



Graduate Handbook for the
Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing
2009-2010

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

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

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1. The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

The MFA degree offers an intensive program of small core workshops and seminars taught by established writers. In workshop, students engage in close readings and critiques of their peers' work, while seminars may focus on an element of craft, regional tradition, historical period, the works of a seminal writer or two, or a literary movement. The degree requirements are integrated with the M.A. in English curriculum so that students also work with a highly accomplished faculty in literature, critical theory, and rhetoric and composition. The degree emphasizes faculty mentorship throughout each student's coursework and thesis completion. Consistent with PSU's mandate to serve our city's cultural and professional needs, many students are also actively engaged with Portland's vibrant literary community. Students must apply specifically to the genre in which they wish to work: fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. In addition to core workshops in the students' primary genre, they may use writing electives to explore other genres. Students of fiction and nonfiction may work in long or short form and the thesis may be a collection of short pieces or a full-length work. Many students come to the MFA program with a background in English literature, writing, or journalism, but this is not required. The program can be completed in two years of full-time coursework; however, many students take additional courses or attend part-time, and they have a maximum of five years to complete the degree.

2. Requirements

MFA students must complete 48 credit hours of coursework. They must also complete a book-length creative thesis of high literary merit, pass a written examination based on the thesis and an adviser-approved list of 30-40 texts, and pass an oral examination in defense of the written examination and creative thesis. The MFA curriculum consists of three core workshops: WR 521 (Fiction), 522 (Poetry), and 523 (Nonfiction); two writing seminars; one course in pre-1900 literature; two courses in literature (one of which may be in critical theory or rhetoric and composition); two writing electives (one of which must be a workshop or seminar in the MFA program); and eight credits of work on the thesis. The MFA core workshops are restricted to MFA students in the strand, except with rare exceptions.

3. Course of Study

The center of the MFA curriculum is the Core Workshop, which offers intensive study in a student's chosen genre. They are restricted to MFA students in the genre in order to engage students in close reading and critique of their work and help them gain mastery of techniques and intimacy with the conventions and issues specific to the genre. The small-group format also allows students to establish connections with the cohort of students in your genre. Seminars may focus on a particular formal element, regional tradition, historical period, or literary movement; required literature coursework helps students understand their own work in the context of literary history and to develop a scholarly perspective on a range of relevant work.

4. The Bibliography and the Written Exam

The scholarly aspect of the MFA student's coursework is reflected in the bibliography. With your adviser you'll develop a list of 30-40 texts studied during your graduate coursework, and your adviser must approve the final list. These may include books you read in classes, books suggested by your adviser or other faculty or peers, and books you discovered on your own that are important in your development as a writer. You are not expected to cram these texts before your examinations; you are, however, expected to be able to knowledgeably refer to them in a your written exam and oral defense.

The written exam consists of one or two questions that are given to the student prior to the defense date (the time allowed will be determined by each adviser); the student's written response should be sent by e-mail to each member of the thesis committee at least one week before the defense. You may also be asked to give your committee members a hard copy. The question(s) are drawn from your thesis and book list, and generally require a student to engage in analysis of both her own work and that of one or more published writers.

The final exam questions will be different for each student, and are designed to be relevant to formal, structural, aesthetic, and thematic concerns in the student's work. A successful exam requires both original thinking and research. At the oral defense, students may be asked questions both about the exam and the thesis.

5. The Thesis

In your second year you should be focused on developing and writing your thesis, which consists of a book-length body of creative work: a novel, a collection of stories or essays, a long fiction work, or a collection of poems. For poetry there is a minimum of 48 pages, the length required for manuscript competitions.

Completed theses are kept in the Department and University libraries.

The Thesis Proposal

The proposal deadline, format and length will be determined in consultation with your thesis adviser. Once your adviser has tentatively approved the proposal she or he will submit it to the MFA committee for further discussion and suggestions. Students may be asked to revise their proposals during both the advisor and committee stages of this process; approval is not automatic.

The Thesis Committee

The committee must include a minimum of three PSU faculty members. Two must be from the English department; the third may be from outside the English Department. All members must have Master's degrees or higher.

