

The UMaine English Department's Commitments to and Expectations of Graduate Students. English Department faculty and staff commit to upholding university rules and processes designed to create a safer, more inclusive and respectful community. We take this opportunity to more explicitly describe the specific commitments we make to our graduate students as people of merit and as junior colleagues (to the extent that any of these commitments or expectations may diverge from UMS or UMaine policy, either of the latter policies will be understood to take precedent).

The Department of English commits to providing you with:

- an excellent education offered through rigorous, well-designed seminars, in-person and small-group meetings with faculty, professional-development offerings, and official department events;
- seminars that enable you to participate knowledgeably in the broader field of study by familiarizing you with the current critical conversations and/or with the generally accepted conclusions on the subject matter of the seminar;
- an environment for study and work that is free of:
 - exploitation, intimidation, harassment, and invasion of privacy and
 - discrimination based on characteristics such as gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, family status, disability, requests for disability accommodation, religious or political affiliations, country of origin, and country of citizenship;
- an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of members from historically underrepresented groups, an environment that extends not only graduate admissions and faculty hiring but also to departmental programming, pedagogy, and curricula;
- security from exploitation that can sometimes result from having a lesser status or lesser experience relative to graduate faculty and administrators;
- room to exercise academic freedom, that is, to question and test received wisdom and to put forward controversial and unpopular opinions for consideration; and
- a culture of courtesy and respect, with the understanding that courtesy and respect do not preclude rigorous constructive criticism of your intellectual and creative work and scholarly responsibilities.

The English Department further commits to providing you with:

- syllabi that describe the objectives, content, assignments, notice of major papers, policy on return of student work, and examination procedures during the first meeting of any seminar;
- fair, impartial, and timely evaluation on papers and examinations;
- regular feedback and guidance concerning your academic progress toward degree;
- representation in the design of department policies that affect candidates' progress to degree;
- professionalization opportunities for both academic careers (e.g., preparing and submitting an academic article for publication in a professional journal, information on professional associations and conferences, and aid in job searches) and non-academic careers (e.g., resume design, advice on transitioning skills to "alt-ac" or public/private sector cultures);
- specifically articulated and readily accessible requirements for achieving the MA (e.g., distribution requirements, degree portfolio criteria, etc.);
- fair and transparent evaluation of your progress toward achieving the MA;
- a safe space to offer constructive criticism of department procedures, curriculum, and pedagogy without fear of repercussion; and

- recognition of co-authorship or other proper acknowledgment appropriate to your level of contribution to a scholarly / creative project.

Finally, the English Department commits to honoring reasonable expectations for:

- timely communication with individual faculty;
- a mutually agreeable schedule of evaluative/supervisory conferences with instructors and especially thesis directors; and
- reasonable confidentiality in your communications with faculty and the department chair, especially
 - that faculty will not discuss your academic performance or behavior with other students (except to the extent that it may affect other students' academic performance or personal safety); and
 - that such discussions of your performance among faculty and administrators as may prove necessary will be limited to relevant concerns about your academic performance and fitness as a graduate student

In turn, the English Department expects that you will:

- respect and uphold all of the aforementioned rights of your fellow graduate students;
- respect and uphold all relevant university policies regarding professional conduct;
- uphold the public service aspects of the mission of the University of Maine, at a level appropriate to your ability;
- conduct yourself, in all educational activities, in a manner befitting an academic colleague;
- take the initiative in asking questions that promote your understanding of academic requirements;
- communicate in a timely manner, especially in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program;
- prioritize the timely completion of your MA degree, except when special circumstances apply;
- meet contractual requirements of your funding package (e.g., TAship or other form of graduate assistantship, Wicks fellowship, etc.)
- attend seminars regularly, punctually, and participate constructively in class work;
- prepare thorough, honest, independent, and original work and submit it on time;
- uphold ethical norms in research and scholarship and provide accurate and honest reporting of research results, research methodology, and scholarship;
- be open to constructive criticism of your intellectual work, scholarly and collegial responsibilities, and teaching performance (if applicable), and integrate such critiques into future work; and
- provide the graduate faculty with constructive criticism that is aimed at improving the learning and mentoring experience of graduate students.

Language sampled from similar documents created by UCSD, Miami U (Ohio), and UC-Boulder contributed to the original version of this document.