full-Time Status

Only 3 research hours are permitted to count towards credit hours in the designated program. Research hours are unsupervised and are assigned a grade of "S."

- **Half-Time Status:** Students not on an assistantship (TF) need 4 hours to reach half-time status. Register for 1 hour of research in addition to a 3 credit-hour course to reach a total 4 registered hours.
- **Full-Time Status:** Students not on an assistantship (TF) need 8 hours to reach full-time status, which is required for all students on appointment. Register for 2 hours of research in addition to 6 credit hours of courses to reach a total 8 registered hours.

Students on appointment should consult "Teaching Fellow Course Scheduling" (below) for coordinating research hours and teaching schedule.

## Independent Investigation

Each time a student wishes to pursue an independent study, contact the faculty member with the proposal well before the registration deadline. All students take one independent study, the Dissertation Prospectus, which is an independent study with the dissertation director. A second independent study may be substituted for a seminar. Students have the option to request additional independent studies, which must be approved by the Graduate Faculty. Consult the Graduate Coordinator.

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<sup>3</sup> ENG 61094, required for Teaching Fellows and taken at the start of the first year, is an exception and permissible only for PhD students who are on appointment. Students may also petition the Graduate Coordinator for an exception, generally for a graduate course offered outside the department.

## Teaching Fellow (TF) Course Scheduling

### First-Year TFs

- Fall: Register for 3 courses during fall semester. Teach 1 class.
- Spring: Register for 2 courses and for 2 hours of Research. Teach 2 classes.

### Second-Year TFs

Fall and Spring: Register for 5 graduate courses per year.

- Students assigned to teach 2 classes should register for 2 graduate courses and 2 hours of Research.
- Students assigned to teach 1 class should register for 3 graduate courses.

### Third- and Fourth-Year TFs

- **Complete Qualifying Exams:** While studying for exams, sign up for research hours. Take both qualifying exams in fall semester (recommended, and required for some fellowship applications) or spring semester.
- **Register for Dissertation I or Dissertation II:** After passing qualifying exams, students register in the following semester for the section that was created for his or her dissertation director. Students who have completed 15 hours of Dissertation I should register for Dissertation II.

## **Academic Standing Policy**

Once a year, the Graduate Coordinator reviews the academic standing of all graduate students. Academic standing requirements for graduate students in the Department of English are more stringent than, and supersede, University requirements. Graduate students who fail to maintain acceptable academic standing are at risk of academic probation and/or dismissal. For PhD students in coursework, the Department's minimum requirements for acceptable academic standing are as follows:

- PhD students on appointment: minimum 3.50 GPA
- PhD students not on appointment: minimum 3.25 GPA

For PhD students who are no longer in coursework, the Graduate Coordinator solicits an annual academic standing recommendation from the student's Dissertation Advisor.

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## Qualifying Examination Guidelines

**Objectives:** The Qualifying Examination consists of two exams that are designed to test the student's preparation for acceptance to candidacy. Therefore, the examinations are not based in seminar work but instead are tied more closely to the expected dissertation topic. The examinations are additionally shaped by the anticipated curriculum, research, and teaching obligations after graduation.

### Exam Preparation Process:

- During the final semester of course work, the student should begin preparing, in consultation with faculty, a brief description (500 words) of the research project, including the object of study, likely method(s), and anticipated contribution to the field.
- Based on this project description, the student selects two graduate faculty for the Examination Committee (chaired by one member) and prepares a reading list for each examination in consultation with the faculty member overseeing that particular exam. Students will write one major (5-hour) examination and one minor (4-hour) examination distributed across the two exam areas. Students are permitted five hours to complete the major exam and four hours to complete the minor exam.
- The Exam Committee meets individually with the student and reviews and advises on the examination rationales, reading lists, and target dates for the examination. The student and committee members are likely to meet often. When the committee members and student reach consensus on the reading lists, the candidate may schedule the exam with the Graduate Office. Scheduling of exams may vary from committee to committee. The committee and the student may elect to conduct and complete both exams over the course of one or two weeks.
- Faculty should have examinations to the Graduate Secretary **at least one week** before the examination.
- Throughout the preparation process, the student is expected to consult with the Examination Committee; the student may be asked to prepare sample questions as a preparation strategy.

### Examination Process:

On the day of each examination, candidates report to the Graduate Secretary, who assigns the candidate to an exam room and oversees the examination period. Candidates will have access to a computer and may only bring the Reading List and pens or pencils to the examination room. Candidates are not permitted to bring their own computers, disk or USB drives, or other materials to the exam room.

1. After the Graduate Secretary collects the examination, he or she will copy and distribute the written examination to the examiner. The examiner evaluates an exam and then submits to the Graduate Secretary an individual grade (High Pass, Pass, Fail) for that portion of the exam that he or she oversaw.
2. A grade of fail is to be accompanied by a statement pointing to the errors and/or weaknesses that led to the evaluation. Doctoral students may retake failed examinations one time, provided the retake is completed no later than during the next period of the academic year (fall, spring, summer). Exams must be retaken in the same area and with

the same instructor. If the student fails a retake, the literature program committee will review the case in conference with the examination committee. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances that would favor permitting another examination, the student will be dismissed from the program.

