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the MA in english

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Program Handbook

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About This Handbook

The content in this program handbook is accurate at the date of posting and is applicable for the current academic year. Program handbooks are updated annually, and students should ensure they are referring to the current version. Occasionally, changes to policy and program requirements do occur so students should also check with their supervisor, Graduate Program Director (GPD), or the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGSPA) on critical matters where they are unsure.

This program handbook reflects general policies and guidelines from Brock University's [Graduate Calendar](#) and [Faculty Handbook](#). The specific documents can be consulted for further details.

1 WELCOME

Welcome to the MA in English, “Text/Community/Discourse.” Every year we are delighted to see new MRP and Thesis projects take shape and to watch ongoing projects evolve through to completion.

Our Handbook is designed to give you up-to-date access to what you need to know as you progress through the program. On behalf of the faculty and staff, we look forward to working with you and to your participation in the program, the university, and the community. Additional information about starting your graduate studies at Brock can be found on the [New Student Welcome](#) webpage, including details about course registration, Brightspace (Brock’s Learning Management System), and housing options.

2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 Program Overview

The MA in English, “Text/Community/Discourse,” focuses on three mutually informing concepts which suggest the power of texts to reflect and to shape both communities of origin and communities of reception. Employing a range of methodologies important in the current discipline of English, the program examines the production and receptions of texts in relation to their social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Literary and textual problems acquire richer significance when viewed in relation to the ways in which texts, both literary and non-literary, are produced and used in the often-conflicting discourses that constitute the culture of a community.

The program offers both a Thesis option and a Major Research Paper (MRP) option. The Major Research Paper option will normally be completed in 3 terms (1 year), the Thesis option in 6 terms (2 years).

2.2 Program Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- study the material and theoretical negotiations that attend the production, performance, and reception of texts;
- understand common theoretical methods in literary and textual studies;
- consider critical, thematic, and historical approaches to literatures, cultures, and media;
- develop critical research skills at an advanced level to produce an MRP or Thesis;
- gain professional research, archival, and presentation skills, as well as valuable teaching experience;
- improve writing skills and develop advanced critical thinking skills.

2.3 Program Outcomes

Many of our graduates go on to PhD programs, but we take great care to ensure that our students understand that doctoral studies are not the only option for graduates with a strong Master of Arts in English. The skills and credentials developed in the program can be taken into a variety of fields, and our graduates have proceeded to work in law, advertising, government, higher education, communications in varied industries, publishing, and journalism.

2.4 Program Expectations

The Department expects students will

- demonstrate ability, initiative, and receptivity to constructive criticism related to program matters;
- learn and conform to pertinent University, Faculty, and Department requirements, standards, and procedures, including those outlined in this document and the Graduate Calendar (including the policy on Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures in Non-Academic Matters);
- conform to provisions regarding hours of employment at Brock University;
- conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism with respect to the handling of data and in the development of a mature and objective relationship with supervisory faculty, other scholars, fellow students, the undergraduates that they help teach, and staff at the University;
- recognize that faculty have other teaching, research, and administrative obligations that may preclude immediate feedback or responses to queries;
- give serious consideration and respond to the advice and criticism received from instructional and supervisory faculty;
- participate in the academic life of the program, including attendance at program colloquia and departmental speaking events (including presentations by candidates for faculty appointments);
- initiate and maintain open lines of communication with the GPD and other pertinent faculty, especially with regard to matters related to progress through the program;
- in co-operation with the Supervisor, develop and maintain a timetable for completing all stages of MRP or Thesis work;
- in co-operation with the Supervisor, develop and maintain a principled statement and practices related to the role of generative artificial intelligence in the composition of the MRP or Thesis; and
- consult with the Supervisory Committee if major changes are required during the conduct of the research.

3 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The MA in English has several governance and administrative bodies that support students and faculty. An overview of Brock University's governance structure can be found on the [University Secretariat](#) webpage.

3.1 Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGSPA) works closely with Brock's six academic Faculties — Applied Health Sciences, Education, Humanities, Mathematics and Science, Social Sciences, and the Goodman School of Business — to

- provide quality administrative service and support to current and future graduate students, supervisors, and graduate programs;
- support the personal and professional development of graduate students and supervisors;
- offer competitive funding packages to financially support students through their studies;
- integrate graduate studies into the research, pedagogical, and outreach missions of the University; and
- support the growth and development of graduate programs and the graduate studies sector.

For more information, visit the [Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs](#) website, including the [Contact Us](#) page.

3.2 Program Governance

3.2.1 Faculty of Humanities

The Faculty of Humanities includes nine departments and several research centres and interdisciplinary programs. There are five MA programs and one Interdisciplinary PhD program. Humanities students at Brock study human experiences and interactions; explore cultural, intellectual, and artistic ideas from ancient times and worlds to the present; and in the process develop skills in critical thinking, problem-solving and communication.

3.2.2 Department of English

The Department of English Language and Literature is a research-focused and collegial academic unit that prizes dynamic and effective undergraduate and graduate teaching, engaging intellectual and creative activity, and meaningful service to the university, to the academic community, and to the broader communities in which the Department is situated. The undergraduate literature program focuses on an understanding of the diverse traditions, themes and dynamics of writing in English, within its various historical and cultural contexts. The Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse Studies program focuses on the theoretical, creative, and practical applications of writing in and for a range of contexts. The Creative Writing program focuses on the craft of key literary genres, as well as the material and social contexts of creative

writing. The graduate program, with its field of “Text/Community/Discourse,” extends these emphases.

3.2.3 Graduate Program Committee (GPC)

Graduate Programs at Brock are governed by a Graduate Program Committee (GPC), administered by a Graduate Program Director (GPD), and supported by a Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC).