Only the committee Chair, usually the adviser, must be full-time PSU faculty, tenured or tenure-track, Assistant Professor or higher in rank with a Master's or Doctoral degree. Other members may be fixed-term or adjunct, but keep in mind that part-time faculty are not compensated for committee work and thus may be reluctant to serve.

The English Department does not require a fourth committee member as an outside reader, but students may include up to two additional committee members for a maximum of five. If a fourth or fifth member who is not on the PSU faculty is requested, a CV for that member should be attached to the GO-16 form when it is submitted to the English Chair for approval and forwarding to the Graduate Studies Office.

If a student's thesis adviser will be someone other than their original faculty adviser they must get a Change of Graduate Adviser form signed by the new adviser and return it to the English Department staff.

The thesis committee must be approved with a form GO-16M which is filled out by the student, signed by the adviser, Department Chair, and forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office for approval (see the Appendix listing Graduate Office (GO) forms for graduation). The deadline for submitting the GO-16M is in the term prior to that in which you plan to graduate. Check the Graduate Studies website for exact deadlines.

6. Thesis Credits

Students working on a thesis must register for WR 503 (Writing Thesis) each term in which they are working on the thesis project. These must total a maximum of 8 credits and be taken over at least two terms.

By University regulation, a graduate student must enroll for a minimum of one credit hour of 501 (Research) or 503 (Thesis) when working on any phase of a thesis. Students must be enrolled for at least one credit hour in the term in which they have their oral examination. If a leave of absence is taken while a student is working on a thesis, the student may not consult his thesis adviser or committee, and no paperwork will be processed by the Graduate Studies Office until the student is registered again.

7. The Oral Examination

The oral exam lasts approximately one hour, and must be scheduled at least six weeks prior to the end of the term in which you will graduate.

Committee members must receive a complete copy of the thesis a minimum of three weeks prior to your oral defense and receive your written exam at least one week prior to the date of your oral. All members of the thesis committee must be present for the oral exam, either in person or via audio conferencing.

After the oral exam, the committee may request some revisions, which you will have two to three weeks to make, depending on the date of your oral.

8. Timeline Considerations

Since the thesis must be given to your committee three weeks before the oral exam, and University policy is that the absolute last date to schedule an oral is in the 6th week of any term, the first two weeks of the term in which you are defending the thesis should be used only for final editing and proofreading.

Three copies of the unbound thesis and four copies of the abstract, in final approved form, must be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies at least 3 weeks prior to the close of the term in which the degree is to be granted (this gives you a minimum of three weeks for revisions, since the deadline for oral exams is 6 weeks prior to the end of term). Specific deadlines for each term are available on the Office of Graduate Studies web site. In addition, the thesis must be formatted and printed with very exact specifications, which are also available on the Graduate Studies web site at http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_thesis.php. Consult the Graduate Office if you have any questions about formatting.

For the academic year 2009-2010, a new policy allows students to submit one printed copy of the thesis and one electronic copy; please refer to the Graduate Studies website for specifications on electronic submissions.

For additional thesis deadlines and requirements, see the Office of Graduate Studies website at: http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_general_deadlines.php.

9. Early Term Graduation

A student who misses the listed thesis submission deadline may graduate in the following term without registering in that term if she/he submits the completed, defended, approved, formatted thesis no later than 5:00 P.M. on the GO-17 (Recommendation for the Degree form) deadline.

10. Pre-admission Credit and Transfer Credit

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

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

Students must download a Transfer and Pre-approved Credit form (GO-21) from http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_forms.php, and meet with their adviser and the Director of the MFA for credit evaluation and approval.

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

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

11. Coursework Outside the MFA Program

Students may take one of their required literature courses in the Department of Foreign Language with their adviser’s approval.

12. Advisement

As soon as you are accepted into the program and assigned an adviser, you should contact her or him to introduce yourself and receive advice on enrolling for fall courses. If your adviser is on leave or otherwise unavailable, contact the Director of the MFA and/or the Graduate Administrator in the English Department. You should also plan to meet with your faculty adviser early in the first term of your coursework to discuss your plan of study. New students who do not have access to their assigned adviser during the summer prior to their first enrollment should consult the Director of the MFA.