3. Upon successful completion of the Qualifying Examinations, the student is admitted to candidacy, that is, they become doctoral candidates and write the dissertation prospectus. The candidate then forms the Dissertation Committee and begins work on the Dissertation Prospectus.

**Graduate Faculty Status:** The qualifying examination may be administered by a faculty member with Associate Graduate Status. The dissertation director or one of the co-directors must have Full Graduate Status. Kent State faculty outside the English department may apply for and be granted graduate faculty status in order to supervise a qualifying exam or serve on a dissertation committee. The university maintains a master list of faculty with graduate status at the following location:

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/graduate-faculty-status>

To confirm graduate status of English Department faculty, consult the Graduate Coordinator.

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## Prospectus: Preparation and Guidelines

### Preparation:

The prospectus is a dissertation project proposal that is finalized subsequent to the successful completion of the Qualifying Examination in consultation with the dissertation advisor and committee. The length and style of the prospectus is determined by the advisor and committee, but should follow programmatic norms. If there is a change in topic, exact title of dissertation, or committee membership, a new Topic Approval Form must be filed (see below).

Answering the following questions will assist the student in framing the project, in anticipating problems or questions about the project, and in preparing a complete prospectus:

1. What does this dissertation set out to do? What are its main arguments? Its purpose?
2. Dissertations present new or little-known material, usually the result of recent research, or contribute to a new understanding of familiar material by treating it in an original and stimulating manner. How will this dissertation do either of these things successfully enough so that specialists in the field would welcome its publication?
3. What works compete with proposed topic? Comment briefly on how new work will revise scholarly perceptions of area of study.
4. What is the importance of this work? How lasting is the appeal? The importance of the scholarship?
5. What is the methodology or methodologies? What theoretical approaches will be most productive for the analysis?
6. What are the primary materials and research sites (archival sites) that are essential to the work? Are they accessible?
7. What are the secondary materials (books and journals, research databases) that are essential to the work? Are they accessible? If not presently accessible, could funding be acquired to permit access and complete the work?
8. How will the dissertation be organized?
9. What is the timeline for the completion of the research? The drafting of chapters? The revision of chapters? Approval process?
10. What are the potential problems or “surprises” that could delay completion of the project?
11. Is this a project that will sustain you not only during the writing of the dissertation but could also sustain your interest during early years of an academic career?

### Guidelines:

The prospectus varies in length and organization but is a proposal to do a research project. As a rhetorical exercise, it demonstrates the need and value of the project (in terms of its contribution to the field), the candidate’s preparedness to complete the project successfully, and the plan for successful completion of the work.

### Typical Organization:

- I. Introduction of Problem and Hypothesis  
[What problem does this work address? How does it propose to resolve the critical problem? What is/are the research question/s that motivate the study]
- II. Discussion of the Need/Importance of the Problem  
[This discussion establishes the context for the research question (primarily through a literature review), establishes the extant “positions” on the problem, establishes the importance of the problem to current critical discussions, and establishes the need for work on the problem]
- III. Discussion of Methodology/Theoretical Approach  
[In order to answer the research question, choose one or more approaches to the question—what is/are the approach/es? How is it or are they informed by current practices in the field? Current theoretical approaches?]
- IV. Organization of the Dissertation  
[Gives a chapter-by-chapter description overview of the argument, of materials, analytical methods, hypothesis; dissertations may be based on multiple studies which would be treated as separate chapters]
- V. Timeline for Completion of the Project  
[A detailed project plan that articulates the research plan, the drafting, revising, approval plan]
- VI. Contributions to the Field  
[Discusses the contributions that this dissertation will make to the field, the degree to which this work will generate scholarly interest in the field, the degree to which it will generate scholarly activity (your own, primarily) in coming years]
- VII. Notes
- VIII. Works Cited
- IX. Working Bibliography  
[The bibliography should aim at completeness, demonstrating a grasp of the body of research, organized into primary and secondary materials and then perhaps into chapters/periods as appropriate.]

### Sample Prospectuses

The Office of the Graduate Coordinator has sample prospectuses from previous students. Contact the Graduate Secretary to request copies of sample prospectuses.

### Prospectus Defense

The Prospectus Defense is required for all PhD candidates in the Literature program. The Prospectus Defense is a meeting, typically between 60 and 90 minutes long, that includes the candidate, the advisor, and all three additional committee members. The Prospectus Defense is scheduled after the advisor has approved the prospectus. Committee members must be permitted 10 days to review the prospectus before the defense meeting takes place.

The advisor, in consultation with the committee, will determine the appropriate procedure for this meeting. If the meeting will begin with an opening statement by the candidate—at discretion of advisor and committee members but a typical procedure—candidates should be given advance notice. The Prospectus Defense is an opportunity for the committee to ask questions and



communicate their responses to the prospectus, including any suggestions or reservations, so that the candidate and advisor can be aware of these as work on the dissertation proceeds.

The candidate or advisor should inform the Graduate Secretary of the meeting time and place, no later than when the prospectus is distributed to committee for review. Because the Approved Dissertation Topic form requires the signatures of all committee members, the conclusion of this meeting is typically a convenient time to secure those signatures.