- **Graduate Program Committee (GPC):** The GPC has responsibility for recruitment and admissions, preparation of the Graduate Calendar submission, course offerings, teaching allocations, scholarship adjudication, student progress, community liaising, responding to student concerns, and reviewing the structure of the program as needed. The GPC is normally composed of the GPD (who serves as chair), and faculty members.
- **Graduate Program Director (GPD):** The GPD is appointed by the Departmental Deployment Committee to oversee the graduate program. The GPD carries out all duties in regular consultation with the GPC. The GPD typically serves a three-year term and has the support of an Administrative Coordinator.
- **Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC):** The GPAC oversees the day-to-day operations of the program and provides administrative support to the GPD. The GPAC often assists students with questions about the program.
- **Graduate Student Representatives (GSR):** Each September, students in the first year of study elect a representative who serves on the GPC for the duration of their program. Responsibilities include providing a graduate student perspective in discussions of program issues, collecting and bringing student concerns to the attention of the GPC, serving as an information resource to other students, and facilitating graduate student social interaction (in-person or online, as appropriate). Representatives are excused from those parts of meetings where there is discussion of student admissions, student progress/evaluation, or other confidential matters as determined by the GPD. The program also encourages students to elect a representative to the Graduate Students’ Association (GSA) – see details below in section 3.4.

3.3 Program Administration and Faculty

Important: All English MA inquiries should be directed to MAEnglish@brocku.ca .

The following committees and units are responsible for varying aspects of the governance and administration of the English program:

Graduate Program Administrative Assistant (General Enquiries)

Melissa Vanette, MAEnglish@brocku.ca

Graduate Program Director (GPD)

Rob Alexander, ralexander@brocku.ca

Department Chair

Tim Conley, tconley@brocku.ca

Faculty of Graduate Studies

<https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/contact-us/>

A full faculty listing for the English program, along with profiles and research interests, can be found in the program's [Faculty Directory](#).

3.4 Graduate Students' Association

The [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\)](#) is a student organization that represents the interests of all graduate students enrolled in a diploma, master's, or doctoral program at Brock. Upon course registration each term, a student becomes a member of the GSA and will gain access to all member benefits, including optional health and dental coverage, a transit pass, student clubs, and other supports and services.

4 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND UNIVERSITY POLICY

Academic regulations and University policies pertaining to graduate studies at Brock University are outlined in the [Graduate Calendar \(Academic Regulations page\)](#) and the [Faculty Handbook \(section 3.B\)](#). All students are required to be aware of, and adhere to, these regulations and policies. Some relevant sections have been included in this handbook below for reference. The Graduate Calendar sets out the regulations, programs, and courses for the academic year indicated. Students may follow the academic policies and program regulations set out in the calendar of the term in which they were first admitted to the program or any subsequent calendar. Students whose studies have been interrupted for one or more years (by not enrolling in at least one course) become subject to the Calendar regulations in effect at the time of their re-registration.

Students can check their regulation and calendar year by accessing my.brocku.ca and visiting the Program Status page. For current course descriptions, restrictions, and prerequisites a student will refer to the current [calendar](#) and/or the [course timetable](#).

5 STUDENT STATUS

Students are admitted to the University either as a full-time or part-time student and this status can only be changed for valid reasons with the permission of the GPD and the FGSPA.

Full-time graduate students are defined as students whose main focus is graduate study for the purpose of obtaining a graduate degree. Graduate study differs from undergraduate study in that it is, for most students, an activity that is highly concentrated, demanding, and all-consuming. Full-time status is not solely dictated by the number of credits a student is enrolled in each term. Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status.

5.1 Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in each successive term from the time of initial admission until degree requirements are complete. During the Spring of the first year, students will register in either the Thesis pathway (ENGL 5F91) or MRP pathway (ENGL 5F90); students who are continuing into the second year must register for each term.

If a student decides to change pathways, from the MRP to the Thesis, they should consult their supervisor and GPD as soon as possible: such changes typically have funding and credit / course-load implications.

Students who fail to register for any term, and who have not been granted inactive status or a leave of absence, are considered to have withdrawn from their program of study.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status.

6 FEES AND FUNDING

6.1 Fees

The fee structure of graduate programs is outlined by Brock University and the FGSPA. Students should consult the [Graduate Tuition and Fees](#) webpage and the information provided in their offer letter for the most up-to-date information.

6.2 Funding and Financial Assistance

There are many sources of funding that may be available to graduate students:

- Brock internal funding support packages are available to eligible full-time, research-based master's students. Details about your personalized funding package are normally included as part of your offer of admission and can differ from student to student. Funding sources may include scholarships, Research Fellowships, Graduate Fellowships, and Graduate Assistantships (employment income earned through teaching assistant or research assistant positions). Details are on FGSPA's [Funding Information](#) webpage.
- Students may be eligible for a variety of scholarships, bursaries, and awards administered by Brock University. A complete listing of available awards is available on FGSPA's [Internal Scholarships and Awards](#) and [FGSPA Awards](#) webpages.
- External funding is generally secured by students through an application for grants and fellowships offered by provincial or federal governments, foundations or other agencies. These applications may be accepted prior to a student beginning their studies, or during their graduate studies.
- Check your eligibility to apply for loans through the [Ontario Student Assistance Program \(OSAP\)](#). Additional information is also available on Brock's [OSAP](#) webpage.

6.3 Graduate Student Employment

Full-time graduate students must limit their paid University employment, including Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships. There is no restriction with respect to time spent in paid employment for part-time students.