13. Independent Study

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

WR 501: Research: This can be used for special research projects in which the student has arranged to work with a faculty supervisor. If the research will lead to a writing project, students may also want to consider ENG 503 or WR 505.

WR 503: Thesis: For students whose thesis prospectus has been approved.

WR 504: Cooperative Education/Internship: For students doing an internship or engaged in a community-based project.

WR 505: Reading and Conference: one-on-one work with a faculty adviser or mentor on a student writing project; this may also include reading and discussion. If a group of students

wants to gather together and propose a topic to a faculty member who would sponsor such a group, it is better to use WR 508: Workshop.

WR 509: Practicum: Students may assist a professor in teaching an undergraduate course. You should work out your duties with the professor in advance of the course.

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

14. One-credit Courses

Graduate Assistantships, some student loans, scholarships, and grants require full-time status. At PSU, a fulltime course load is 9 credits or more, half time is 8 credits or fewer. This means that if you enroll for two 4-credit courses you will not have full-time status. However, in addition to Independent Study (explained above), the department offers a range of 1-credit graduate course options.

1. Discussion/reading groups attached to an existing course

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

2. Freestanding Discussion/Reading Groups

These are groups organized around a shared area of interest between a professor and a group of students (and sometimes additional faculty). What we aim for is something enriching, pedagogically and academically sound and interesting, that does not generate lots of extra work for faculty, but stretches graduate students in new directions. These groups need supervision, not teaching or lecturing to, and need to produce their own discussions, with the faculty members as guides. Some of these courses may be listed in the Schedule of Classes; otherwise, you will probably need to have the professor fill out a By Arrangement Request form, likely for WR 508: Workshop. For more details on the nature of the group and how to register, you should contact the professor directly.

Each term the department will generate a list of one-credit courses professors have offered for the term. You will receive these via email and/or they will be posted outside the English Department. Some of these may also be listed in the Schedule of Classes. Again, please be mindful that professors are not required to teach these extra credits, and do so voluntarily in order to meet student needs. In addition, be aware that 1 credit of graduate work should equal no more than an average of 6 hours of work per week for the student. If you believe your workload is exceeding this amount, please inform your supervising professor. You may also negotiate with the professor to take any of these options (group work or independent study) for more than 1 credit, with workload adjusted accordingly (but, again, please be aware that by University policy WR 501 and WR 505 coursework applicable toward the degree is limited to 12 hours and may not be used to substitute for required MFA coursework).

15. GPA

Although grades of C+, C, and C- are below the graduate standard, they may be counted as credit toward the Master's degree with specific written approval of the Department Chair. Students must have a B average (3.0 GPA) on the courses fulfilling the degree requirements (courses listed on the GO-12 form). Grades of D and F carry no graduate credit.

16. Financial Aid, Graduate Assistantships, and Employment

Information on graduate financial aid is available on the University website at:

<http://www.pdx.edu/finaid/>

For graduate students who are Oregon residents, the state sponsors the Oregon Laurels Tuition Remission program for graduate study. Information about the Laurels and other competitive scholarships is available on the Graduate Studies website at:

http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_funding_scholarships.php

English department nomination is required for three all-University competitions: the Oregon Sports Lottery, the University Club, and the Underrepresented Minority Graduate Student Pipeline scholarships. Any student who would like to be nominated for one of these scholarships should speak to their adviser or the Student Affairs Committee about their qualifications. A computerized database of national and local scholarships is also available in the Millar Library.

Graduate Assistantships

The Department has available a very limited number of Graduate Assistantships, and primarily these are given to first-year students. Graduate Assistants help with Department programs such as the Portland Center for Public Humanities, serve as assistants to faculty administrators such as the Director of Rhetoric and Composition or the Director of Literary Studies, perform other administrative or research duties that foster their career development, or teach in a variety of contexts: composition courses at all levels, tutoring in the Writing Center, assisting faculty in writing intensive courses, and assisting faculty in English courses. Depending on their qualifications, they may also teach courses in creative writing, technical writing, or literature. Graduate assistants receive both tuition remission and a stipend for the academic year, along with tuition remission for summer term. In recent years we have also been able to offer teaching employment in the summer, but this is not guaranteed.

