

# ENGLISH - DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)

Students pursuing a PhD in Literature delve deeply into language and literature, exploring answers to important literary and cultural questions. Doctoral students may choose a concentration in any area of English-language literature and pursue focused study and original scholarship in their area of specialization.

The PhD program is a five-year curriculum, including five years of funding, that comprises a language requirement and three basic components:

- coursework
- a qualifying examination
- a dissertation

For more information, visit the English Department (<http://www.colorado.edu/english/>) website.

## Requirements

### Admission

The PhD program offers rigorous training in critical analysis and research for professional placement. Applicants must hold either an MA or BA degree. Those with a BA who apply directly to the PhD program may also be considered for the MA program.

### Program Requirements

The degree requirements listed here are subject to change. Students wishing to pursue graduate work in English literature should visit the department's Graduate Studies (<https://www.colorado.edu/english/current-students/graduates/>) webpage for the most up-to-date degree requirements.

#### Years 1 & 2: Coursework

Coursework prepares PhD students to write a successful dissertation and to teach effectively in their area of specialty. Students should enroll in graduate seminars serving those ends in English or related fields. The sole requirement for coursework for the PhD is that students take a minimum of 30 credits of graduate study. All courses must be at the 5000 level or above. Students should plan their coursework in close consultation with their director, the graduate program assistant or the associate chair for graduate studies. The student's first and second years in the PhD program are usually dedicated to coursework.

Students with a master's degree can transfer up to 15 credit hours of coursework from their master's toward the 30 credit hours of coursework required for the PhD.

Sometime during the student's first year of study, they should identify a faculty member to become their director. The student and director should inform the graduate program assistant of their agreement to work together. By the student's third semester of study, they and their director should begin working on plans for the student's comprehensive exam (e.g., prospectus topics and possible texts for the reading lists).

See the index in the Graduate Student Handbook (<https://www.colorado.edu/english/current-students/graduates/forms-additional-information/>) for the PhD-Literature Action Item Checklist, which includes deadlines and a suggested schedule for years 1–5.

### Language Requirement

Students earning the PhD in literature must complete a foreign language requirement demonstrating proficiency in one foreign language, prior to attempting the Comprehensive Examination. There are three options for fulfilling this requirement:

1. Take a language proficiency exam in the language of the student's choice.
2. Take two semesters of a 2000-level language course for credit and complete them with a grade of B or better (courses would be in excess of the 30 credit hours required for the degree). Summer language intensive programs at other universities can be substituted for the 2000-level course with the approval of the associate chair for graduate studies.
3. Transfer in two language courses taken at another college or university. In order to qualify, the courses must:
  - a. have been taken within the last three years,
  - b. be equivalent to a 2000-level language course at CU Boulder, and
  - c. be passed with a grade of B or better.

Language exams are administered at least once each semester by the English department. For uncommon languages, students may be asked to make independent arrangements for their exam. The language exam consists of translating a text written in a foreign language into written English using English-language sentence structure. The text is at the reading and comprehension level of a fourth-semester student of the chosen language. Students are given two hours to complete the translation, and the exam is open book, open computer.

### Year 3: Comprehensive Examination

The comprehensive examination is a two-hour oral exam. The exam will be conducted by the student's director and the rest of the examining committee. The student will be tested on the reading lists and the dissertation prospectus. Typically, one hour of the exam is devoted to the prospectus and one to the reading lists. The order will be decided by the student's examining committee prior to the exam.

### Examining Committee

With the support of their dissertation director, the student should ask faculty to be part of their examining committee no later than one semester in advance of the term in which they plan to take the examination. The student's examining committee will consist of five members: the student's director, two English faculty members, a faculty member from another department of the student's choice, and the associate chair for graduate studies. If the associate chair for graduate studies is already a regular member of the student's committee, another English faculty member will serve in their place. The director and examining committee will work with the student to finalize the reading lists and prospectus. Both the director and examining committee should play an active role in helping the student write the prospectus and prepare for the comprehensive exam.

If the student's area of interest benefits from working with a particular instructor who is rostered in the English department, the student can petition the Graduate Committee to authorize that instructor to substitute for a faculty member of the examining committee. The instructor must also be approved by the Graduate School (see the graduate program assistant for details).

### Reading Lists

The two reading lists cover the following topics:

- **field**, or the broad context (e.g., historical, thematic, generic, technological) pertinent to the student's dissertation project; and
- **methods/texts**, literary and critical work germane to the project.

Each reading list should comprise between 25 and 40 titles and a paragraph (up to 300 words) providing a rationale for this content. The reading lists should be approved by the student's director and examination committee, and the PhD Reading List and Prospectus Approval Form should be submitted to the graduate program assistant at least one month before the exam.

### Prospectus

The prospectus presents the student's proposed dissertation project in 25 pages or less, plus notes and bibliography. Twenty-five pages is the maximum length limit; anything longer will be returned for editing. The prospectus should consist of three parts:

1. the topic, argument and statement of scholarly contribution;
2. a description of the student's method and of existing relevant scholarship; and
3. a brief chapter-by-chapter summary.

The bibliography should contain full citations of all works referenced in the prospectus, and all of these titles should appear on one of the student's reading lists. The student must submit a final draft of their prospectus to all committee members two weeks prior to the date of the comprehensive exam.