Full-time graduate students are entitled to 240 hours of paid University employment per academic year (120 hours per term), though they can work up to a limit of 520 hours per year. All paid employment on campus (including Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships) counts towards the total. If a student expects to exceed the 520 hours per academic year, there is a form available on the FGSPA Student Forms webpage. Please see <https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/student-resources/forms/#misc>

Note: In some cases, students receive Research Fellowships and Research Assistantship support to work on their own thesis research. In such circumstances, requirements as to maximum hours of work do not apply. However, when payment is for assistance with research not closely related to the student's thesis research, the average number of hours worked per week must not exceed ten (including TA hours, if applicable); the rate of pay will follow the Office of Research Services guidelines.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status. For full regulations regarding TAs, including duties and rates of pay, see the [CUPE 4207 Collective Agreement](#).

It is each individual course instructor's responsibility to meet with their TAs at the beginning of the term to discuss the work expected and the scheduling of duties throughout the term. These will be detailed in an Allocation of Hours form distributed by the Department at the start of each contract. Some examples of possible duties for teaching assistants include leading seminars, holding office hours, corresponding by email with students, attending course lectures, and grading assignments, as outlined in the Allocation of Hours form. It is the Department's responsibility to ensure that adequate preparation time is allowed, and it is the graduate student's responsibility to be prepared.

6.3.1 Teaching Assistant Training

Teaching Assistants (TAs), are members of CUPE 4207 (<https://4207.cupe.ca>); work expectations and hours will be explained in writing as required by the union. The Department holds a mandatory information session for new TAs in September. Brock's Centre for Pedagogical Innovation also offers support and courses on university-level teaching, including on the use of Brightspace and Learning Management Systems (<https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/what-we-offer/instructional-development/#teaching-assistant-program>).

7 SUPERVISION AND COMMITTEES

7.1 Supervision

1. Graduate research is a partnership involving students, Supervisors, Second Readers, and other Supervisory Committee members, normally from the home Department. It is vital that students are provided with responsible, professional supervision that is sensitive to student needs and free of personal conflicts that might interfere with intellectual development. The quality of supervision is an important variable contributing to the quality of student work and to its timely completion.
2. The GPD will, through the best means available, communicate to students the relevant research interests of Departmental faculty. The GPD will suggest possible supervisors for a student research project based on faculty research interests.
3. In the case of conflicts arising between students and supervisory faculty, students should first attempt to resolve matters in conversation with the faculty member in question. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this way, the student should bring the matter to the GPD for discussion and steps toward further resolution.
4. In cases where conflicts arise between students and the GPD, students should first attempt to resolve matters in conversation with the GPD. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this way, the student should bring the matter to the Chair of the Department for discussion and steps toward further resolution.
5. For overarching regulations regarding Graduate Supervision and Supervisory Committees, visit the Faculty Handbook Section 3B 9.1: Graduate Supervision and Supervisory Committees.

7.2 Responsibilities of MRP and Thesis Supervisors

1. Supervisors are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity and linked to a wider scholarly network, and students have the right to expect from Supervisors scholarly expertise, accessibility, and assistance with the design, planning, and conduct of feasible research projects.
2. Supervisors must devote the time required to share their knowledge and skills with students. For this to happen, Supervisors must undertake to be available to students interested in their areas of expertise. Specifically, Supervisors must
 - assess MRP and Thesis draft proposals and offer constructive feedback as needed with the aim of approving final proposals by the stated deadlines;
 - be reasonably accessible to the students for consultation and discussion of academic progress and research problems and give timely responses to written work with constructive suggestions for improvement;
 - offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work;

- help the student establish and maintain a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages and requirements;
- ensure the student is aware of University, Faculty, and Departmental requirements and standards for the graduate program;
- conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism;
- make a suitable alternative arrangement for supervision when on extended leave of absence from the university;
- in the case of MRP Supervisors, notify the Second Reader of the expected date of submission of the MRP by the student and the deadline for the Second Reader to submit their grade for it;
- in the case of MRP Supervisors, offer (in conjunction with the Second Reader) a grade for the MRP to the student and provide the MRP title and grade to the GPD at least two weeks in advance of the deadline set each year by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for its receipt of a Graduate Record Form (in Fall, usually early September—see the Faculty of Graduate Studies for exact dates) which indicates that all degree requirements are complete; and
- in the case of Thesis Supervisors, recommend to the GPD a short list of appropriate External Examiners and establish and maintain (with the student and GPD) a timeframe for the scheduling of the defence and related deadlines.

7.3 Responsibilities of Supervisory Committee

1. Second Readers of MRPs and members of Thesis Supervisory Committees are expected to follow, in general, the guidelines laid down for the primary Supervisor, although they do not have primary responsibility for the student.

2. Specific duties of MRP Second Readers are to

- offer appropriate advice upon request;
- assess draft proposals and offer constructive feedback, with the aim of approving the proposals by the stated deadlines;
- read the penultimate draft in a timely manner and discuss the draft with the Supervisor and student; and
- approve the final draft and agree with the Supervisor on the grade to be awarded.

3. Specific duties of Thesis Supervisory Committee Members are to

- offer appropriate advice upon request
- assess draft proposals and offer constructive feedback, with the aim of approving the proposals by the stated deadlines;
- approve the Thesis Proposal by May 1;
- review and report to the GPD on the student's progress in preparation for the January and May Academic Progress Reviews;
- approve the final draft of the thesis;
- participate in the Examining Committee at the oral defence.

4. As a departmental standard under normal circumstances, all student work submitted to Supervisors, Second Readers, and other Supervisory Committee members should be returned within two weeks (14 days). Students should be clearly informed of any delays caused by exceptional circumstances in advance whenever possible.

