

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDIES HANDBOOK
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**



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I. INTRODUCTION

The Master of Arts Program in English (MAE) and English Education (MAEE) trains students in careful examinations of texts, interrogations of place, advanced writing and research strategies and so much more. We welcome all students to our programs and our department: all races, genders, nationalities. We welcome students in any physical or mental condition. We welcome students regardless of sexual or gender orientation. We welcome documented and undocumented Americans, we welcome military veterans, we welcome all political and religious affiliations. We commit to living up to this welcome and expect to be held to a high standard of accessibility and openness.

This handbook provides basic information about our programs, including requirements, expectations, and procedures. Students should familiarize themselves with the information in the handbook and keep the handbook for future reference as questions arise. Keep in mind, however, that questions or concerns may arise that are not covered here. Students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to address situations not addressed in the Graduate Handbook. Additionally, students should familiarize themselves with the [Graduate School's policies and procedures](#), directing questions to Degrees Program Specialist for English. Lauren Ceretti.

There are a number of rules, regulations, and deadlines with which students must become familiar. All regulations in this handbook must be followed to maintain good standing in the program. There may be extenuating circumstances that justify modification of these regulations. If a student feels that special consideration should be given to their situation, the student should contact the DGS. In most cases, a student may petition the Graduate Studies Committee, whose members will review the petition and inform the student of their decision.

The Graduate Studies Committee is made up of the DGS and faculty members from the Department of English. The Graduate Studies Committee, chaired by the DGS, reviews the academic procedures and policies, recommends changes to the faculty, updates the Graduate Student Handbook, plans and directs graduate workshops, reviews and selects candidates for admittance, and awards teaching assistantships. The DGS oversees the activities of the Graduate Studies Committee and organizes the graduate program as a whole.

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Graduate Students

Requirements: Every graduate student is expected to meet the requirements set forth in the current Montana State University catalog and any other requirements specified by the Department of English. These requirements are subject to change; graduate students will be notified of modifications in departmental rules and procedures. Because MA students must meet the requirements of The Graduate School as well as the English Department, they should familiarize themselves with the [English Department](#) and the [Graduate School](#) websites and pay careful attention to Grad School emails and announcements.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs): GTAs are expected to complete the obligations of their teaching and tutoring assignments. GTAs work closely with their assigned faculty mentor throughout the term of their assistantships.

Contact information: Students should ensure their contact information (phone and physical address) is current; changes should be updated in [MyInfo under the Personal Information Tab](#). All graduate students will be given an MSU student email account; students are expected to check that inbox regularly. Graduate students who are working as GTAs will be assigned an MSU instructor email account and a physical mailbox, located in the main office of the department, 2-176 Wilson Hall. Students are encouraged to regularly check their physical mailbox.

Academic performance: Graduate students are expected to prepare for and attend their classes, and to actively participate in departmental functions. A student must maintain a minimum 3.0 semester GPA, a minimum 3.0 GPA in the entire program and a cumulative 3.0 GPA overall. Any student who's cumulative or program grade point average is less than 3.0 at the end of any term may be placed on university probation or suspended from MSU.

Although inadequate performance occurs rarely, the department has an obligation to notify any student who is not performing adequately in their academic work. In this situation, the department will inform the student at the earliest possible time and, when circumstances warrant, will work with the student to correct the problem or improve the situation.

Faculty

The Department of English has important responsibilities to its graduate students. Above all, faculty serve as informal and formal mentors to graduate students. The department encourages graduate students to seek out faculty mentors. Mentors can be invaluable, giving advice and perspective on all aspects of graduate education. These professional connections also benefit faculty members, who are often energized by their work with graduate students. In the belief that the best mentoring relationships are self-selected, the department does not assign students to specific faculty members; instead, students should consult the list of faculty and research faculty specialties and discuss with the DGS to become familiar with department members and their research specialties.

For more information about faculty's scholarly interests, including contact information, please visit the [department's website](#).