**Filing the Approved Dissertation Topic Form:**

Once the prospectus has been approved and defended, students are required to file a Notification of Approved Dissertation Topic form with the prospectus (or prospectus abstract) attached. The English department generally submits the full prospectus. Generally, this form is completed at the Prospectus Defense. The university requires that the form be filed no later than the semester preceding the graduation semester. All Dissertation Committee members must sign the form, after which the form is given to the Graduate Secretary. The Graduate Secretary gathers the signatures of the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator and files the form with the Graduate College. The form is available at:

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/forms-library>

## **Dissertation Fellowships**

### **University and Pringle**

The University and Kenneth R. Pringle Fellowships provide a service-free spring semester to PhD students on appointment. The department typically awards as many as two Kenneth R. Pringle Fellowships, which are funded by the Department, and as many as two University Fellowships (when authorized by Research and Graduate Studies), which are funded by the University. All PhD students on appointment in their third year of funding or earlier, who have passed their qualifying exams, and who meet certain additional requirements, may apply. Calls for applications normally are forwarded to the graduate LISTSERV during December or January before the fellowship year, with a deadline typically in February or March. The results are announced later that semester. See Graduate Coordinator for more information.

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/university-fellowship>

### **Graduate Fellowships**

The graduate school offers several fellowships, including for assistance with travel and research. See the following site:

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/awards>

### **Fifth-Year Teaching**

In selected academic years, the English Department has offered a fifth-year teaching fellowship for continuing dissertators. To be competitive, the student must have the prospectus filed and generally must have two dissertation chapters completed by the spring of the previous year. Please follow the graduate student LISTSERV.

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## The Dissertation Process

The dissertation process consists of six basic steps:

- Appoint a dissertation committee
- Defend Prospectus and File Notification of Approved Dissertation Topic
- Write dissertation and Register for Dissertation Hours
- Preliminary Approval and Graduate Faculty Representative
- Final Oral Defense
- Filing the Dissertation with the University

**Note:** For forms linked below, the address was correct at the time this document was prepared. Also consult the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Forms page at the following location: <https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms>

### Appoint a Dissertation Committee

The candidate and advisor consult to appoint a dissertation committee. Be sure to check program guidelines for other rules. The committee will consist of a minimum of the following persons:

- a. the advisor, who will act as chair of the committee.
- b. two additional members from the English department.
- c. one faculty member from a discipline outside the English department.

The advisor and at least two of the remaining three must be members of the Graduate Faculty who have been approved to direct dissertations (F4). All faculty must have at least the rank of A3 (approved to serve on dissertation committees). The Graduate Faculty Status List is maintained on the Graduate Studies website.

<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/graduate-faculty-status>

**Note:** Students may select one graduate faculty member from outside the university. Members of the committee who are from outside the university must apply for and be approved for Graduate Faculty status by the English Department's Graduate Studies Committee (GSC). If Graduate Faculty Status is assigned for a designated period, it must be renewed and in force when the dissertation is completed and approved and paperwork filed with the college.

### Defend Prospectus and File Dissertation Topic Approval Form

See "Prospectus Defense" on page 16.

**Note:** Students who are in the prospectus stage or have completed the prospectus may apply for dissertation fellowships. See "Dissertation Fellowships" on page 18.

### Write Dissertation and Register for Dissertation Hours

In consultation with the dissertation advisor, write the dissertation. Generally, advisers read individual chapters as completed, and may approve or recommend revision. Committee members

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may read selected chapters, at the discretion of advisor and dissertator. Consult and revise the prospectus as needed.

To qualify for graduation, the candidate must remain continuously registered from advancement to candidacy through the semester of the defense, including summers. For registration guidelines, see “Teaching Fellow (TF) Course Scheduling” on page 11.

## Preliminary Approval and Appoint Graduate Faculty Representative

- When the advisor believes the dissertation is ready for preliminary approval, it will be circulated in easily legible form among the members of the committee. Six weeks before the dissertation is circulated, the advisor requests the appointment of the Graduate Faculty Representative to serve on the examining committee using this link: <https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-faculty-representative>
- After distributing the dissertation to committee members, the advisor must allow a minimum of 10 days for reading the dissertation and will then convene all dissertation committee members including the Graduate Faculty Representative (without the candidate) for preliminary evaluation. Recommended revisions will be noted by the advisor and communicated to the candidate.
- Candidates should remain cognizant that the committee must be allowed 10 days to read dissertation before considering for preliminary approval and another 10 days between preliminary approval and final defense. The two 10-day periods are the minimum.

## Final Oral Defense

- The dissertation must be in final form (not merely a late draft) prior to the defense.
- The advisor will determine the time and place of the final oral defense, allowing 10 days after the preliminary defense, and then notify all members of the examining committee and the candidate.
- The advisor should select a moderator from the members of the Graduate Faculty who have been approved to direct dissertations. The moderator cannot be a faculty member in the English department. The moderator **does not** receive a copy of the dissertation, only a copy of the abstract. (**Note:** If the Graduate Faculty representative also serves as the moderator, the Graduate Faculty representative **does** receive a copy of the dissertation.)
- The advisor will direct the preparation of the abstract (not more than 350 words). The candidate should give the abstract to the Graduate Secretary at least one full week before the defense. The abstract will be attached to the public announcement of the defense, which the Graduate Secretary prepares, posts, and sends to the Associate Dean of Graduate Affairs, defense committee, and moderator.
- The candidate must also send the Graduate Secretary an original signature page, to be signed by the committee at the conclusion of the defense. Submit the signature page in appropriate format for printing with the dissertation. The signature pages must be formatted to the exact specifications of the most recent dissertation style guide. The Graduate Secretary prints two copies on bond paper, which are available for signing and the conclusion of the successful defense. **A dissertation with improperly formatted signature pages will be rejected by Graduate Affairs, which could delay a candidate’s graduation.**

## **Filing the Dissertation and Graduation**

After faculty approval, the dissertation must be filed with the university. The format must be in accord with the university *Style Guide*, students may choose whether to register for copyright or apply for a digital embargo, and students register for graduation.