7.4 Meetings and Monitoring Research Progress

There should be regular meetings between Student and Supervisor and with the Supervisory Committee during all stages of the program, including research, writing and defence of the thesis. Regular consultation also implies that Graduate students have the right of reasonable access to their supervisors. Graduate students and Supervisors should establish and maintain a regular schedule of meetings; however, the frequency of meetings at any given time depends on the stage and nature of the research project and should be agreed upon by the student and Supervisor.

8 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Overview of Degree Requirements

The Department offers two pathways within the MA program:

- The Major Research Paper Pathway
- The Thesis Pathway

Prospective students choose their desired pathway at the time of application for admission.

The Major Research Paper (MRP) pathway is normally completed within three terms. The advantages of the MRP pathway are that it takes less time to complete, there is no mandatory oral defence, it presents an opportunity to increase the student's grade average (since the research paper is graded where the thesis is awarded a Pass or Fail), and, because some students may gain more breadth through their coursework, it is suitable for entry into further studies in the discipline.

The Thesis pathway offers students a longer program (6 terms instead of 3) and allows them the opportunity to develop more in-depth projects. In the Thesis pathway, students will consult with the GPD to form their supervisory committee. Students should develop a proposal draft and topic and secure their supervisory committee by January of the first year.

All students are required to take the two core courses, [ENGL 5P00](#) and [ENGL 5F01](#). Major Research Paper students must take four additional ENGL courses selected from the variable topics offerings; Thesis students take three such additional ENGL courses. All students will register in their Thesis Project (5F91) or their MRP (5F90) in the Spring of their first year. Thesis students will continue registering in 5F91 in Year 2.

For a full list of graduate course offerings by subject area, please refer to the Courses tab within the navigation menu in the [Graduate Calendar](#). For a full list of scheduled courses for the current academic year, please visit the [Graduate Academic Timetable](#). Additional details about course registration can be found on FGSPA's [Graduate Course Registration](#) webpage.

8.2 Courses

1. Upon accepting a place in the program, all students should consult the Schedule of Important Dates in the Graduate Calendar for the upcoming academic year:

<https://brocku.ca/webcal/current/graduate>.

2. Upon registration, students will consult with the GPD to plan a program of study.

8.2.1 Required Courses

8.2.1.1 MRP Pathway

As outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#), students enrolled in the MRP pathway must complete:

- ENGL 5F01 – Professional Skills and Development
- ENGL 5P00 – Theoretical Foundations
- ENGL 5F90 – An independent research paper of 30 to 35 pages in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices. Students will register for 5F90 in the Spring of their first year.
- Four 0.5 credit electives numbered 5(alpha)00 or above. Students must take one course from one of the other MA programs in the university or a reading course/tutorial ([ENGL 5P02](#)), usually appropriately modified from a fourth-year ENGL seminar. The GPD will guide students in making this selection.

FALL: MRP-pathway students will **a.** enroll in ENGL 5P00, ENGL 5F01, “Graduate Seminar in Research and Professional Development” (this full-year course meets over two terms), **b.** normally, enroll in two additional half-credit courses. One of these half-credits will be from another graduate program, or a modified fourth-year class, or a directed reading; for the last two options, 5P02 will be used as the course code. If an appropriate half-credit is not present in the fall, the MRP student may choose from options in the winter, **c.** with the assistance of the GPD, consult faculty who might serve as Supervisors or Second Readers, and **d.** begin preliminary work on their MRP.

WINTER: MRP-stream students will **a.** continue in ENGL 5F01, **b.** enroll in two additional half-credit courses, **c.** by February 1, follow the GPD’s recommendation in securing a Supervisor and Second Reader for the MRP and inform the GPD, in writing, of their agreement to serve, **d.** continue preliminary work on the MRP, **e.** secure formal approval of the MRP Proposal, a copy of which is to be submitted to the GPD with the signatures of the Supervisor and Second Reader by May 1.

SPRING: Register for ENGL 5F90. In the Spring (May-August), MRP students will complete their MRPs.

8.2.1.2 Thesis Pathway

As outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#), students enrolled in the Thesis pathway must complete:

- ENGL 5F01 – Professional Skills and Development
- ENGL 5P00 – Theoretical Foundations
- ENGL 5F91 – An Independent piece of research of approximately 15000-20000 words (60-80 double-spaced pages) in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices, with an oral defence with an external examiner in attendance (See Thesis Format in 7.3.2). Students will register for 5F91 in the Spring of their first year and continue to register in 5F91 in each term of Year 2.
- Three 0.5 credit electives numbered 5(alpha)00 or above.

FALL: Thesis-stream students will **a.** enroll in ENGL 5P00, “Theoretical Foundations,” **b.** enroll in ENGL 5F01 (this full-year course meets over two terms); **c.** enroll in two additional half-credit courses; **d.** by February 1, secure the approval by the Supervisory Committee of a brief preliminary Thesis Proposal (to be signed by the Supervisory Committee and submitted to the GPD); **e.** secure formal approval of the Thesis Proposal, a copy of which is to be submitted to the GPD with the signatures of the Supervisory Committee by May 1.

WINTER: Thesis-stream students will **a.** continue in ENGL 5F01; **b.** enrol in one half-credit course; **c.** continue preliminary work on their Theses.

SPRING (YEAR 1) – SPRING (YEAR 2): Thesis students will work on their Theses. They should plan their schedule with their Supervisors to complete a full draft by the beginning Spring of Year 2 to plan their defense in Spring of Year 2.

8.2.1.3 Part-time Students

1. Part-time students are normally restricted to two courses per term.
2. Normally, part-time students take ENGL 5P00 in their first term of study.
3. Normally, a part-time student’s MRP or Thesis Proposal is due by September 30 of the student’s second year of study.
4. A pattern of study different from 2 and 3 above requires the permission of the GPD.
5. For a student completing their entire graduate program as a part-time student, all degree requirements must be completed within five years of the date of first registration.