The department endeavors to provide students with the best possible training through course work, seminars, travel support, when possible, research experience, and other activities. It has an obligation to keep current in professional areas and give students the best possible guidance in course selection and other professional issues. When the time comes for students to apply for more advanced graduate work or seek employment, the department will assist students in every way possible.

Faculty members serving on graduate student thesis/professional paper committees are responsible for reading and commenting on the prospectuses and meeting with the student to discuss the prospectus. Faculty members are also responsible for reading and responding to the final draft of the student's thesis/professional paper and administering the student's oral paper defense in accordance with the university deadline (located on the [Graduate School's website](#)).

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

The Master of Arts in English has two program options: The Master of Arts in English (MAE) and the Master of Arts in English Education (MAEE).

Program Learning Outcomes: Master of Arts in English (MAE)

- Demonstrate a command of methodologies, theories, and historical frameworks relevant to their sub-discipline.
- Demonstrate critical analytical skills in the interpretation and comparison of texts.
- Achieve proficiency in reading, understanding, and synthesizing research.

- Achieve a command of written academic English, including the abilities to:
 - Organize and present material in a cogent fashion,
 - Formulate and defend arguments,
 - Employ effectively the language of their discipline.
- Articulate insightful and complex ideas through oral communication.
- Contribute to scholarly discourse on relevant topics in the field.
- Engage with diverse voices in their discourse communities to foster meaningful and ethical engagement with a broader public.

Program Learning Outcomes: Master of Arts in English Education (MAEE)

- Understand historical issues and current trends related to English as a secondary school subject.
- Apply current research in English Education and/or literacy studies to develop and implement pedagogical practices in their local teaching context.
- Develop a line of scholarly inquiry related to English Education and/or literacy studies that is situated within related scholarship in the field.
- Advance their professionalization through participation in local, regional, and/or national professional networks (e.g., conference presentations, publications).

English graduate students follow degree requirements for the program to which they were accepted. The Master of Arts degree is 30 credits (depending on the culminating paper). Students will attend to department requirements and build a program of study (their collection of coursework) pursuant to offerings and their interests/goals. As part of their work, students will select one of two options for their culminating paper: the thesis or professional paper.

Thesis option requirements (30 credits)

- 21 hours of course work
- 9 hours of thesis credits
- Thesis oral defense
- File thesis with the MSU Library in accordance with [ETD formatting requirements](#).

Professional paper option requirements (30 credits)

- 24 hours of course work
- 6 hours of professional paper credits
- Professional paper oral defense
- File professional paper with the [MSU Library](#) or the English Department's Graduate Committee. MAE students are highly encouraged to file their professional paper with the MSU Library; MAEE students are required to file their professional paper.

Choosing Between the Professional Paper and Thesis Options

As the above requirements indicate, the main difference between the thesis and professional paper option is the number of credits devoted to course work and the thesis or professional paper project.

While neither the English Department nor The Graduate School has a formal page length requirement for the thesis or professional paper, generally a professional paper ranges between 30-50 pages and a thesis paper ranges between 80-110 pages. Students declare their option during their second semester of course work when they complete the "Program of Study" form. If students decide (upon consultation with their chair) to change their option, they will submit a [revision to the program of study](#).

Course Credit Restrictions for Both Options

- 400-level credits: Nine (9) credits at the 400 level can be applied to the degree assuming the courses are appropriate to the student's professional paper or thesis area and are approved on the Program of Study.
- Independent Study (ENGL 592) and Internship (ENGL 598) courses may not comprise more than ten (10) credits of the required credits for a graduate degree.
- ENGL 592 credit limitations: Up to six (6) Independent Study (ENGL 592) credits may be included in the professional paper plan. Up to six (6) Independent Study (ENGL 592) credits may be included in the thesis plan. All independent study credits require a faculty mentor and DGS approval.
- Not all MSU coursework can be applied to the degree (e.g., 490, Undergraduate Research/Creative Activity; 588 Professional Development). The student, in consultation with the DGS, will ensure all applicable credits are approved on the Program of Study.
- Six (6) credits of coursework from another MSU department can be applied to the degree, assuming the courses are appropriate to the student's professional paper or thesis area and are approved on the Program of Study.