## **Formatting and Submission Guidelines**

- Each dissertation must be formatted according to guidelines in the current *Style Guide and Instruction for Preparing Theses and Dissertations for Electronic Submission to OhioLink*:  
<https://www.kent.edu/cas/style-guide-dissertations-theses>
- At the completion of the Final Oral Defense and upon approval, all committee members and the moderator will sign the Report of Final Examination, which the Graduate Secretary will have prepared and given to the advisor before the defense. This report is signed by the department Chair and sent to the Associate Dean of Graduate Affairs.
- The candidate must file the dissertation electronically. The Graduate Secretary will file the two signature pages, the Report of Final Examination, and the Preparation Approval form with the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

## **Copyright and Embargo**

Candidates nearing completion of the dissertation are advised to consult their dissertation advisor about registering for copyright and options for digital embargo. The embargo form is available from the Graduate Secretary.

## **Graduation**

Students must register for graduation early in the semester in which they plan to schedule a defense. Students should discuss with advisor whether it would be reasonable to defend in an upcoming semester. The deadline to register for graduation generally falls during the first week of the semester.

## **Professionalization: Conference Funding and Placement Workshops**

Professionalization is necessary to be a competitive candidate on the current job market. Professionalization includes conference attendance, published articles and chapters, and application materials like a vita, cover letter, writing sample, and portfolio.

Conference funding from the English Department is available for graduate students who are presenting a paper at a conference. Request the form, which is required to apply, at the front desk in the English Department Office.

Placement Workshops are organized by the Graduate Coordinator to assist in all facets of preparing to enter the job market and obtain employment. Workshops will focus on the vitae, cover letter, teaching philosophy and portfolio, and interviewing. Dates and times of the Placement Workshops will be announced on the Graduate Student LISTSERV, typically very early during the fall semester.

## **AGES**

The purpose of this organization is to give an opportunity for graduate students in the English Department of Kent State University to take part in various professional and social activities. This organization supports graduate student representation within the university and the department, and works actively to promote increased opportunities for graduate students in professional and social settings. Membership in this organization is open to anyone who is currently enrolled in a graduate program in the English Department at Kent State University, in any program, Literature, LRSP, NEOMFA, and TESL.

## Graduate Fellowships and Assistantships

To attract and retain highly qualified applicants to our programs, the Department of English has been able to offer fellowships and assistantships that provide students with tuition remission (“waiver”), a nine-month stipend, and a health insurance premium subsidy. In return for funding, the graduate appointee, designated a Teaching Fellow (TF) in a PhD program or a Graduate Assistant (GA) in a master’s program, is asked to serve in one of several capacities, most often as an instructor in the Writing Program or for the ESL Center. Students also serve as tutors and administrative assistants in the Writing Commons, Digital Media Lab, or as Fellows to the Wick Poetry Center. The department has periodically been able to extend funding to fellows or assistants to the NEOMFA Coordinator or as research assistants to English Department faculty in the Institute for Bibliography and Editing or for other externally funded projects.

Teaching Fellowships are offered to incoming PhD students for up to four academic years, renewable upon satisfactory performance. Graduate Assistantships, also renewable for satisfactory performance, are awarded to incoming Masters students for up to three years (NEOMFA Program) or up to two years (all other programs). Annually, the department issues a call for unfunded students who wish to apply for a TF or GA, and one or more positions may be offered as one-year (MA or MFA), two-year (MFA or PhD), or three-year (PhD-only) appointments, with tuition waiver and health insurance premium subsidy.

The number and program distribution of assistantships that are offered varies by academic year, but the department generally awards assistantships in the following categories:

- Teaching Fellowships (TFs) are offered to high-ranking PhD applicants to the Literature and Rhet/Comp programs, and they are accompanied by a higher stipend. Students awarded teaching fellowships generally teach one section of College Writing in fall semester and two section of College Writing in the spring semester.
- Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are offered to high-ranking MA applicants to three programs (Literature, Rhet/Comp, and Creative Writing), and students awarded teaching assistantships generally teach one section of College Writing in fall semester and two sections of College Writing in the spring semester.
- Graduate Assistantships (GAs) are offered to high-ranking MA applicants to the TESL Program, and students awarded assistantships have similar teaching responsibilities, except that the ESL Center courses are offered on a 7-week basis, and duties are divided into two half-terms during each academic semester.
- Teaching Fellowships or Graduate Assistantships (TFs or GAs) in other units—Writing Program Assistant, Wick Poetry Center Fellow, NEO-MFA Coordinator Assistant, Digital Media Lab assistant, research assistant to Institute for Bibliography—are typically awarded competitively to returning students. Duties vary by unit, but responsibilities typically involve assigned tasks, promotion of unit activities, coordination with director, assessment, and weekly meetings. In return for performing duties, TFs or GAs are typically excused from one teaching assignment in an academic term.