For descriptions of current Core Courses, please see <https://brocku.ca/humanities/english-language-and-literature/graduate/course-offerings/>

8.2.2 Elective Courses

Please note: Elective course offerings change from year to year, and only a selection of the courses listed will be offered each term. The elective courses available in any given year are to

be found in the Graduate Course Timetable available in the Registration Guide provided by the Registrar's office. For a full list of graduate course offerings by subject area, please refer to the Courses tab within the navigation menu in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

With the permission of the GPD and the agreement of the program or faculty in question, all MA students have the option of taking a half-credit course from another MA program in the university or a research tutorial (ENGL 5P02) in place of a course from the variable topics list; MRP students are required to do this normally in the fall term of the program. However, Thesis students have this option in exceptional cases. Notably, students may be able to take one half-credit course from another Ontario University through the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student Plan (OVGS), or from a university outside Ontario on a Letter or Permission. In the case of any of these options, consult as early as possible with the GPD to allow for arrangements to be made.

8.2.3 Student and Course Evaluations

8.2.3.1 Student Evaluations

At the beginning of each course, course instructors must provide students with a course syllabus that outlines details about their evaluation, assignments required, as well as deadlines and associated penalties if applicable. In graduate courses, grades in the range of A (80 to 100), B (70 to 79), and C (60 to 69) are passing grades, but graduate credit is only given for grades A and B. **If a student has a standing of less than B in one half-credit course, continued candidacy is subject to review by the Graduate Program Committee.** For graduate courses, the grades A+, A, B, C, F, IN (incomplete), IP (In Progress), Pass/Fail, CR/NC (Credit/No-Credit), SA/UN (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory), NW (Not Withdrawn), or AG (Aegrotat standing) will be recorded on the transcript. Students must meet the minimum academic performance criteria set out in the Brock University [Graduate Calendar](#) (see Academic Regulations, Section II).

All graduate students have the right to appeal academic decisions. An appeal is a request that an academic decision (e.g., a grade or standing in a program) be changed, based on the evidence supplied by the student, or that a regulation be waived on compassionate grounds or because of extenuating circumstances. Details regarding appeals can be found in the Graduate Calendar.

8.2.3.2 Course Evaluations

Normally students and instructors will provide each other with feedback throughout the course. A more formal course evaluation will be provided through the Online Course Evaluation website administered by the Centre for Pedagogical innovation (<https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/teaching-tools/course-evaluation/>). If an instructor prefers, they can opt out of the online course evaluation system and make use of a departmental form. As the number of students in a group may make anonymity difficult to maintain, students have the option of preparing a group assessment, including minority opinions where applicable. If not online, evaluations are to be submitted to the Administrative Assistant, who will forward them to the Chair. No evaluations are released to instructors until after the submission of grades.

8.3 Thesis / Research Proposal

MRP proposals should be approximately 8 pages in length, excluding notes and bibliography, while thesis proposals should be approximately 15 pages in length, excluding notes and bibliography. Both should include a title for the paper, an overview of the topic, a review or critical engagement with relevant scholarly literature, a description of the methodology to be employed, a proposed timeline for completion of the project (including the exchange of drafts with Supervisory Committee members), and a bibliography of works cited. Creative and Research-Creation proposals may be developed in consultation with the Supervisor.

Additional details can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

8.3.1 Procedures

1. Students will consult with the GPD and workshop their bibliographies and proposals in the late fall and early winter of their first year.
2. Students consult with Supervisors in the beginning of the Winter term of their first year to discuss their projects.
3. Once the final proposal has been circulated with Supervisory faculty, the Supervisor will convene a meeting at which the student and the Supervisory faculty discuss the research project. Faculty members will offer constructive feedback and any guidance that is required.
4. The Supervisor and Second Reader or Supervisory Committee must sign the Departmental Proposal Approval Form, attach to it a copy of the approved proposal, and submit both to the GPD by May 1.

8.3.2 Format

MRPs must be prepared according to current scholarly style guidelines appropriate to the field of study. They should be 30 to 35 pages in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices.

The Thesis should be an independent piece of research of approximately 15,000-20,000 words (60-80 pages, double-spaced) in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices. The department accommodates a few different formats for the final thesis, including

- a traditional textual analysis;
- a scholarly edition;
- an exhibition (accompanied by an exhibition catalogue); and
- a creative writing project.

The format of the thesis is to be decided in consultation with a supervisor and approved by the GPD. Whatever the final format specified in the student's proposal and approved by the Supervisory committee, the thesis is expected to be a piece of original research and able to be deposited in Library and Archives Canada.

Formatting guidelines are available on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

8.3.3 Evaluation

1. The MRP must be presented in final form to the Supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the deadline set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the receipt of final grades in a given term. This allows time for the Supervisor and Second Reader to assign a grade to the student and communicate it to the GPD and for the GPD to communicate the grade to FGSPA.
2. In the case of disagreement between the Supervisor and Second Reader on the assignment of a grade, the GPD and/or the Chair will attempt to mediate; failing that, the average of the grades will be assigned.
3. If the student believes that the Supervisor or Second Reader is unduly delaying grading of the MRP, the student may petition the GPD to review the matter.
4. If a failing grade is awarded for a MRP, the student will be withdrawn from the program (see Faculty Handbook B.10.2.B).
5. All MRP documents must be preserved and deposited for public display in the graduate program's archive, on Brightspace in the "MA Cross-cohort" site and retained by the GPAC. It is the responsibility of each MA student, upon receiving a final grade, to supply to the GPD a PDF file of the complete document (including an appropriate title page featuring the author's name, the supervisor's name, the date of submission, and the document's title).

