

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and Ph.D. in English with Creative Dissertation Programs Handbook

Welcome

The M.F.A. in Creative Writing International program at UNLV offers concentrations in Fiction, Literary Nonfiction, and Poetry. Admitted M.F.A. students follow a three-year program that includes classes in literature and creative writing workshops, forms of the genre courses, travel abroad to a non-English speaking country, and an experiment in literary translation. The capstone experience is the M.F.A. thesis, generally completed in the third year, and which should be a book-length collection of short stories or a novel, a collection of essays, articles, or other work of literary nonfiction, or a book of poems. Graduates of the M.F.A. program have gone on to publish books, secure tenure-track teaching jobs, gain admission to Ph.D. programs, and develop successful careers in professional writing, editing, arts administration, and other fields which are advantaged and informed by knowledge of literature, writing and the humanities.

The Department of English at UNLV also admits students pursuing a Ph.D. in English with a Creative Dissertation, and who study with the Department of English in partnership with the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute. This three-year program puts a primary focus on coursework in literature, directed studies in creative writing or writing workshops, a qualifying examination, and a creative dissertation in a chosen genre of specialization (fiction, literary nonfiction, or poetry). The Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation is designed to prepare students for careers in professional writing, for teaching at the college or university level, or for other careers in the literary arts and humanities.

Both the M.F.A. and Ph.D. programs are engaged in an active partnership with the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute (BMI) (<http://blackmountaininstitute.org/>), which brings writers to the UNLV campus from around the world to read, speak on pressing world issues, and engage in panel discussions with other writers and public intellectuals. BMI provides cultural enrichment and education for the substantial audiences these events attract, and offers significant social and political outreach and engagement with the city of Las Vegas and its greater community. The Black Mountain Institute also publishes the nationally and internationally acclaimed magazine *The Believer* and the established literary journal *Witness*.

M.F.A. and Ph.D. students can gain practical experience in literary publishing by working with both these BMI publications and/or with the poetry journal *Interim*, published by the Department of English. In addition to the international emphasis, the BMI reading series, the publications supported by BMI and the English Department, the Creative Writing program in partnership with BMI also features the Emerging Writers' Series, which hosts writers just developing reputations on the national and international literary scene and who are selected for the series by the Creative Writing students; and the Alumni Reading Series, which invites successful graduates of the program to read on campus and to present to students and the university community.

All students admitted to the M.F.A. in Creative Writing and the Ph.D. in English with Creative Dissertation programs at UNLV are offered full funding for three years of study. M.F.A. students are supported by the Graduate Assistantship, earned through a combination of teaching, tutoring in the Writing Center, editorial or internship work on BMI or department publications, or by administrative duties to support the program or department. Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation students are supported by a combination of the Graduate Assistantship

and the Black Mountain Institute Fellowship, earned through a combination of teaching and work in editing. All students are encouraged to be active in the organization of events and activities in partnership with the Department of English and BMI, and to contribute to the mission of the university and to the literary community.

Douglas Unger
Director, Creative Writing Program

Mission Statements

M.F.A. in Creative Writing

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is a three-year, intensive studio arts terminal degree with a strong international emphasis and requires the writing of a book-length creative thesis in fiction, literary nonfiction, or poetry. The objectives of the M.F.A. degree are to enable the student to master the craft of writing in the chosen genre to a publishable level; to train the student in traditional literary studies and in writing pedagogy; and to provide the student with some practical knowledge of literary translation and literary publishing. The goal of the three-year course of studies is to prepare the student for a teaching career at the university, college, or community college level and/or for writing as a profession outside of the academy; to provide the student with an international perspective on the creation, publication, and teaching of the literary arts, specifically fiction, literary nonfiction, and poetry; to encourage an appreciation of literature and writing in all its forms in a global context; and to inspire the literary activism of the public intellectual and person of letters.