The department also has several competitive awards that provide a one-semester release from teaching responsibilities or that extend the term of a prior appointment.

- **Pringle Fellowship:** Named for Kenneth R. Pringle, who began teaching at KSU in 1931 and retired in 1972, two Pringle awards permit a dissertation student a release from teaching responsibility for one semester to focus on the dissertation. Students who apply



for the Pringle Fellowship are also forwarded to the university for consideration to the University Fellowship.

- **Witte Fellowship:** Named for Steve Witte, a noted scholar of writing research and rhetoric and the Knight Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at Kent State University, Prof. Witte helped found the LRSP program at Kent State. Two annual Witte awards permit a dissertation student in Rhet/Comp a release from teaching responsibility for one semester to focus on the dissertation.
- **5th-Year Teaching Fellowship:** The department awards a 5th-Year Teaching Fellowship to a student with exceptional teaching and a promising publication record. The award provides a fifth year of funding so that a PhD student can share results at conferences and submit for publication while also teaching two courses per semester in the department.

## Applications and Funded Appointments

Incoming students who complete applications by the priority deadline (usually January 15) for admission during the upcoming fall term are automatically considered for funded appointments, typically teaching with the Writing Program. Both incoming and continuing students are ranked by program faculty (Literature, Rhet/Comp, TESL, and NEOMFA), with highly-ranked incoming students receiving offer letters upon admission, waitlisted students (unfunded) being notified about approximate status and likelihood of funding, and currently unfunded students either receiving funding offers or being waitlisted. Program faculty rank admitted or continuing students for funding according to program criteria.

- The Graduate Literature Program Subcommittee (GLPS), the elected representative body for Literature Program graduate faculty, ranks applicants, incoming and continuing, for the following degree programs, PhD in English and M.A. in Literature and Writing, Literary Theory or Literary Traditions Concentration. Students who accept funded offers to the PhD program are designated Teaching Fellows and granted up to four years of funding. Students who accept funding offers to the MA in Literature and Writing program are designated Graduate Assistants and granted up to two years of funding. Funding offers renew each year up to initially offered term of funding, based on satisfactory performance.
- The Rhetoric and Composition faculty, a committee of the entire faculty, ranks applicants for the following degree programs: PhD in Rhetoric & Composition and M.A. in Literature and Writing, Rhetoric and Composition Concentration. Students who accept funded offers to the PhD program are designated Teaching Fellows and granted four years of funding. Students who accept funding offers to the MA in Literature and Writing program are designated Graduate Assistants and granted two years of funding. Funding offers renew each year up to initially offered term of funding, based on satisfactory performance.
- The TESL faculty, a committee at least two members of faculty, ranks applicants, incoming and continuing, for the following degree programs: MA in TESL. Students who accept funded offers to the MA program are designated Graduate Assistants and granted two years of funding. Funding offers renew each year up to initially offered term of funding, based on satisfactory performance.
- The Creative Writing faculty, a committee of the entire faculty, ranks applicants, incoming and continuing, for the following degree program: MFA in Creative Writing. The Kent State Creative Writing Faculty consult with program faculty from consortium schools in the NEOMFA program to rank students, but funding offers from Kent State

are made to students who apply to and select Kent State as the NEOMFA Gateway university. Students who accept funded offers to the MFA program are designated Graduate Assistants and granted three years of funding. Funding offers renew each year up to initially offered term of funding, based on satisfactory performance.

### **Conditional Admission**

Students who are admitted conditionally, whether with academic conditions or language proficiency conditions, are not eligible for a Teaching Fellowship or Graduate Assistantship. After conditions are satisfied, a student may apply for funding as a returning or continuing student.

### **Training for Incoming Appointees**

In programs other than TESL, incoming and funded or newly-appointed continuing students are generally required to complete the department's summer training course, ENG-61094, Teaching College Writing, before serving as an instructor in the College Writing Program.

A tuition/fee waiver and additional stipend is provided for the summer III term in which the course is offered. Students who can demonstrate previous training in teaching college writing and related experience may apply to be excused from ENG-61094 Teaching College Writing. Students who are excused from training need to acquire the requisite credit hours if the course is required in degree program—if they are excused from summer III term of Teaching College Writing. Contact the Graduate Coordinator about application process to be excused from summer training and about substitution for and funding of additional credit hours that replace ENG-61094 Teaching College Writing, if it is a required course in your program.

Students who apply for other types of appointments, in second or later year in program, are trained in new duties as part of the appointment. The teaching appointment for students in the TESL program is not in the College Writing Program but through the ESL Center. Training is coordinated through the ESL Center, and TESL students are not required to enroll in summer term for ENG-61094 Teaching College Writing.

### **Non-Priority Admission and Funding**

Students who apply for spring or summer admission have applications read by an appropriate program committee or the Program Coordinator, but applicants are not considered for funding. Consult web site for deadlines on programs that permit year-round admission. The practice for non-priority admission varies by program.