Thesis students: Upon completion of the Thesis, a public oral defence is required with the participation of an external examiner. The thesis is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. While the final Thesis should also be submitted to the graduate program's archive, more detailed instructions on the defence and final submission process can be found below (8.4).

8.4 Thesis / Research Defence

Additional details can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage and in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, X. Thesis Defences.

8.4.1 Procedures

1. Once a complete draft of the thesis is sent to the Supervisory Committee, the GPD will contact the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Research and Graduate Studies, to indicate that a defence will be necessary.
2. The thesis submitted to the GPD for provision to the Examining Committee must be accompanied by a Faculty of Graduate Studies Certificate of Approval signed by the Supervisor attesting to the fact that the Thesis is approved by the Supervisory Committee as ready for defence.
3. The candidate must provide one copy of the approved thesis to the Supervisor and the GPD, who will forward it to the Dean's office for distribution by the Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Studies. The thesis must be presented to the Examining Committee at least six weeks in advance of the anticipated date of the oral defence.

4. The External Examiner will be principally responsible for provision of an independent and objective evaluation of the academic quality of the thesis. The approval of the External Examiner is the responsibility of the Dean of Humanities or designate. The GPD will solicit from the Thesis Supervisor a ranked list of at least three possible candidates who are qualified to serve as an External Examiner (including faculty profiles, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and a brief statement of qualifications). The GPD will supply this list to the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Humanities, designate. The Supervisor and student should not contact potential External Examiners to discuss availability, and any contact with an External Examiner prior to the thesis defence should be brought to the attention of the GPD.

5. Typically, a thesis defence will occur four to six weeks following the External Examiner's receipt of the thesis document. External Examiners shall be informed at this time that their report will be shared with the student prior to the defence. External Examiners shall submit their report no later than one week prior to the defence. External Examiners shall as part of their report identify whether the thesis is ready for defence and whether the thesis is to be recommended for submission to internal/external thesis award competitions. (See Faculty Handbook, Section 3).

6. If the External Examiner reports that the thesis is not ready for defence, the student must revise the thesis within a reasonable period of time in response to the examiner's comments and the thesis will then be resubmitted to the external examiner. A decision by the external examiner that the thesis is not ready for defence is binding.

7. The External Examiner's report will be shared with the Examining Committee and the student prior to the defence.

8. The Associate Dean of Humanities, Research and Graduate Studies, or designate, will act as Chair of the Examining Committee and direct proceedings at the defence. A recommended format for the defence is as follows:

- The candidate will be asked to present an overview of the thesis - preferably limited to 20 minutes, but not to exceed 30 minutes. The candidate is welcome to use slides during the presentation, but it is not required.
- The Examining Committee will then ask questions in the following sequence: External Examiner, Committee Members, Thesis Supervisor. (The Thesis Supervisor can waive the right to ask questions.) This sequence will involve two or three rounds of questions.
- The Chair will then open the oral examination for questions from the audience.
- The candidate will then be asked to leave the room (along with any audience members) and the Examining Committee will discuss and decide on the acceptability of the thesis and the defence. Approval of the thesis will require acceptance by two-thirds of the committee and must include approval by the External Examiner.
- The candidate will then be recalled to the room and informed of the result.

9. If revisions are necessary, the Committee will specify the areas for revision and the date by which the revised thesis is to be returned to the GPD. Students should typically be given two to four weeks to complete minor revisions, which are to be approved by the Supervisor, and four to twelve weeks to complete major revisions, which are to be approved by the Supervisor and Chair of the defence.

8.4.2 Committee Composition

The Examining Committee will comprise the Supervisory Committee and an External Examiner from outside the university or from outside the program but within the university. The External Examiner may participate virtually (i.e., via MS Teams). All members of the Supervisory Committee are encouraged to participate in person, with virtual participation as an alternative if necessary.

8.4.3 Written Document

Theses must be prepared according to current scholarly style guidelines appropriate to the field of study and must adhere to the FGSPA minimum standards for the Master's Thesis: <https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/research-based-students/masters-thesis/>. They should be approximately 15000-20000 words in length (60-80 pages), exclusive of notes, references, and appendices. Formatting guidelines are available on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

8.4.4 Submission

When the Thesis is in its final form (following defence and any revisions), has been approved by the graduate program, and meets FGSPA Thesis Format Specifications, the student will submit the Thesis to the Brock University Digital Repository. Procedures are outlined here: [Master's Thesis](#).

The student must also submit to the Faculty of Graduate Studies the Certificate of Approval, the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses, and the Brock University Thesis and Major Research Paper Copyright Licence, which will be provided to them.

In the case of empirical research, one copy of all data should be maintained by the Supervisor as well as any copies of coding sheets or important analyses. When human participants have been involved, all original material which contains participant identification shall be turned over to the Supervisor for disposal or safekeeping, as required by university guidelines.

8.4.5 Evaluation and Possible Outcomes

Major Research Paper and project grades shall be reported to the FGSPA in the usual fashion with letter and numerical grades. If a failing grade is awarded for a Major Research Paper, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

Thesis grades shall be reported as either a Pass or Fail grade. A Pass grade must be further differentiated as one of the following: Acceptable as is, Acceptable with minor revisions, Acceptable with major revisions. All aspects of the written work as well as the student's performance during the defence must be taken into consideration when determining the grade. Normally, if all but one member of the committee agree on a decision, the decision shall be that of the majority, except when the single dissenting vote is that of the external examiner. If this happens, it must be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who in consultation with the Dean of Humanities will determine an appropriate course of action. A failing grade will be awarded if two or more committee members find the thesis unacceptable or if the External Examiner does not approve the thesis.