For more information on Graduate Assistantships contact Prof. Greg Jacob jacobg@pdx.edu.

Many non-academic divisions of the University offer Graduate Assistantships, including: University Communications, Campus Recreation, University Housing, The Office of International Affairs, the Women's Resource Center, the Queer Resource Center, and Student Health and Counseling. Unfortunately there is no centralized listing of these non-academic Assistantships; each office must be contacted individually (the Graduate Studies office does not keep a list of available Graduate Assistantships each year). Students with non-English language skills may want to contact the Department of Foreign Language about teaching opportunities.

The University also offers the following employment/professional development opportunities:

Writing Intensive Course (WIC) Assistant

WIC Assistants help faculty across the University curriculum in teaching writing for a content course. Responsibilities may include: reading drafts, leading writing workshops, or doing presentations on writing. To qualify for a WIC position you should take either ENG 413/513 (Teaching and Tutoring Writing) or ENG 414/514 (Introduction to Composition Theory).

WIC Assistants receive a stipend but no tuition remission. Contact Prof. Greg Jacob for further information.

Writing Center Tutor

Tutors assist students in individual sessions. To qualify for this position you should take ENG 413/513 (Teaching and Tutoring Writing). Tutors receive either a stipend or credit but not tuition remission. Contact Dan Deweese at deweese@pdx.edu, for further information.

WITS/PSU Teaching and Internship

The MFA Program and Literary Arts' Writers in the Schools Program have developed a partnership to provide one MFA student each year with teaching experience and professional development training as a Writer in the School, teaching creative writing to high school students for half the year and interning for Literary Arts, a literary non-profit, for the other half. The particular internship tasks will be determined in consultation with the student who is selected. Writers in the Schools employs established writers and teachers throughout the Portland-metropolitan area. The MFA student will be paid commensurate with other WITS writers, and students who qualify may also apply for work-study funds during the internship period. To be eligible to apply, you must have completed one year of the MFA program. Contact Prof. Michele Glazer at glazer@pdx.edu for more information.

University Studies Graduate Mentor

University Studies Mentors come from all academic backgrounds and work with Sophomore Inquiry courses. Mentors plan and facilitate 50-minute mentor sessions for Freshman Inquiry, Sophomore Inquiry or Transfer Transition courses. Mentors serve as friends, colleagues and teachers, helping students learn the academic ropes. All new mentors must enroll in a four-credit Education course that is offered in the spring and a two-week fall training prior to the start of school. Mentors work 10-20 hours per week. For more information: http://www.pdx.edu/unst/mentor_application.html

SETC (Skill Enhancement and Tutoring Center) Writing Tutor

SETC is located in the Smith Memorial Student Union. They hire writing tutors on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year as existing tutors graduate. Applications may be picked up in room Smith 439 and the phone number is (503) 725-4448.

Graduate Literary Organization (GLO) Coordinator

The GLO Coordinator may be a first- or second-year student in the English or Writing program (one Coordinator is selected from each program). The Coordinator is responsible for GLO's communication, management, and organization, including supervision of the four volunteer chairs in: Readings, Marketing, Workshop and Student Voice. The Coordinator also interacts with SALP (Student Activities Leadership Program) to manage GLO events and finances, since GLO is a SALP-funded group and not administered by the Department of English. The position carries a stipend and small monthly salary.