Ph.D. with a Creative Dissertation

The Department of English in partnership with the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute offers a three-year course of study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English with Creative Dissertation. The program centers on the study of English and American literature and includes coursework in English and creative writing, a qualifying examination, and a creative dissertation — typically an original collection of poems, literary nonfiction, or short stories; a novel; or a cross-genre manuscript. The Ph.D. in English with Creative Dissertation is designed to prepare students for careers in professional writing, in the teaching of English and creative writing at the university or college level, in editing, publishing, and the literary arts and humanities.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College, via: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or gradassociatedean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in your department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

Program Information

[Master's of Fine Arts – Creative Writing
Subplan 1: International Focus](#)

[Master's of Fine Arts – Creative Writing
Subplan 2: Language/Composition Theory Track](#)

[Ph.D. of English](#)
[Subplan 1: English Literature Track](#)

Contact Information

Department Website

<http://english.unlv.edu/index.html>

Department Chair

Gary Totten, RLL 220, gary.totten@unlv.edu

Director of Graduate Studies

Kelly Mays, RLL 249, kelly.mays@unlv.edu

Director of Creative Writing and MFA Graduate Coordinator

Douglas Unger, RLL 217, douglas.unger@unlv.edu

Main Office – Assistant to the Chair & Office Manager

Brianna Silverio, RLL 221, brianna.silverio@unlv.edu, 702-895-4662, Fax 702-895-3653

Graduate Program Office

RLL 255, unlvenglishgradprogram@unlv.edu, 702-895-4366, Fax 702-895-4801

MFA Graduate Coordinator Assistant

Elena Brokaw, RLL 255, mfaunlv@unlv.nevada.edu, 702-895-4366, Fax 702-895-4801

Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the Graduate Catalog.

Advisory Committee Guidelines

For all programs, a student will organize a committee of at least three departmental members, one of whom is the student's advisor. Additionally, a fourth member from outside the department, known as the Graduate College Representative, must be appointed. Details regarding committee guidelines can be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Degree Program Benchmarks Master's of Fine Arts in Creative Writing [Subplan 1: International Focus](#)

1. Complete required [coursework](#) as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.
2. Complete required [study abroad](#) of one semester or summer in non-English speaking country (six credits).
3. Organize a [committee](#) of at least three departmental members, one of whom is the student's advisor. Additionally, a fourth member from outside the department, known as the Graduate College Representative, must be appointed.
4. Complete [creative thesis](#). All candidates for the M.F.A. degree are required to write a creative thesis in either poetry, fiction, or literary nonfiction and to complete at least 12 credits toward the creative thesis requirement by intensive work in conference with members of the faculty. The creative thesis for the M.F.A. will be a book-length manuscript and must conform to the guidelines set forth by the Graduate College in the Graduate Catalog and in its [Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines](#).
5. [Defend creative thesis](#) by posted deadline.
6. Submit all required [forms](#) to the Graduate College via Graduate Rebel Gateway & [apply](#) for graduation.

[Subplan 2: Peace Corps Track](#)

1. Complete required [coursework](#), as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.

2. Apply to Peace Corps during first year in the program.
3. Organize a committee of at least three departmental members, one of whom is the student's advisor. Additionally, a fourth member from outside the department, known as the Graduate College Representative, must be appointed.
4. Write thesis during two-year Peace Corps assignment. The creative thesis for the M.F.A. will be a book-length manuscript and must conform to the guidelines set forth by the Graduate College in the Graduate Catalog and in its [Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines](#).
5. Defend creative thesis by posted deadline.

Submit all required forms to the Graduate College via Graduate Rebel Gateway & apply for graduation.

Ph.D. of English

Subplan 2: Creative Dissertation

1. Complete required coursework as outlined in the Graduate Catalog.
2. Demonstrate reading knowledge of one foreign language.
3. Organize a committee of at least three departmental members, one of whom is the student's advisor. Additionally, a fourth member from outside the department, known as the Graduate College Representative, must be appointed.
4. Take a pass/fail qualifying examination, consisting of the following:
 - a. Three, four-hour written exams in three major areas of study (usually a genre, a significant literary period, and either an additional period, a major author, or a special topic approved by the advisory committee).
 - b. A ninety-minute oral defense of the student's written exam.

Both components of the exam are based on the three reading lists prepared with the supervision of the student's advisor and advisory committee. If either part of the exam is not passed, the student is allowed ONE additional opportunity to pass the exam.