In the instance of a failed defence, the candidate may, at the discretion of the Examining Committee, be permitted a second and final thesis submission and defence. This will be scheduled for no later than one calendar year after the original presentation and defence. In preparing the thesis for resubmission, the student will be guided by the written criticisms of members of the Examining Committee. Under normal circumstances the composition of the Examining Committee of the second thesis defence will be identical to that of the original Examining Committee. A fee may be charged for re-examination. Appeals relating to the procedures followed in a thesis examination or to the grade assigned shall be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, V. Grading System for Graduate Courses.

8.5 Post-Defence Requirements

Following a successful thesis defence and completed revisions, additional steps must be completed prior to graduation. Additional details can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

8.5.1 Required Forms

There are a number of forms that must be submitted to your GPAC, which are available on the FGSPA [Student Forms](#) webpage under Thesis Submission. Some forms are circumstantial*, but all students must submit the following:

- Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses
- Brock University Thesis and Major Research Paper Copyright License Form

*Under certain circumstances (e.g. to protect confidential commercial information, patentable material, pending submission to a journal for publication), the Vice-Provost and Dean of FGSPA may approve to restrict circulation of a thesis in the digital repository for up to twelve months from the date of a successful defence. Details and instructions can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

8.5.2 *Submission to Brock Digital Repository*

Upon completion of thesis revisions, students must upload their final thesis document to the [Brock University Digital Repository](#). Details and instructions can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

Important: Students will not be approved to graduate by FGSPA until their dissertation is finalized in the digital repository.

9 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

9.1 Academic Performance and Continuation

Graduate students must achieve and maintain minimum satisfactory academic performance to be eligible to continue in a graduate program.

Each graduate degree program has a defined time to completion. MRP students are expected to complete their coursework in Fall and Winter, submit their proposals by May 1, and write their MRP during the Spring term (with grades submitted by August). Thesis students are expected to complete their coursework during the first year, Fall and Winter, submit their proposals by May 1, and begin writing their Thesis in Spring. Thesis students have the following year to write their Thesis, normally submitting by early Spring at the latest, to arrange a defense in Spring (by August in the second year at the latest). Graduate funding periods are typically tied to the program's defined time to completion.

Satisfactory Progress: In order to continue in the program and qualify for funding, a student must maintain a B average overall. In addition to maintaining a B average overall, satisfactory progress in the program entails the following: for first-year students, securing a supervisory committee during the Winter term and submitting an approved MRP or thesis proposal to the GPD by May 1 of that year; for second-year students, meeting Thesis research and writing deadlines agreed upon with their supervisor.

The GPD may convene a meeting of the Graduate Program Committee in January and/or May in order to discuss student progress, where the GPD or any member of the Graduate Program Committee believes such a meeting is warranted. Such a meeting may be used to determine whether a particular student is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in the program. The GPD may consult with a student's current and previous instructors while the student is enrolled in the program, and with Thesis Supervisors and Second Readers when relevant, to prepare for such a discussion. Progress deemed to be unsatisfactory may result in a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies that the student be withdrawn from the Program. If the Dean concurs, the Dean will send a notice of termination to the student.

Additionally, graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative average of at least a B- (70%) during each term of study. If a graduate student falls below the minimum cumulative average the student will be automatically placed on academic probation for the subsequent term by the FGSPA. A probationary student must achieve the minimum cumulative average, normally during the probationary term, to be eligible to continue as a graduate student.

9.2 Residency Requirements and Recommended Completion Timelines

MRP Pathway

Year 1 – Fall	ENGL 5F01, 5P00 Two 0.5 courses Begin preliminary work on MRP Consult potential Supervisors and Second Readers
Year 1 – Winter	Continue 5F01 Two 0.5 courses By Feb. 1, secure Supervisor and Second Reader for MRP Secure formal approval of MRP Proposal (by May 1) Continue preliminary work on MRP
Year 1 – Spring	Register ENGL 5F90 Complete MRP

Thesis Pathway

Year 1 – Fall	ENGL 5F01, 5P00 Two 0.5 courses Establish Supervisory Committee Prepare research proposal for approval by the Supervisory Committee (by Feb. 1)
Year 1 – Winter	Continue 5F01 One 0.5 course By Feb. 1, secure approval by the Supervisory Committee of a brief preliminary Thesis proposal Secure formal approval of the Thesis Proposal, a copy of which is to be submitted to the GPD with the signatures of the Supervisory Committee by May 1 Continue preliminary work on thesis
Year 1 – Spring	Register for ENGL 5F91 Continue work on thesis
Year 2 – Fall/Winter	Register ENGL 5F91 Continue work on thesis
Year 2 – Spring	Final thesis approved by committee (by June) Defence (August)

9.3 Final Stage Status

If an additional term beyond the standard length of their program is required to finish the program, students can apply for 'Final Stage Status' (FSS) for reduced tuition in the final academic term. Students approved for Final Stage Status by their graduate program must have completed all course work, other program requirements and must have a complete draft of their Major Research Paper or Thesis that their supervisory committee agrees requires no additional chapters/sections. Students approved for Final Stage Status must be able to complete their exit requirement within the subsequent term. Final Stage Status will be awarded only once and for only one term.

The Final Stage Status form is available on the FGSPA [Student Forms](#) webpage under Registration and Student Status.

9.4 Application to Graduate

To receive their diploma, a student must apply to graduate through their my.brocku portal even if not planning to attend a convocation ceremony. Brock has two graduation ceremonies in June and October of each year. The deadline to apply to graduate is February 1st for the June (Spring) ceremony and July 1st for the October (Fall) ceremony.