Transfer Credits

A combined total of no more than nine (9) non-degree, reserved, and transfer credits can be applied to a degree-seeking program of study. All credits need approval from the DGS and must be recorded on the Program of Study.

IV. DEGREE TIMETABLE & DEADLINES

While this section provides key goals/milestones per term as appropriate it does not detail everything students experience during their programs. Graduate students should direct questions regarding their academic pace to the DGS and, once they have one, their committee chair. Students are also expected to attend to [dates and deadlines](#) updated on the Graduate School's webpage.

Graduate students may attend either full time or part time in the MAE and MAEE. When graduate students are full-time, the MAE program is typically a four-semester course of study, with self-directed summer reading/writing for their professional paper/thesis in between years one and two. Students usually take two or three courses a semester for their first year, depending on their teaching assignment (if they are funded GTAs). When MAEE students are full time, they take courses during fall/winter/summer. The pacing for full-time MAEE students is dependent on term of entry and the rotation of required courses. When students in both programs are part-time, the pacing varies with one to two courses a semester until program completion. Regardless of pace, Graduate School requires completion markers; the DGS will assist each student in meeting these markers and communicating their needs to faculty.

Term 1

Students take **coursework** and become actively involved in the department by getting to know their advisor (the Director of Graduate Studies), attending the graduate student reception to meet faculty (September), and attending talks and presentations across campus.

Term 2

Early during term 2, students meet with the DGS to discuss a possible research topic/line of inquiry, potential committee members, and thesis/professional paper options. By the end of term 2, **students officially build a graduate committee and submit a Program of Study**—both approved by the DGS and the students' committee. Students initiate both forms within MSU's My Info Student Services tab; directions for the committee submission form and program of study are located [here](#).

As part of completing the “Graduate Program of Study and Committee Form,” each student writing a thesis will form a graduate committee of three members; students writing a professional paper will form a graduate committee of two members. This committee advises the student on academic matters and is the examining committee. As students think about choosing committee members, they should consider faculty members’ areas of expertise and the working relationships that will best help them succeed.

For thesis committees, at least two of the committee members must be faculty in the Department of English. For professional paper committees, one committee member must be faculty in the Department of English. For all committees, the committee chair should be the English faculty member whose area of expertise parallels the topic of the professional paper or thesis, as well as the working relationships that will best help them succeed. Once the student’s graduate committee is formed, the committee chairperson will serve as the student’s academic advisor.

Note: Many students (particularly those moving at a part-time pace) feel that they are too early in their programs to complete the form, but that is exactly one of its purposes—to prepare students for completing their degree requirements in a timely fashion. The form may be revised if a student’s plan changes after the form has been completed. All revisions are approved by the DGS and committee chair and filed with Graduate School.

Additional pacing note: The department’s request for tuition waivers for a GTA’s second year is based upon the program of study form. Students need to plan carefully, regarding the number of credits they will take and the semesters they plan to take them. Students who do not submit their program of study forms in a timely fashion will be considered as not working toward a degree by The Graduate School and will become ineligible for financial aid (including teaching assistantships, work-study, and other University employment).

Term 3 +

Work toward the culminating paper (professional paper OR thesis) begins near the end of the second term of graduate school and accelerates in between terms 2-3 or at the beginning of term 3. Graduate students should consult with their committee chair to set internal deadlines for the prospectus and continued paper writing/checkpoints. As students begin working on their papers, they are also continuing to take coursework.

Step 1. Meet with Committee Chair

Students and their chair review the timing for the culminating paper (review the program of study to ensure accuracy or a need to submit a revision form) as well as genre and shape of said paper. Together, they should read the departmental expectations for the prospectus, attending to specific needs for this project. For students completing qualitative research, a discussion of and plan to complete MSU’s [Institutional Review Board’s \(IRB\)](#) protocols is necessary.