- The following programs admit, but do not fund, students for spring or summer entry: TESL MA or TESL Cert (applications read by TESL Faculty), MA, Literature and Writing, Literary Traditions or Criticism and Theory Concentration (applications read by Program Coordinator or Graduate Coordinator).
- The following programs do not review applicants for spring or summer admission: Rhet/Comp PhD or MA, Literature and Writing, Rhet/Comp Concentration; NEOMFA. Applications are only read when submitted by priority deadline, January 15, for fall admission. Only applications that are received by the priority deadline are considered for funding.
- The Rhet/Comp program generally does not admit unfunded applicants to the PhD Program or to the MA Program. Students who wish to pursue study part-time or to rely on external funding should contact the Graduate Coordinator at time of application.

- The Graduate Coordinator reads applications to the MA in Teaching year-round, and consults with Program Coordinators for Literature or Rhet/Comp on individual applicants, but MAT applicants are not considered for funding.

Applicants to degree programs that are considered for funding only at the priority deadline may apply for internal funding at the next priority admission term, which is announced on the department LISTSERV. Program faculty rank continuing students alongside incoming students for funding according to program criteria, and newly extended funding for continuing students is announced with a designated term of funding and begins the ensuing fall term (or in summer term, if student is assigned to ENG-61094 Teaching College Writing).

## Appointment Term, Academic Leave, and Deferring Admission

The appointment term is 2 academic years in an M.A. programs, 3 academic years in the MFA program, and 4 academic years in a PhD programs. When performance is satisfactory or conditionally satisfactory during annual review, the appointment is automatically renewed up to the initially designated number of terms. Academic appointments are on a series of 9-month academic terms. The department is unable to offer summer funding.

A student who takes approved academic leave in any semester after the first retains the appointment up to the permissible duration of academic leave. No funding is extended during the term of academic leave, but the returning student retains the same number of funded terms as initial funding offer specifies, provided student returns after maximum permissible academic leave.

An admitted student may defer admission, but a student who accepts a TF or GA appointment must begin study during the initially offered admission term. The admission offer remains open for up to an academic year, but the student who defers admission must re-apply for funding.

## Annual Review and Reappointment

Each TF/GA appointee has performance reviewed annually, typically in spring for a year-long appointment, in fall if a student has a semester-long appointment. Newly enrolled students have teaching performance reviewed during the first semester of teaching and study. The method of review varies by the type of appointment, but all TF/GA reviews at the individual unit are arranged by the program coordinator or the unit supervisor.

- **Writing Program:** Instructor review is scheduled by the Writing Program Coordinator. Observation and review of continuing or returning instructors is annual, typically in the spring, but new instructors or TF/GAs who have received unsatisfactory performance reviews will be reviewed in the fall. Instructors are assigned a peer observer, and the instructor schedules the observation and supplies the designated materials (syllabus, lesson plan, etc.). Further details about the reviewing process are part of the Writing Program manual. Peer observation reports are then forwarded to the GSC committee for review, in fall and/or spring term.
- **ESL Center:** The ESL Center Director reviews all instructors during the first module of teaching (first 7 weeks), the observation is written up, and a meeting is scheduled with the TF/GA. Observation reports are then forwarded to the GSC committee for review in the spring term.
- **Writing Commons:** The Writing Commons Director reviews performance and communicates orally with a wrap-up near end of semester. The year-end report is then forwarded to the GSC committee for review in the spring term.

- **Wick Poetry:** The Wick Poetry Center Director or staff prepare an annual written evaluation for each GF/TA serving as a fellow. The year-end report is then forwarded to the GSC committee for review in the spring term.
- **Other Appointments:** For other appointments, including NEO MFA program assistantship, Digital Media Lab, or other positions in which one or two students are under the supervision of a faculty member, the program director, coordinator, or faculty supervisor regularly reviews performance and prepares a year-end or semester-end report, as suited to the length of the appointment. The year-end report is then forwarded to the GSC committee for review in the spring term.

The faculty members of GSC reviews performance reports for all students and at committee's discretion chooses one of the following:

- Renew appointment unconditionally for satisfactory performance, up to the term assigned during initial appointment
- Renew appointment conditionally for unsatisfactory performance, requiring additional training and an additional performance review in the subsequent academic term, up to the term assigned during initial appointment
- For second instance of unsatisfactory performance, make recommendation and refer to Department Chair, Graduate Coordinator, and Faculty Advisory Committee's *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee.

The GSC reappointment decision is conveyed to the student via email, at or near the close of the academic term.

## **Students on Appointment: Teaching Performance Expectations**

The following items are minimal expectations of any college instructor. For the most part, they involve actions and procedures easily undertaken and can be assessed readily.

### **Class Punctuality and Office Hours**

Instructors are expected to start and end classes punctually and to notify students and department for planned absences beforehand and as soon as practicable for unplanned absences. When concerns unplanned or unscheduled absence from class, notify the Graduate Coordinator and the Department Secretary as soon as practicable.