Please refer to the FGSPA [Apply to Graduate](#) webpage for details on applying to graduate, and the FGSPA [Important Dates](#) page for convocation deadlines and dates.

Details about post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) can be found on the [Brock International](#) website.

10 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, APPEALS

10.1 Academic Integrity

In accordance with the Brock University [Academic Integrity Policy](#), all students are expected to display the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity means upholding a strong personal and professional ethic within your own work, and that of your colleagues. In upholding the principles of academic integrity, graduate students are expected to demonstrate respect and acknowledgement of others' words and ideas when conducting research, writing, publishing, and teaching.

For more information, visit Brock's [Academic Integrity](#) webpage and the [Graduate Calendar](#) Academic Regulations page (XII. Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct).

10.2 Academic Misconduct

Integrity is fundamental to the process of research and scholarship, and misconduct damages the entire academic enterprise. Academic dishonesty, while traditionally defined as plagiarism, also includes inappropriate collaboration with other students, data falsification, fabrication of results, and the unauthorized resubmission of previous work.

In the event a student is suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty, professors will contact the GPD and there will be an interview between the GPD and the student. During this interview students have the right to have an advisor present such as Brock's [Ombudsperson](#). Additional

procedures covering academic misconduct can be found on the [Graduate Students - Academic Integrity](#) webpage and in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations (XII. Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct).

10.3 Appeals

Students who have concerns about a grade in a particular course should first discuss the issue with the instructor of the course in question.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should refer to the pre-appeals procedures and appeal timelines as summarized in Faculty Handbook section III, [Appendix 1](#). Additional details are outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#) (Academic Regulations, XIII. Graduate Student Appeals) and the [Student Senate Appeals](#) webpage.

11 HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

The health and safety of individuals is to be a primary objective in every area of operation at Brock University. Every person utilizing University premises must comply with this policy and all related regulations, standards, programs, and procedures. [Health, Safety and Wellness](#) provides information, resources, tools, and support to assist the Brock community in creating and fostering a healthy, safe, and environmentally sustainable place to visit, study, live, and especially, work. Students should also be aware of Brock's [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#), as well as [Lab Safety](#) and the process for [incident reporting](#).

As outlined in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, students employed by the University are required to complete the mandatory [Health and Safety Awareness Training](#) available on SharePoint in the Health Safety and Wellness Toolbox (requires a Brock employee login).

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Human Rights Code, students employed at Brock University are legally obliged to undertake [mandatory online training](#) through Brightspace, Brock's learning management system.

12 STUDENT RESOURCES

Below are details about some of the services and resources available to students across Brock University, including those offered by the FGSPA. For a full list of services and supports available at Brock, please visit the University's [Services, Departments and Offices directory](#).

12.1 FGSPA Graduate-Specific Resources

Academic Writing Supports

All graduate students have access to FGSPA's [academic writing supports](#) to help develop their writing skills. The Graduate Academic Support Specialist, in partnership with [Learning Services](#), offers a variety of one-on-one and group support and events (with in-person, online, and hybrid options) to help graduate students at all levels of study, including bookable sessions, workshops, and events to support their writing development.

Graduate Advising

[Graduate-specific academic advising](#) is available to all graduate students to discuss a variety of topics related to their studies in a safe, confidential environment. FGSPA's Graduate Academic and International Specialist helps students navigate their graduate studies and overcome barriers that may impact their success. Students are encouraged to reach out at any point during their studies for guidance and support.

GRADvantage

[GRADvantage](#) is a centralized hub of academic and professional development resources, workshops, and events, aimed to help guide graduate student success. This framework is organized into five areas based on a student's unique interests and goals for the future: Communicator, Community Builder, Innovator, Leader, Researcher. Current graduate students can also complete the GRADvantage pathway on ExperienceBU to earn a certificate.

Additional Development Opportunities

Graduate students are encouraged to explore other [development opportunities](#), such as the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, Mapping the New Knowledges Graduate Student Conference, and GRADflix to share their research and practice their knowledge translation.

12.2 Additional Resources at Brock

Office of Research Services

The [Office of Research Services \(ORS\)](#) provides support to graduate students on internal and external grant funding opportunities, improving research communications and knowledge mobilization, and discovering real-world applications to research. Students are encouraged to contact ORS for further support.

Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre

Brock's [Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre \(SWAC\)](#) offers a range of services that support student mental health (e.g. crisis management, personal counselling), wellness, medical care, and accessibility. Students requiring accommodations during their graduate studies can contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) within SWAC.

Brock University Library

The [Brock University Library](#) offers a variety of resources to students, including scholarly content in digital and print format, diverse study spaces, innovative technologies, an institutional repository and open access publication platforms, and guidelines for research strategies. Hours of operation at Brock's various library locations, including the James A. Gibson Library in Schmon Tower, can be found on the library's website.

Career Services

Brock's [Career Education](#) team helps students with career exploration, feedback on documents (CV, resume, cover letter, statement of intent), job search strategies, interview preparation, and personal branding. Students can contact the Career Education team for further support.

Centre for Pedagogical Innovation

Brock's [Centre for Pedagogical Innovation \(CPI\)](#) supports excellence in teaching and learning across Brock University, including instructional development, support on digital tools for teaching and learning, curriculum support, and fostering effective teaching. Graduate students can explore workshops and supports tailored for teaching assistants through CPI's website.

Brock International

[Brock International](#) offers in-person and virtual support services tailored specifically to international students, including immigration consulting, academic coaching, language support, transitioning to life in Canada and living in the Niagara region, and working as an international student. Details about these services and a listing of events and workshops for international students are available on the Brock International website.