English, Ph.D.

The Doctor of Philosophy program in English is designed as preparation for the teaching, publishing, and administrative service required of a career in academia and to provide depth of study in the field of English.

For further information, see Ph.D. in English on the department’s website.

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in English requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Concentrations are offered in areas such as literary history and critical theory, as well as interdisciplinary areas such as cultural studies and transnational studies.

Of the minimum 72 s.h. required for the degree, at least 51 s.h. must in graded course work at the 3000-level or above. Of those, at least 30 s.h. must be in English courses at the 5000-level or above.

Students must gain formal admission to Ph.D. candidacy by a vote of the Graduate Steering Committee, usually during the third semester of doctoral study.

Students complete course work in literature and culture of any four of these historical periods, as expressed in texts of the English-speaking and -writing world (usually but not always British or American): pre-1500, 1500-1660, 1660-1800, 1800-1900, 20th and 21st centuries. They also complete three seminars in the Department of English at the University of Iowa.

Students also must fulfill the program’s foreign language requirement, usually by taking a standardized test or completing an advanced undergraduate course numbered 3000 or above in a language other than English.

The comprehensive examination consists of the following: a portfolio of five scholarly questions based on a period of literary history (usually British or American); a review essay and annotated bibliography in a special area of interest; two course syllabi; an article to be submitted for publication; and an introduction to the portfolio that synthesizes its parts in preparation for a two-hour oral exam.

A dissertation is required. Students present their prospectus formally to a faculty committee and must undergo a final exam defending the dissertation.

All doctoral candidates are strongly advised to gain some teaching experience, preferably in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Department of Rhetoric and in GE CLAS Core literature courses.

For application forms and a complete description of the Ph.D. program, contact the department’s graduate program academic coordinator.

Admission

Applications and all supporting documents for graduate admission must be submitted electronically by December 14.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College.

Financial Support

Graduate scholarships, fellowships, and teaching and research assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. The department strives to provide five years of support for students who enter with an M.A. and six years of support for students who enter with a B.A. Students must be in good standing, which requires a University of Iowa g.p.a. of at least 3.00, full-time enrollment, and satisfactory progress through the program.

Financial aid applications are considered only from students who have applied or been admitted to a degree program in the Graduate College. Applications and all necessary supporting material must be submitted by the end of January for the following academic year. Forms are available from the Department of English and the University’s Office of Admissions.

Career Advancement

Most Ph.D. graduates seek employment at colleges and universities. Although the Department of English cannot guarantee such employment, it does supply vigorous assistance. Because there is no certainty that all doctoral graduates in English will find continuing academic employment, it is valuable to remain open to the opportunity of jobs outside the profession of teaching. A number of graduates are finding employment in academic administration, the digital humanities, business, and government.

See information about Ph.D. job placement within and without academia at Ph.D. Placement on the department’s website.