Step 2. Reading List

In consultation with the chair and committee member(s), students will develop a reading list of 20-25 texts. Each reading list will vary depending upon the student’s topic, but it should include the crucial works of literature, criticism, and theory for the project. The reading list may be revised into the bibliography/references for the prospectus.

Step 3. Prospectus

- Draft the prospectus (including bibliography/references and projected timeline) according to departmental expectations.
- Submit prospectus to the committee chair. Revise as necessary.
- Once approved, submit the Prospectus to the full committee.
- Meet with committee members to receive substantive feedback on prospectus. Faculty may suggest new directions, additional texts, honing of argument, etc.

Step 4. Continued Reading/Research/Writing Toward Professional Paper/Thesis

Final Semester

The Graduate School requires students to be enrolled for a minimum of three (3) credits during the semester in which they will graduate.

Step 1. Application for Advanced Degree

Early in the semester during which a student expects to graduate, a Graduation Application must be filed. The specific dates for each term are listed in the [deadlines section](#). The Graduate School charges a non-refundable fee for processing an Application for Advanced Degree Form.

To change graduation dates after filing the application, the student must withdraw their application by completing the form at [The Graduate School's web site](#) and then resubmit a new application for their new semester of graduation (another filing fee will be applied).

Step 2. Final Draft + Oral Defense

Upon completion of the final draft and oral defense, all committee members will sign the departmental approval form, marking the collective defense decision. Once fully signed, the chair will file the form with the English Department Office for internal filing. The Chair may also ask the English Department to route for signatures via DocuSign if that is preferred. Students do not sign approval form.

Scope of the Oral Defense

The student's committee conducts the oral exam, which lasts about 90 minutes. Students prepare opening remarks or a presentation of the thesis or professional paper and confer with the committee chair prior about how to best use this portion of the defense. This opening section of the defense and question and answer period of the defense is open to the public. After the oral exam's conclusion, the graduate committee will excuse the student and all guests; they will then decide whether the student passed the oral exam. Students are invited back into the room to hear the committee's decision. The committee chair will inform the DGS of the committee's decision promptly.

In addition to the 30 completed credits, students must complete the thesis or professional paper **AND** pass their oral examination to be eligible for graduation. The oral exam is graded on a scale of pass, fail, and distinction.

Passing with Distinction

Graduate students will be awarded a pass with distinction if their thesis or professional paper demonstrates exceptional merit (as decided upon by the majority of the student's collective committee) in three or more of the following categories:

- Demonstrates creative and original thought and argument that extends current scholarship in the student's area of inquiry
- Explores a breadth of theoretical method or scope of inquiry beyond the normal range of an MA project (especially if moving in the direction of the kind of project that one might undertake as a PhD dissertation)
- Develops an impressive detailed, comprehensive, and compelling new interpretation of a significant literary, cultural, or theoretical text
- Demonstrates a mastery of the relevant scholarship in the student's area of inquiry
- Performs an exceptional defense that demonstrates a student's ability to articulate and defend their project with clarity and conviction

- Demonstrates reasonable promise of publication (in whole or in part) by an academic journal in the student's chosen field of study, or
- Produces a thesis/professional paper written in an exceptional manner

If a graduate student fails the oral examination, they are not eligible to graduate in the semester planned and changes will need to be made. The student will need to:

- Reapply for graduation using the PDF of the graduation application, available on the MSU's [MyInfo Student Services](#) tab.
- Register for three credits.
- Meet all the new semester deadlines (e.g., the grad app deadline for that new semester, the defense & formatting deadlines, etc.).

Students should consult Graduate School policies for the [timing of subsequent defenses](#): The details are offered under the categorization of "students writing a thesis" but the Department holds students to the same standard.

A student writing a thesis is allowed two total attempts to pass the defense. At least two months must elapse before the second attempt takes place. Failure to successfully pass the second attempt results in termination of graduate study and dismissal from the academic program. Students who are dismissed from the program due to failure to pass the defense are ineligible to reapply to the same degree program.