### Comprehensive Exam

The comprehensive exam will consist of a one-hour Q&A on the student's prospectus and a one-hour Q&A on the student's lists, knowledge of their field and close-reading abilities. All committee members must be present in person or via teleconference for the comprehensive examination. A positive vote from at least three of the committee members is required to pass. Upon passing the comprehensive exam and pending approval by the Graduate School, the student will advance to PhD candidacy (D status). This will allow the student to apply for dissertation fellowships and other internal funding. An unsuccessful comprehensive exam may be retaken only once, and must be retaken within six months. The second exam must cover the same material and include the same committee members as the first.

Any grades of incomplete (I) must be completed before the student schedules the comprehensive exam.

At least two weeks before taking the exam, the student must submit the Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree (<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/sites/default/files/attached-files/candidacyappadv-form2018-re.pdf>) and the Doctoral Examination Report ([https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral\\_examination\\_report.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral_examination_report.pdf)) to the graduate program assistant, who will submit them to the Graduate School for approval.

### Years 4 & 5: Dissertation

The dissertation, which should be work of professionally viable scholarship, will typically take the form of a monograph. It may contain such elements as practice-based research, curatorial or internet exhibition, fieldwork, etc. In some instances, it can combine critical and creative elements. The dissertation is written in close consultation with the student's director and dissertation committee.

The dissertation committee consists of five members: the student's director, three English faculty members, and a faculty member from another department of the student's choice. This committee is often

but not always drawn from members of the student's comprehensive examination committee.

The dissertation should be at least 150 pages long, the length of a scholarly monograph.

The first chapter of the dissertation project is due to the student's director and dissertation committee no later than one semester after passing the comprehensive exam. The candidate and full committee will then meet to discuss it and create a clear itinerary for completing the dissertation. Failure either to schedule and pass the comprehensive exam or to submit the first chapter of the dissertation within the semester following the exam will result in withdrawal of teaching support and suspension from the PhD program.

### Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense should take place in the spring semester of the fifth year. Before the start of the spring semester, the student should schedule a dissertation defense: an oral examination and discussion lasting about 90 minutes. The student should deliver copies of their dissertation to their committee members at least one month prior to the defense date. The student must also file a Doctoral Examination Report ([https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral\\_examination\\_report.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral_examination_report.pdf)) and a Doctoral Dissertation Defense Leaflet ([https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral\\_defense\\_leaflet.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/english/sites/default/files/attached-files/doctoral_defense_leaflet.pdf)) with the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the defense. All doctoral graduation requirements and forms, including deadlines, can be found on the Graduate School's Current Students (<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/current-students/>) webpage.

A satisfactory vote from at least four committee members is required to pass the defense. If unsuccessful, the student may retake the defense once after completion of changes or additions determined by the committee. The second exam must cover the same material and include the same committee members as the first.

### Dissertation Submission & Format

The student must submit a final copy of their dissertation to the Graduate School by the applicable deadline for that semester, and must comply with the Graduate School's specifications for dissertations. For detailed instructions and to download an example of a formatted dissertation, go to the Graduate School's Thesis and Dissertation Specifications (<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/thesis-and-dissertation-specifications/>) webpage. Students must include all stipulated parts of the thesis (e.g., title page, signature page, abstract, table of contents, bibliography) and are encouraged to ask the Graduate School to check the format of the thesis before they submit the final copy ([gradinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:gradinfo@colorado.edu)).

### Dissertation Hours

A PhD student must complete at least 30 dissertation hours to receive the degree. Dissertation hours may be taken in any semester, including before the student passes the comprehensive examination (at least 1 dissertation hour must be taken prior to passing the comprehensive exam). However, no more than 10 dissertation hours taken before the semester in which the comprehensive examination is passed will count toward the 30 dissertation hours required for the degree.

Beginning the semester after the student passes the comprehensive examination and extending through the semester in which the dissertation is successfully defended, a PhD student is required to register continuously as a full-time student for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours in the spring and fall semester of each year. A PhD

student must be registered for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours in the semester (including summer semester, if applicable) in which the dissertation defense is held. A PhD student who fails to register continuously after passing the comprehensive examination must retake and pass the examination to regain status as a student in good standing in the Graduate School.

A PhD student who does not have to maintain full-time status and does not have to use campus facilities may claim off-campus status, which allows for registration of 3 credits rather than the full-time 5 dissertation credits. Off-campus status is considered part-time. Students should check with the Office of Financial Aid to see how part-time status will impact them, including the ability to receive new student loans.

### **Annual Reports**

PhD students in their second year or beyond are required to submit an annual report on the progress of their PhD work by Oct. 31 of each year. These reports should be no more than one page in length and should describe both the student's dissertation project and the steps taken to advance it (e.g., courses, research, prospectus). The report must be signed by the student's director (or by the associate chair for graduate studies if the student doesn't yet have a director) prior to its submission. Students who don't have a current report on file cannot be considered in good standing. Reports should be submitted via email to the graduate program assistant.

### **Time Limit**

PhD students are expected to complete all degree requirements within five years from the semester in which they are admitted and begin coursework in the doctoral program. To continue beyond five years, the student must file a petition for an extension of the time limit with the dean of the Graduate School. The dissertation director and the English department's associate chair for graduate studies must endorse such petitions. Extensions may be granted for up to one year. For additional time, the student must file another petition for extension. There is no guarantee of department funding after the fifth year.