

Department of English
MASTER'S THESIS CHECKLIST

Preparing and Applying to Write a Thesis

- ☐ Discuss your interest in a thesis proposal with your advisor in the first year Annual Review (see MA Guide for more information).
- ☐ Meet with potential faculty advisors to discuss thesis proposal possibilities (fall semester for spring thesis project, spring semester for fall thesis project)
- ☐ Submit ENGL 7990: Master's Thesis Proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee no later than December 1 (for spring thesis project), or April 1 (for fall thesis project).
- ☐ Register for ENGL 7990 Thesis. (A section will be added to the Banner Class Schedule once the proposal is approved.)

Completing the MA Thesis

- ☐ Apply to Graduate via the Student Hub. The NU Commencement Office will send an email with information.
- ☐ Send your final or near-final draft to your first reader.
- ☐ At least two weeks prior to the upload deadline (see the CSSH Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines page for reference), meet with the CSSH Graduate Office for the formatting review.
- ☐ Send your final or near-final draft to your second reader.
- ☐ Submit a signed NU Graduate Approval Record to the CSSH Graduate Office, 180 Renaissance Park or gradcssh@northeastern.edu. The Graduate Program Administrator can help you secure signatures.
Upload your thesis to the Proquest/UMI website.
- ☐ Receive letter grade from advisor by the grade deadline (see Registrar's calendar).

We strongly recommend that you meet with your Thesis Director at least once or twice per month while completing thesis to ensure your timeline is met.

Last updated: August 2026

Department of English
MASTER'S THESIS FAQs

Getting Started

1. When should I start thinking about the Master's Thesis?

One year prior to the thesis semester, you should begin discussing your options with your advisor. If you are interested in doing a thesis, start approaching faculty to determine willingness and availability to supervise the thesis project in the second and third semesters you are in the program. It's helpful to let the Graduate Program Administrator know who your thesis supervisor will be as soon as that's decided.

2. When do I need to submit the Thesis Proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)?

The student must submit a thesis proposal form and potential reading list, prepared in consultation with the potential thesis supervisor, to the GSC by the deadline (Dec. 1st in the fall, April 1st in the spring). Please be aware that to pursue the thesis option, a student must have a 3.5 GPA in the program. Exceptions can be granted based on extenuating circumstance at the GSC's discretion.

3. How many texts should be on the proposal's reading list?

Proposals will vary, so there is no set number of texts. There may be concerns, however, if a proposal has fewer than 20 or more than 50 texts.

4. How should I register for ENGL 7990?

If you are eligible and choose to write a thesis, enroll in ENGL 7990 Thesis in your third or fourth semester. **ENGL 7990 is taken *in lieu of* one MA elective course and carries 4 semester hours of credit.** Students must register for Thesis under the name of their Thesis Director. The Graduate Program Coordinator will create the appropriate thesis section once the GSC has approved of the thesis proposal.

Writing the Thesis

1. How often should I meet with my Thesis supervisor?

Normally, a student meets with the Thesis supervisor at least monthly, but we recommend bi-weekly to discuss progress.

2. May my thesis be longer than 10,000 to 15,000 words?

Yes. The word count range is suggestive rather than prescriptive.

3. Are there examples for me to look at?

Examples can be found by using the Northeastern University Libraries Digital Repository (<https://repository.library.northeastern.edu>).

4. How will the second reader be chosen, and what is that person's role?

The second reader is chosen by the GSC in consultation with the first reader. The second reader is not involved in the process of generating the thesis. The second reader should be presented with what is a final or near-final draft, and is asked to decide whether the draft engages and treats its subject adequately, and whether there are other minor emendations that would be helpful or otherwise useful.

With the thesis upload deadline in mind, please include in your timeline, the projected date for having your thesis ready for the second reader's review.

Completing the Course and Thesis

1. What happens after the paper is complete?

Thesis projects are uploaded to Proquest upon approval by the readers and department. Please consult the CSSH Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines page for details and deadlines

(<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/theses-and-dissertations/>). The Thesis supervisor also assigns a letter grade in Banner during the grading period.

2. Where can I find thesis deadlines?

Deadlines can be found on the CSSH Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines page (<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/resources/theses-and-dissertations/>).

3. What happens if I don't finish my thesis in one semester?

Students who need additional time to complete the thesis beyond one semester are required to register for ENGL 7996 Thesis Continuation in the following term. This course carries 0 credit but is billed at 1 semester hour. It is expected that the student will complete the thesis in the Thesis Continuation term.