Chiron Course Instructor

Chiron courses are credit classes taught by students for students. They are listed under "Interdisciplinary Studies" in the University Schedule of Classes. In addition to the teaching experience gained, student instructors receive a small teaching stipend. For more information, go to: <http://www.ess.pdx.edu/chiron/>

Work-Study Positions

If you qualify for the federal work-study program, you may apply for a variety of jobs posted by the English department, including writing, website development, and office work. These jobs are posted on the Career Center website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/careers/>

17. Professional Development

We believe in the inherent value of doing creative and scholarly work, but we also recognize that students may want to put their degrees to practical use once they graduate. The MFA degree is one of the most versatile and useful that a student can have, and we have developed courses, workshops, and other activities designed to assist students in preparing for a variety of careers. Here are some of our key professional development offerings:

Teaching Writing Workshop

This is a one-day workshop on strategies for teaching others to write. It includes demonstrations, discussions, and teaching handouts on everything from invention and revision strategies to dealing with special issues such as non-native speakers. Contact Prof. Greg Jacob (jacobg@pdx.edu) for more information.

Graduate Literary Organization (GLO)

The GLO receives funding from the Student Activities Leadership Program (SALP) and operates independently from the English Department to organize readings, workshops, book sales, and other activities that foster the literary community at PSU. Two coordinator and four volunteer positions are available each year.

Ooligan Press

Publishing and Writing students may participate in the work of Ooligan Press, a small trade publishing house. Students work in groups to review, accept, and edit manuscripts; design the interior and the exterior of books; send books to press; and market the books to booksellers, libraries, and other outlets. Publishing and writing students have gone on to work as literary agents, freelance editors and writers, and open their own small presses.

WR 394, Writing Careers for English Majors

This course is also available for graduate credit if you enroll as ENG 505 (Reading and Conference). The course covers career possibilities, internships, and community service. Each student gets individual attention and the goal is to identify possible career paths. This course is particularly helpful for those who wish to pursue non-teaching careers. Contact Dan Deweese (deweese@pdx.edu) for more information.

ENG 513, Teaching and Tutoring Writing

This course offers theoretical and practical strategies for teaching composition and tutoring. The focus is on preparing participants to teach in a variety of contexts. Contact Dan Deweese (deweese@pdx.edu) for more information.

The PSU Career Center

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

18. Preparing to Graduate

Requirements for the MFA include:

- 3 Core Workshops in your genre
- 2 writing seminars
- 3 literature courses, of which one is pre-1900 literature
- 2 electives in Writing, one of which must be a workshop or seminar in the MFA
- 8 credits of Thesis
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25

In consultation with the adviser, the student chooses a thesis committee and prepares the GO-16. At the beginning of your final term of coursework, you must submit a GO-12 (Approved Graduate Degree Program), which lists the courses you are using to meet degree requirements. This form cannot be submitted until after the thesis proposal has been accepted and the appointment of the thesis committee has been completed.

Keep in mind that any courses used to complete the MFA degree requirements may not be used towards any subsequent degree, so students who have more than 48 credits may not want to list them all on the GO-12. The GO-12 is to be submitted to the English Graduate Administrator for approval by the Chair and forwarding to Graduate Studies.

19. Program Timeline and Graduation Checklist

- Make sure the English Department staff has correct contact information, including a current email address.
- Sign up for the department listserv on the English web site at: http://www.english.pdx.edu/maillinglist_g.php
- Meet with your adviser and plan a preliminary program of study.
- Familiarize yourself with the program information in this Handbook and the PSU Bulletin.
- Take 3 Core Workshops, 2 seminars, 3 literature courses, including one on a pre-1900 literature, 2 writing electives, and 8 credits of Thesis. Students must be registered for at least one credit in the term in which they have their oral thesis defense and graduate.
- In consultation with your adviser, develop your thesis committee, making sure that they will all be present during the term in which you plan to complete the program.
- Complete your thesis proposal in consultation with your adviser. Your adviser will submit the proposal to the MFA Committee for approval. Students may be asked to revise their proposals during both the adviser and committee stages of this process; approval is not automatic.
- Consult with your adviser regarding your GO-16M. This form must be submitted, at the latest, at the end of the term prior to that in which you intend to graduate. All other Graduate Office deadlines are in the term in which you plan to graduate. See below for the exact dates.
- Complete the GO-12 in consultation with your adviser. This form must be approved by your adviser and signed by the department chair or department graduate committee chair, and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than the first week of the term you will graduate.
- Check with your faculty adviser and thesis committee chair to assure that you have completed your requirements.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.25 to advance to candidacy (consult the University Bulletin on academic probation if GPA requirements are not met).