The general principles for office hours, which apply to graduate students, are the following:

- When teaching one course (3 credit hours) in an in-person and scheduled mode, expected office hours are 3 per week. A minimum of half of those office hours must be scheduled in an on-campus office. The remaining office hours may be virtual or "by appointment."
- When teaching two courses (6 credit hours) in an in-person and scheduled mode, expected office hours are 5 per week. A minimum of half of those office hours must be scheduled in an on-campus office. The remaining office hours may be virtual or "by appointment."
- All further details are elaborations on above basic principles, to allow for asynchronous online classes, ESL module schedules, etc.
  - When teaching an asynchronous all-online course, in-person office hours are not required. Scheduled virtual office hours (phone consultation, Skype, FaceTime, Collaborate, etc.) must offer an equivalent substitute for in-person office hours per week.
  - When teaching one course in an ESL module, TESL instructors should follow guidelines above for one in-person course during that ESL module, 3 office hours

per week. Minimum 1.5 hours in person, scheduled. Remaining 1.5 office hours may be satisfied with “by appointment” or virtual office hours.

- When teaching two courses in an ESL module, TESL instructors should follow guidelines above for two in-person courses during that ESL module. Minimum 2.5 hours in person, scheduled. Remaining 2.5 office hours may be satisfied with “by appointment” or virtual office hours

So long as the general principles are met—the scheduled number of office hours and at least half of them in the mode that matches the class delivery model—any further refinements are at the discretion of the instructor.

## Syllabus

For every course taught, a syllabus supplied to students and forwarded to Writing Program or Undergraduate Program, which must include the following. The Provost’s office forwards an advisory before each academic semester, which includes recommended wording on several items below.

1. Course number with prefix, title, and section number.
2. Semester and year of this course offering.
3. Instructor name and contact information—phone number, email address, and office hours, with days of the week, hours, and mode of contact.
4. Statement of course objectives and expectations.
5. Statement for courses that fulfill the university requirements – Kent Core, diversity, writing-intensive.
6. Required and optional textbooks and materials.
7. Course prerequisites, including a statement that students in the course who do not have the proper prerequisites risk being deregistered from the class.
8. Statement on enrollment/official registration.
9. General class calendar indicating the lecture topics, including important dates and deadlines for assignments, tests and/or projects.
10. The course withdrawal deadline. See <http://www.registrars.kent.edu/home/CLASSES/sessdatesrch.cfm>
11. Clear statement of grading policy and grade distribution/percentages for all class requirements.
12. Statement concerning cheating and plagiarism.
13. Statement regarding accessibility and registering for accommodations for a documented disability.

## Policies about Assignments

- Reasonable notification of assignments, examinations, and changes in syllabus.
- Provision of reasonable make-up procedures for legitimately missed exams or other graded work.
- Evaluation of work with adequate and constructive comments written on students’ papers or orally, as is appropriate to the character of the test or assignment.
- Evaluation of work within a reasonable timeframe that allows the student to benefit from the instructor’s comments prior to the next assignment.

## Basic Pedagogy

Although the intellectual and judgmental skills essential for acceptable teaching are more open to interpretation than class management techniques, the following items are presented as constructive suggestions for the improvement of teaching.

- Content, assignments, and approach should be keyed to the level, aims, and nature of the course.
- Methods of communication and teaching techniques should be appropriate to the level of students and the subject matter and delivery method for the course.
- Each class session should reflect thorough preparation, including knowledge of and currency in the subject matter. For instructors in College Writing I and II, ENG-61094 Teaching College Writing provides the requisite training. The TESL program provides training for ESL Center courses.
- Testing and grading practices should relate directly to course content and assignments.

### **Students on Appointment: Non-Teaching Performance Expectations**

Appointments that may not require teaching duties include Writing Commons, Writing Program Assistant, ESL Center Assistant, Digital Media Lab, and Wick Poetry Fellow. Duties vary by unit, but responsibilities typically involve assigned tasks by the unit director, promotion of unit activities, coordination with director, assessment, and weekly meetings. Renewal of a non-teaching appointment is usually at the discretion of the unit director, and students in non-teaching appointments are assigned annual performance reviews.

### **Unsatisfactory Performance and Termination**

The department recognizes a distinction between unsatisfactory performance, which can be addressed by training and counseling, and actions so destructive that they merit immediate suspension and termination.

#### **Criteria for Unsatisfactory Performance**

The Graduate Coordinator, on the basis of performance reviews and in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee's *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee determine what the appropriate departmental response shall be, such as mentoring or additional training, for instances of the following:

1. Lack of academic progress in the graduate appointee's studies,
2. Unsatisfactory performance of assigned teaching duties, as determined during performance review.
3. In a non-teaching assistantship, the failure to perform duties, such as because of absence or neglect of responsibilities, or similar actions that undermine the ability of the unit to serve its clientele--as determined during performance review.

#### **Criteria for Immediate Termination of Appointment**

The Chair, on the basis of compelling evidence and in consultation with the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the Faculty Advisory Committee, may terminate a graduate appointment for the following reasons:

- Academic dishonesty, examples of which include claiming credit for the work of another without authorization or citation (plagiarism in a graduate course) or falsely representing a student's academic performance, based on criteria unrelated to classroom expectations and syllabus guidelines, examples of which include falsely reported exam scores or paper grades.
- Failure to perform assigned duties, to a degree that shows willful intent to disregard assigned duties, examples of which include not holding class at regularly scheduled time and place, not holding office hours, not supplying a syllabus. In a non-teaching

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assistantship, examples include series of absences at assigned work time or other refusal to perform duties like attending meetings, etc.