Step 3. Revisions + Committee Chair Approval

Students must complete any and all revisions required by their committee as they finalize their final thesis/paper draft. Once committee chairs give the final approval, students move into final formatting and/or filing of their thesis/paper.

Step 4. Filing

Students are to file with the library (thesis or professional paper) or the English Graduate Committee (professional papers if not filed with the library).

Deadlines for submitting the final version of the thesis are listed on [The Graduate School's website](#). Students must meet formatting requirements prior to filing. If, for any reason, a student cannot meet deadlines, they may file for a [1-credit extension](#) with Graduate School, enrolling in ENGL 589 (Graduate Consultation), and following the Graduate School timeline for graduation via the extension.

V. REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

New Students

The Graduate School sends students an information sheet regarding the registration process with their acceptance letters. The English department's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) advises students about course offerings for the first semester. Once students have made their selections, the DGS will submit their course selections to the English Department Office for enrollment. If students are taking courses outside of the department, the DGS will let students know how to enroll themselves for those credits.

New GTA Payroll Logistics & Registration

To assist the department in requesting tuition fee waivers for new GTAs, students will coordinate with the DGS on their course schedule. The DGS will relay plans to the English office indicating how many credits they will take the first year. GTA's are required to complete the Form I-9 with the Department of English.

The Graduate School will not process a student's stipend appointment form until they have registered for classes. The electronic process (e-GAAF) requires students to accept the terms of the appointment each semester; this pertains to both the waiver and stipend and is applicable to new and continuing students.

Registering for an Independent Study (ENGL 592)

After students determine the topic they wish to pursue in an independent study, they should ask the department faculty member whose area of expertise matches their topic if they would be willing to oversee their project. Working in consultation with the faculty member, the student will complete the ["Independent Study \(592\) Request Form."](#)

The form requires a specific explanation of the independent study's topic, objectives, readings, and writing assignments. Once complete, students send the form to the English Department and route for signatures via DocuSign. The form is maintained in the department and once fully signed, students will be enrolled in the 592 credits (for the selected range of 1-4 credits).

Registering for an Internship (ENGL 598)

Students interested in ENGL 598 will submit a proposal to the graduate committee for approval. To qualify for graduate credit, the proposal must include:

- A description of how the internship fits into the academic program (students cannot earn internship credits for simply serving as a professor's teaching assistant, nor can they earn internship credits for their work as GTA's).
- A list of readings to be conducted as part of the course (e.g., one or two books or a series of journal articles).
- An explanation of the type of writing to be produced (e.g., a series of short essays; a long seminar paper; a podcast series).

Students will submit copies of the written work produced for the internship to the coordinator of graduate studies.

Registering for Thesis (590) and Professional Paper Credits (575)

Students will meet with their graduate committee chairs to determine how many thesis/professional paper credits they should register for and the nature of work to be accomplished for the credits. As students plan how they will register for these credits that The Graduate School requires students to be enrolled for a minimum of three credits during the semester in which they will graduate. Students should also confer with their committee chair about how their progress on the professional paper/thesis credits will be assessed. All credits are completed on a pass/fail basis.

Leave of Absence Policy

If a student needs to take time away from the program, the student should confer with the graduate committee chair and the Director of Graduate Studies.

The leave of absence policy varies depending upon the student's progress in the program. Once students complete the courses outlined on their Program of Study Form (with the exception of thesis or professional paper credits) or take their written exams, they must be "continuously enrolled" to maintain graduate status. However, The Graduate School allows absences from the university for three semesters, consecutive or individual, and still maintain their "continuously enrolled" graduate status. For more information on [MSU's continuous enrollment policy](#), please refer to The Graduate School's website.

Following a semester leave, students must file an ["Intent to Register Form"](#) for reentry to the university and program.