Final term

- At the end of the term prior to that in which you will graduate, bring your GO-12 (approved and signed by your adviser) to the Department Graduate Administrator. It will be signed by the Chair and copied for your file before being submitted to Graduate Studies. The same week, you should submit an Application for Awarding of Master's Degree form to the Office of Graduate Studies (this form does not need a Departmental signature so you may submit it directly).
- Contact your committee early in the term and schedule your oral defense. Reserve the English Department conference room (407 NH), allowing one to one-and-a-half hours. Confirm with your committee via email a week or so before your oral.

- See deadlines below for dates by which the oral defense must be completed. However, it is advisable to reserve a date early in the term since many faculty sit on multiple committees and because the conference room gets booked.
- Bring to your defense three thesis approval pages, which can be downloaded at: http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_thesis.php
They must be signed by your committee while everyone is present.
- Distribute your thesis to committee members a minimum of 3 weeks in advance of your scheduled defense.
- You will receive your written exam one or two weeks after you distribute your thesis (the time allowed for the written exam will be determined by your adviser and committee).
- Distribute both hard and electronic copies of the completed exam to your committee. The written exam is graded pass/fail.
- In the 2 to 3-week period between the deadline for your thesis defense, and the deadline for submitting your thesis to the Graduate Office for final approval, make changes and address any concerns about your thesis raised by your committee.
- Format your thesis according to the formatting requirements of the Graduate Studies Office: http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_thesis.php
- It's a good idea to take a formatted print-out of your thesis on regular paper to the Graduate Studies Office and check to make sure that you've met all the requirements for formatting, a bibliography (required even for some creative theses), etc. Once you are sure the formatting is correct, take three unbound copies of the thesis and the approval pages (and four copies of the abstract), printed on acid-free paper, to the Graduate Studies Office at least three weeks before the end of the term. These copies will be sent to the PSU Library and the English Department following your graduation.
- Deadlines for each term are available below and on the Office of Graduate Studies web site: http://www.gsr.pdx.edu/ogs_general_deadlines.php
- Check commencement deadlines on the University's commencement web page if you wish to take part in the ceremony. The English Department does not hold a separate commencement ceremony.

Please note that all forms (with the exception of the degree application form) must be submitted to the Department so that they can be signed by the Chair and copied to the student's file before they are submitted to Graduate Studies.

20. Graduation Deadlines 2009-2010

Turn in your advisor-approved GO-16

- At the end of the term prior to the one in which you'll graduate:
by Sept. 21 / Nov. 30 / March 8 / June 1

Turn in your advisor-approved GO-12, an Application for the Degree and schedule your oral defense

- In the first week of your final term: by Oct. 2 / Jan. 8 / April 2 / June 25

The defense must take place prior to week 7 of the term

- By Nov. 6 / Feb. 12 / May 7 / July 9.

Your final draft of the thesis must be submitted to your committee by week 5.

- They must receive the thesis a *minimum* of two weeks before the defense, i.e. two weeks prior to Nov. 6 / Feb. 12 / May 7 / July 9.
At this point it's a good idea to do the final formatting of your thesis and take it to Graduate Studies for a check. That way if there are changes you can make them before having it printed on acid-free paper.

You must make any final changes to the thesis and submit three copies of the formatted ms. on acid-free paper to the Office of Graduate Studies by the end of week 9

- Nov. 20 / Feb. 26 / May 21 / July 23.

21. Appendix 1: Admission & Application Requirements

Applicants to the MFA in Creative Writing must provide satisfactory evidence of preparedness to undertake advanced work, which would include a B.A. or B.S. degree from a regionally accredited college or university. The application deadline is January 18.