5. Write a creative dissertation worth twelve credits toward the degree. See guidelines set forth by the Graduate College in the Graduate Catalog and in its [Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines](#).
6. After completing a dissertation that has been accepted by the student's committee, he/she must successfully orally defend his/her dissertation and submit a final, properly formatted by the posted Graduate College deadline.
7. Submit all required forms to the Graduate College & apply for graduation.

Program Timeline

Master's of Fine Arts – Creative Writing

Subplan 1: International Focus

Of the 54 total credits required (see Graduate Catalog for the kind and number of credit hours that must be taken to complete the degree): Six full-time (from 6 credits with GA to 9 credits without) semesters or three full academic years is the average duration of the program of study for the MFA.

Subplan 1: Peace Corps Track

Of the 42 total credits required (see Graduate Catalog for the kind and number of credit hours that must be taken to complete the degree): Eight full-time (from 6 credits with GA to 9 credits without) semesters or four full academic years is the average duration of the program of study for the MFA students who join the Peace Corps.

Ph.D. of English

Subplan 2: Creative Dissertation

Of the 48 total credits required (see Graduate Catalog for the kind and number of credit hours that must be taken to complete the degree): Six full-time (from 6 credits with GA to 9 credits without) semesters or three full academic years is the minimum duration of the program of study for the Ph.D. Graduate College regulations stipulate a maximum. The average duration has been between three and four years.

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the [graduate catalog](#).

Annual Review Procedures

Each winter break and early spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan (IDP) form. The review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress, and it establishes reasonable goals for the year ahead. Reported student data is shared with students' graduate coordinators and advisors to foster opportunities for discussion about students' strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and next requirements, and mentoring plans so that students know what they need to do in order to progress successfully through their programs in a timely manner. Students who are graduating are also required to complete the form in order to record their achievements since the data is also used to track metrics related to the annual productivity of all students. This online form will be sent by the Graduate College to the student's Rebelmail account. The mandatory review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

Discipline Resources

The Department sponsors a number of prestigious journals, including the *Ben Jonson Journal* (Edinburgh University Press), *Interim*, a long-established and well-known literary journal, and the *Far West Popular Culture Review* (as well as its accompanying annual meeting in Las Vegas). Students participate in editing all these journals. In addition, the Black Mountain Institute, one of the West's leading literary institutes, publishes the award-winning journal *Witness*, which our students also help to edit.

University Resources

Leadership and Professional Development Academy

The goal of the Professional Development Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

Academic Success Center

The goal of the Academic Success Center is to help students do well academically and complete their studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

Alumni Association

With an alumni base 120,000 strong, the UNLV Alumni Association offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the commencement office is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for graduation on time and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College Student Services Team and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College RPC Team

Office of Diversity Initiatives

The vision of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's diversity mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The DRC is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is

the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Office of International Student and Scholars

International Students and Scholars (ISS) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

Jean Nidetch Women's Center

The Jean Nidetch Women's Center is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

The Intersection

The Intersection is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

UNLV Libraries

UNLV Libraries has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The Graduate & Professional Student Association serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Conduct

The Office of Student Conduct is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The Military and Veteran Service Center is staffed with veterans and GI Bill-experienced staff to assist more than 1,000 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate

College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the Online Writing Lab (OWL) page.

University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the Graduate Student Handbook, and following websites:

- Academic Integrity
- Activation for Military Service
- Change of Address
- FERPA/Privacy Rights
- Health Insurance - Mandatory
- Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report
- Proof of Immunization
- Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects
- Rebelmail Policy
- Student Conduct Code
- Student Computer Use Policy
- Title IX

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV’s Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the online reporting form at Title IX Reporting Form, by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the Graduate Student Handbook :

- Academic Calendar
- Academic Policies
- Admission and Registration Information
- Progression and Completion Policies (listed alphabetically)

In addition, the Graduate College website contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

Revision Policies and/or Procedures

Last revised	Revised by	Changes summary
4/15/20	Kelly Mays, Director of Graduate Studies	corrected outdated material to align with Graduate Catalog