Returning Students

Returning students should meet with their advisor, either the DGS or their committee chair (if they have formed their graduate committee) to select appropriate courses. Students register by letting the DGS know their choices; the DGS will then forward the courses to the English office. The office verifies that second year students are following their Program of Study. If they deviate from that form, the office staff will guide them through the Program Change process.

The Graduate School will not process a student's stipend appointment form until they have registered for classes. The electronic process (e-GAAF) requires students to accept the terms of the appointment each semester; this pertains to both the waiver and stipend and is applicable to new and continuing students.

VI. TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

The English Department awards Graduate Teaching Assistantships to defray the costs of a student's graduate program and allow the student a source of income and tuition remission during their graduate studies while also keeping their focus in the department. The department views GTAships as important professional preparation and experience for students interested in later teaching work. As such, the department commits to creating a rich, mentored experience.

Eligibility and Criteria for Award

Applicants to the English M.A. programs may request a GTAship. During the admissions process, the Graduate Committee reviews requests as it considers Fall applications. (GTA appointments typically begin in Fall semesters.) All English GTAs work on campus, in person. The committee considers the following criteria in awarding GTAships:

- The overall quality of the application for graduate studies;
- Particular reasoning offered in the applicant's request for a GTAship;
- The fit of the applicant's stated goals for study with the learning experience the GTAship creates;
- An applicant's previous teaching or tutoring experience; and
- The applicant's ranking among those who have requested an assistantship.

GTAships require enrollment in at least six (6) credit hours per semester (Fall and Spring). GTAs cannot exceed 19 hours of on-campus work a week (this is quite important if GTAs take additional jobs on campus).

Applications by Current Graduate Students

A current graduate student without funding may apply for a GTAship for their second year of study by writing a brief letter of application to the Graduate Committee, due January 31st. The application should be accompanied by a note of support from a faculty member of a 500-level course, speaking to the student's abilities as a graduate student and suitability for teaching. The request for GTAships will be considered along with new applicant requests during the regular Fall admissions application review.

Responsibilities

GTAships assign students to a faculty supervisor and an undergraduate class(es), the supervisor and GTA work together and sometimes, there is a small group of GTAs assigned to a class (e.g. LIT 110). A full GTAship has a 16-hour workload per week, which includes attending class sessions, class preparation, grading, and regular meetings with the supervising professor/team to discuss the class material. GTAs are responsible for completing all duties and being in regular contact with both their students and their supervising professor. Depending on the term, the department may offer partial GTAships, resulting in less hours and an altered workload.

Responsibilities for each GTAship vary by assignment and are made clear by the faculty supervisor at the pre-semester orientation. Orientation is required.

Preparation and Mentoring

The department views GTAships as powerful learning and professionalizing experiences for graduate students and does not require previous teaching experience as a qualification for receiving a GTAship.

GTAships are awarded to graduate students with limited or no teaching experience; thus, the department offers and requires participation in preparation and mentoring support of graduate students' teaching, including:

- An orientation prior to the beginning of the semester.
 - In the orientation, students become acquainted with the course goals and learning outcomes, discuss the syllabus, assignment sequence, and classroom management. Faculty supervisors and the GTA(s) will also discuss expectations for how they will work together: speaking into the responsibilities and expectations for both.
- Continued mentoring by the supervising faculty throughout the year.
 - GTAs and their faculty supervisors will have regular meetings and will often review their responsibilities, modifying if there is need to better fit the course.

Renewal of GTAships

Renewals of GTAships for a second year are contingent on a) satisfactory performance of teaching duties, b) maintenance of an acceptable standard of work in graduate classes and c) progress toward satisfying degree requirements.

Workload Management

GTAs are expected to balance their teaching time with time spent on their own studies. It is a typical challenge that all GTAs, adjuncts, lecturers and faculty navigate. English GTAs who encounter difficulties with time management or other issues related to their studies can consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, graduate committee, or other GTAs for assistance.

Limitations on Campus Employment for GTAs

To encourage success as a student and as a teaching assistant, The Graduate School has the following employment policy: “Graduate students may not be employed for more than 19 hours per week cumulatively for all forms of employment on campus.” English Department teaching assistants may not take on other forms of campus employment during their appointment.