Applicants must submit the following:

- A Departmental application form indicating which genre they will focus on: fiction, nonfiction, or poetry.
- One transcript from each post-secondary institution attended.
- A 3.25 GPA in undergraduate work.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- A two-to-three-page, 1.5-spaced personal introduction describing the applicant's background as a writer, goals, and interest in this particular program.
- A manuscript in the applicant's primary genre, which should be typed, double-spaced, and the pages numbered. Poetry manuscripts may be single-spaced. Previously published, single-authored work will be accepted but should be photocopied, not bound. Manuscripts should demonstrate mastery of basic craft and literary promise, and should represent your best work regardless of whether or not it has been published. Applicants should submit work in the genre to which they are applying.
- In poetry: 12-15 pages, as in manuscript form.
- In fiction: 20-30 pages, double-spaced and numbered as in manuscript form.
- In nonfiction: 20-30 pages of magazine articles or creative nonfiction, double-spaced and numbered as in manuscript form.
- A stamped, self-addressed notification postcard.

NOTE: Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not required for admission to the MFA in Creative Writing.

The University Application

Send the completed University application, your official transcripts, and a \$50 fee to:

Office of Admissions
Portland State University
P.O. Box 901
Portland, OR 97207

Use the major code WR for the MFA. Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not completed an undergraduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution are required to submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores (the English Department requirements are higher than those for the University in general – please see the “International Students” section below).

Do not send the University application fee to the English Department. This \$50 fee is subject to change by the Oregon University System.

Application Deadlines

There is a once-a-year admission deadline for the MFA of January 18 of each year for the academic year beginning that September. There is no flexibility on this deadline. Applications

must be postmarked by January 18 and include all departmental application materials (any materials that are sent separately must also meet the deadline).

Your department application will not be reviewed until you have submitted your University application and been assigned a PSU identification number. Applicants will be notified of both Department and University acceptance by mail only.

Failure to supply complete and accurate information will delay the admission process and subject applicants to the University's policies governing academic dishonesty.

Enrollment Deferment

Students who do not enroll in the term to which they were admitted will automatically be dropped from the program by the University. However, MFA students may request a deferment of their admission for one year from the term for which they were admitted. Deferment is not automatic, however.

To request deferment, a graduate Admission Application Update Request must be downloaded at: <http://www.pdx.edu/media/u/p/update-gr.pdf>

The form must be filled out, signed, and forwarded to the Director of the MFA.

22. Appendix 2: International Students

Any applicant whose native language is not English and who has not received a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or an equivalently accredited non-U.S. institution with instruction exclusively in English must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600 (100 on the internet-based test or 250 on the computer-based test). The International English Language Testing System exam (IELTS) may be substituted for the TOEFL; the minimum acceptable score is 7.5.

23. Appendix 3: Office of Graduate Studies Forms and Definitions

- **GO-7, Request for Change of Status**
If you were admitted conditionally you must file this after meeting the conditions for regular status. This must be done before you can submit graduation paperwork.
- **GO-10, Reservation of Graduate Credit**
You can take up to 12 PSU graduate credits at the end of your undergraduate course of study (you only pay undergraduate fees even though they're graduate credits), and transfer these credits in to a graduate program. This is allowed only for first B.A. / B.S. degrees.
- **GO-12, Approved Graduate Degree Program**
This is where you list the courses you are using to fulfill the degree requirements. The Graduate Studies Office strongly disapproves of listing more credits than are required for the degree, since they will not be usable for any future degree. All courses taken appear in your transcript regardless of whether or not they are listed on the GO-12.
- **GO-13, Change in Graduate Degree Program**
This is used to amend a GO-12 if any changes are made to your course of study after filing the GO-12
- **GO-15, Validation of Out-of-Date Graduate Credit**
If any of your coursework exceeds the 7-year PSU time limit (5 years for the MFA), you can request a validation exam to approve the use of that credit.
- **GO-16M, Appointment of Final Oral Examination Committee (Masters Level)**
This form must be submitted to have your thesis committee approved by the

Graduate Studies Office. You should do this before beginning your thesis credits or submitting your prospectus.