- Threatening students, or endangering students, examples of which include scheduling unauthorized field trips or holding class or other educational activity (e.g., tutoring session) in an unauthorized off-campus location, without the knowledge and prior request and permission of the Program Coordinator or Graduate Coordinator.
- Writing or uttering comments so inappropriate, disparaging, harassing, or abusive that they create a hostile learning environment and/or deter students from attending class meetings or other educational activities, examples of which include those defined by the Policy Register (<https://www.kent.edu/policyreg>) under University Policy Regarding Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment.

## **Appointment Termination and Appeals Policy and Procedure**

A decision about suspending a student from graduate appointee duties or termination belongs to the Department Chair in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. A suspension of duties, on well-founded evidence that it meets above criteria for immediate termination or repeated unsatisfactory performance, may be taken immediately, but the recommendation for appointment termination must be reviewed by the Faculty Advisory Committee's (FAC) *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee before it will take effect. The Department Chair, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Grievance Subcommittee must provide to the TF/GA appointee written statements explaining the justification for termination. The student may contest or appeal the decision to the Graduate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

## **Suspension**

The decision to suspend a student from performing duties as a Graduate Assistant or Teaching Fellow is entirely at the discretion of the Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. A notice about intent to terminate should be filed within three weeks of a suspension. If a termination recommendation is not submitted to or is not approved by the FAC *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee, the Grievance Subcommittee should make a recommendation about when to end the suspension.

## **Immediate Termination**

The Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Coordinator, may suspend immediately from duties a graduate appointee whose performance is designated to meet the criteria for immediate termination. The decision is referred to the Faculty Advisory Committee's (FAC) *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee for review. If the Grievance Subcommittee affirms the recommendation of the Department Chair and the Graduate Studies Coordinator, the suspension will remain in force and the appointment will be terminated at end of the semester. If the Grievance Subcommittee does not affirm the recommendation of the Department Chair and the Graduate Studies Coordinator, the decision about whether to terminate the student's appointment remains with the Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator.

## **Unsatisfactory Performance Termination**

A graduate appointee whose performance is designated unsatisfactory in one semester will be offered mentoring services by the relevant Program Coordinator, which may consist of review of teaching materials or recommended training. When additional training or materials review is complete, the completion must be reported back to the Graduate Coordinator.

The appointee shall be reviewed again the following academic term, and a repeated instances of unsatisfactory performance shall be referred to the Faculty Advisory Committee's (FAC) *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee, which reviews in consultation with the Department Chair and the Graduate Studies Coordinator, to decide whether to terminate the student appointment. At the discretion of the Department Chair, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Coordinator, the student's appointment-related duties after second unsatisfactory performance review may be suspended immediately, at the conclusion of review by the Grievance Subcommittee, or by the end of current semester or before next semester appointment begins.

### **Appealing Termination**

A student whose appointment is terminated immediately or whose performance is terminated for receiving unsatisfactory performance reviews, and whose termination has been reviewed by the Faculty Advisory Committee's (FAC) *ad hoc* Grievance Subcommittee, whether decision is affirmed or not, may contest or appeal the termination decision to the Graduate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **Other Termination-Related Policies**

A graduate student whose appointment is terminated, whether immediately or for repeated unsatisfactory performance, shall continue to be funded through the end of the semester, with health insurance intact, during which the termination was effected.

A graduate student whose appointment is terminated, whether immediately or for unsatisfactory performance, shall be ineligible to hold another appointment in the department, including employment as a temporary instructor.



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## Policy and Form Links

The College of Arts and Sciences has a Forms and Resources page, which maintains a list of the most commonly used and currently approved forms. It also provides a link to a form library for less commonly used forms.

<https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-forms>

Below is a list of forms ordered according to the student's progress through the program.

### Exam for Candidacy, Prospectus, and Dissertation

- Graduate Faculty Status (required for qualifying examination):  
<http://www.kent.edu/graduatestudies/graduate-faculty-status>
- Report of Candidacy Examination:  
<https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/report-of-candidacy-2.pdf>
- Notification of Approved Dissertation Topic and Prospectus  
<https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/Approval%20of%20Dissertation%20Topic.pdf>
- Style Guide and OhioLink Submission: <https://www.kent.edu/node/371036>

### Final Doctoral Examination

- Request for Graduate Faculty Representative <https://www.kent.edu/cas/graduate-faculty-representative>
- Report of Dissertation Final Examination  
<https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/Report%20of%20Dissertation%20Final%20Examination.pdf>
- Dissertation Preparation Approval Form  
[https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/Dissertation\\_Preparation\\_Approval\\_Form.docx](https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/Dissertation_Preparation_Approval_Form.docx)
- Style Guide and OhioLink Submission <https://www.kent.edu/node/371036>
- Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center <http://etd.ohiolink.edu/>

### Graduation

- Apply for Graduation and Graduation Deadlines  
<https://www.kent.edu/registrar/calendars-deadlines>
- Regalia (Cap and Gown) for Commencement  
<https://www.kent.edu/commencement/students/cap-and-gown.cfm>

For other forms, like a change in program study or graduate re-enrollment, please consult the College of Arts and Sciences Forms and Resources page. For departmental forms, such as conference travel, consult the Graduate Secretary.