Retaining Course Evaluations and Grades

GTAs should keep all student course evaluations for future employment references. The department retains electronic copies for at least the period of a GTAs appointment.

MSU requires all student grade records to be kept for five years. During this period, GTAs are responsible for having the ability to produce records showing how each of their students’ course grades were computed.

VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The primary form of financial support available through the Department of English is teaching assistantships, which are awarded on a competitive basis. We recognize, however, that not all students are awarded teaching assistantships, nor do all students desire to teach. GTAs should be aware that University regulations prohibit students from being employed by the university for more than 19 hours per week.

The Graduate School also awards a limited number of [fellowships](#) to eligible graduate students based on information included in their application forms. Students should also check with the [Office of Financial Aid Services](#) to determine whether they are eligible for any other forms of financial aid.

VIII. COMMUNITY SUPPORT & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Associated English Graduate Students of MSU

Founded in spring 2007, the Associated English Graduate Students of MSU (AEGS) was formed to promote continued learning outside of the classroom, to enable professional development and to facilitate institutional memory. AEGS aims to create an atmosphere of egalitarian opportunity, inclusiveness, mutual appreciation and encouragement of academic studies and professional engagement. As of fall 2024, AEGS is dormant; students are encouraged to consider the leadership and peer opportunities within an AEGS structure and alert graduate committee of a desire to renew this student club. If there is student interest, the department will guide students into restructuring and attending to the [club’s registration](#) on campus.

Why AEGS?

This organization furthers the mentorship of newer students by faculty and experienced students, provides leadership opportunities, and creates a venue of awards for the recognition of peer excellence. AEGS seminars provide vital information about how to successfully complete the thesis/professional writing process (including information about deadlines and requirements and helpful suggestions about how to improve student work at every stage in the process), to applying for PhD programs and jobs. It aims to provide comprehensive support in matters both academic and professional.

All MSU English graduate students and faculty members are welcome and encouraged to be a part of this experience. There are no membership dues or fees.

Student Travel/Conference Resources

Students whose papers have been accepted for presentation at professional conferences may be eligible for financial assistance to help defray traveling expenses. Potential resources are available through the College of Letters and Science Dean's Student Travel Fund, the Graduate Professional Advancement Grant, and the Department of English Student Travel Fund. Additional information is located on the Department of English's [website](#).

IX. AWARDS

The Michael T. and Sharon A. Beehler Award Scholarship

The Beehler award is a \$1,000 recruiting award provided to new graduate students entering their first year of graduate studies. The following qualifications are required:

- Pursuing a degree from the Department of English
- First year Masters in English student. If there is no eligible recipient, the scholarship shall go to a first year Masters in English Education student returning for year two.

Additional award information: If the graduate program in English no longer exists, or if there is not a first-year graduate student, the award is to be made to the top graduating Senior in English.

The award will be conferred to the incoming graduate student that the graduate committee judges to be most promising in graduate coursework and in contribution to the community of English graduate students and the English department.

If the award is given to a first year Masters in English student or a top graduate Senior, the Graduate Committee considers input from faculty and its own experiences with students (e.g., through DGS as advisor) to make final judgment for the award.

Outstanding Thesis/Professional Paper Award

To be considered for the outstanding graduate thesis/professional paper award, a student must be nominated by a member of their thesis/professional paper committee. The Director of Graduate Studies will solicit nominations from the faculty each semester that the department has graduating students. The DGS is responsible for notifying the students to request that they submit a representative writing sample of their thesis or a draft of their entire professional paper. The Graduate Committee will read the writing samples and determine the award. The selection process occurs once a year: late spring semester as the award is granted during spring semester at the department awards ceremony. Committee chairs and members are allowed to vote for the students they are supervising. The following qualifications are required:

- Demonstrates creative and original thought and argument that extends current scholarship in the student's area of inquiry
- Explores a breadth of theoretical method or scope of inquiry beyond the normal range of a MA project (especially if moving in the direction of the kind of project that one might undertake as a PhD dissertation)
- Develops an impressive detailed, comprehensive, and compelling new interpretation of a significant literary, cultural, or theoretical text
- Demonstrates a mastery of the relevant scholarship in the student's area of inquiry
- Produces a thesis/professional paper written in an exceptional manner

Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award

Each spring semester, the Graduate Committee awards an Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. All GTAs will submit the following materials to their supervisors in one combined pdf file:

- Current CV
- Statement of teaching philosophy
- List of classes taught
- Summary of Teaching Evaluations

Upon reflection on the year's work and examination of the above materials, faculty supervisors nominate one to two GTAs for this award. Faculty supervisors submit the following materials to graduate committee, along with the GTA's combined .pdf:

- One page statement that summarizes teaching strengths

The winner becomes the department's nominee for the CLS Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. During the selection process, the Graduate Committee may consider a GTA's likely appeal to the award committee for the CLS award.

Excellence Awards/The Graduate School

In coordination with The Graduate School, departments select graduating graduate students for one of three [awards](#): Land Grant Excellence, Scholarship Excellence, or Teaching Excellence.

- **Land Grant Excellence:** Students who are highly effective in engaging with the community, by sharing and applying new knowledge that is locally relevant and mutually beneficial.
- **Scholarship Excellence:** Students who have created and disseminated new knowledge that significantly advances our understanding of our world.
- **Teaching Excellence:** Students who have made a high impact on students' lives by helping them grow in knowledge, skill, and confidence.

Each department has an allocation of awards that they can grant across the academic year. The allocation is approximately 10% (rounded) of the average number of graduate degrees awarded over the past three years. The English Department's allocation is a combined number for the Fall and Spring commencements.

Departments can choose to use their allocation for any combination of the awards. This

acknowledges that not all departments have their graduate students conduct scholarship, nor teach. Departments must keep the total number of awards over the three types and two commencements to be their annual allocation. In the English Department, the Graduate Committee nominates students, in coordination with the department's awards committee.

X. ADVISING

From the time students begin the program until they form their graduate committee, students are advised by the DGS. After students begin to work with their graduate committee, their committee chairs become their primary advisors, though all graduate students need to communicate with the DGS throughout their degree to assure that all deadlines are met, and paperwork is completed.

Having an assigned advisor, particularly before a student forms a graduate committee, does not preclude seeking advice and support from other members of the department. The entire faculty desires every student to succeed and having several people to go to with questions is a good idea. Students should keep the Director of Graduate Studies informed about any decisions that may affect their progress to the degree.

XI. STUDENT CONDUCT

All graduate students are subject to the student conduct code. Please see Conduct Guidelines and Grievance Procedures for Students: http://www.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/

Course Concerns

If problems related to courses arise, a student's first step toward resolution is to discuss the matter with the course instructor. If the matter cannot be resolved at the student-teacher level, the student should discuss the matter with the DGS. If, after discussing the matter with the student and the teacher, the DGS cannot resolve the matter in a way acceptable to both parties, the student should take their concern to the department chair. In some cases, the DGS and/or the department chair may refer the issue to the Graduate Studies Committee who has the final decision-making power for issues related to graduate study.

XII. STUDENT WELLNESS & RESOURCES

The Department of English abides by the policies set forth by the [Office of Institutional Equity](#):. In particular, if you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation(s), please contact the [Office of Disabilities Services](#), your faculty members, and/or the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for support.

Additionally, Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

- Title IX Officer: <https://www.montana.edu/equity/staff.html>
- Voice Center: <http://www.montana.edu/oha/voice/>
- Counseling Services: <http://www.montana.edu/counseling/services/>
- University Police: <http://www.montana.edu/police/>

The Graduate School also [offers additional support](#) as well as resources for overall wellness: [both direct services and wellness events](#). Students are strongly encouraged to pay attention to emails and invitations from Graduate School.