- **GO-17M, Masters Recommendation for the Degree**
This form is signed by your committee after your final oral exam is completed. Students are not allowed to handle this form once it has been signed.
- **GO-19M, Request for Change of Major (Masters Level)**
This form is used to change from one Master's degree program to another. Unless you are transferring from an M.A. to an M.S. (or vice versa) in the Writing Program, transferring between programs requires a full admission review during the fall term admission cycle.
- **GO-21, Proposed Pre-Admission and Transfer Credit**
This form must be completed if you have taken any courses before admission to your graduate program that will be used to fulfill its requirements (at PSU or elsewhere). It must also be filed if you take any courses after admission that will be used to fulfill your requirements.
- **Dual Degree Memo**
This form is used to define which courses will apply to both degrees in a dual degree program.
- **Graduate Petition**
This form is used to petition the Graduate Council for a waiver of a University graduate academic regulation or degree requirement.

MFA in CREATIVE WRITING STUDENT CHECKLIST

The checklist is based on a full-time schedule (9 credits per term for 5 terms). We recognize that everyone does not go through the program following this timeline, but you can extrapolate.

TERM	CHECKLIST
FALL YEAR 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have I seen my assigned advisor? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I checked out the Course Planning Guide to see how I might fulfill the pre-1900 Literature requirement? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I signed up for ODIN and OAM accounts? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I signed up on the English Grad student list serve? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I exchanged contact information with other students in the program? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I sought out students with more experience in the program for advice? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I transferred any previous graduate credits I had by submitting a GO-21 form? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I sought information through the program website, the Career Center, special department events, faculty and fellow students to learn about opportunities at PSU and in the larger community to deepen my experience and connections with the literary world, such as with Wordstock, Hawthorne Books, Literary Arts, reading for PSU's <i>Portland Review</i>, etc.
WINTER YEAR 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Am I contacting faculty and other students regularly for advice and support? <input type="checkbox"/> Do I want to apply for a 2nd-year GAship or seek out other employment or fellowships for next year? Have I taken steps to do so?
SPRING, YEAR 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have I found a faculty member to be my second-year advisor? If not, have I sought advice from students and faculty on how to do so? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I worked with my advisor to develop my bibliography? <input type="checkbox"/> Am I ready to form an exam or thesis committee? If not, what steps do I need to take to do so? <input type="checkbox"/> Do I want to take summer courses? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I contacted my advisor about my thesis proposal? Do I have a summer writing plan? Have I established a schedule with my advisor and/or a writing group to keep me on track? <input type="checkbox"/> If I was a conditional admit, have I fulfilled the necessary conditions? If so, have I submitted a GO-7 form to the department for approval? If not, have I discussed with my advisor how I will do this before I enter my final term of study?

TERM	CHECKLIST
SUMMER YEAR 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How am I progressing toward completing my degree? What requirements do I still need to fulfill? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I clarified any career goals? Have I taken steps to meet those goals by taking certain courses or gaining work experience? <input type="checkbox"/> If I am working on a thesis or prospectus, or studying for exams, do I have the supports I need to make good progress? If not, how can I put them in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Do I need to spend part of the summer working on a portfolio prospectus?
FALL, YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have I assembled my thesis committee and received instructions from my advisor on how to proceed? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I made sure that my advisor has submitted at GO-16 form (Appointment of Exam Committee) on my behalf? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I consulted the timeline for submitting forms to the Graduate Office and to the Department, submitting my thesis to my committee, and scheduling my oral?
WINTER YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Have I made sure that by the end of this or next term I will have fulfilled all the requirements for graduation and that I will have completed 48 graduate credits? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I reminded my thesis committee of the date of my oral? Have I reserved the conference room where the oral will be held? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I informed my committee that I plan to graduate next term? Have I solicited any final advice from my committee on how to proceed toward graduation? Have I also asked other students for advice? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I taken steps to submit my Application for a Degree and GO-12 (Approved Graduate Degree Program) forms by their due dates at the very start of next term? <input type="checkbox"/> Have I consulted with the Graduate Office on the proper formatting and paper that I will use for my thesis?
SPRING, YEAR 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Now that my thesis has been approved and I have passed my oral and written exams, have I celebrated the completion of my MFA?