



# M.A. in English & Writing Studies Start to Finish Guide

This ***Start to Finish Guide*** is designed to serve as a key reference for your experience in the MA in English and Writing Studies (EWS) program, from the time you're admitted to the moment you complete your final program requirements.

## In this guide, you will find:

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Please keep this document and follow all of the steps carefully until you've completed the degree and graduated.

## Program Fast Facts

- The MA in EWS is a 30-unit program (10 courses).
- A full-time course load = 2-3 classes/semester.
- The program can be completed in 4 semesters (with a full-time course load):
  - 2 semesters with 3 courses each, and
  - 2 semesters with 2 courses each.
- Completing dual concentrations requires 39 units (13 courses) and 5 semesters (with a full-time course load).
- 6 units counts as full-time for Graduate Studies, but 6.1+ units may be required for full financial aid.
- Most courses are offered in person.
- All program requirements must be completed within 7 years. After that time, courses will "expire" and will need to be repeated or replaced with equivalent courses to complete the program.
- Graduate coordinators use a listserv called ENGMA to email important announcements about program policies, deadlines, events, and professional opportunities. Check your CSUSB email account regularly, and let your coordinator know if you are not receiving emails from ENGMA.

For additional and updated information, please check online:

- ⇒ [M.A. in English & Writing Studies Program Website](#)
- ⇒ [CSUSB Graduate Studies Website](#)

## Course Requirements at a Glance

- All students must complete 5 core classes, which are the same for all concentrations.
- All core courses are offered at least once each academic year.
- Students select from 5 concentration options, each of which includes 4 courses.
- Available concentrations are: Applied Linguistics/ TESL, Composition and Rhetoric, Literature, Pedagogy, and Public & Professional Writing.
- Doing dual concentrations is possible.
- All students complete a culminating experience—either a thesis project or comprehensive exams.
- Students must take either a thesis writing course or the exam preparation course, both of which are 3 units.

## Typical Program Timeline

**Semesters 1 and 2:** Take 3 courses per semester, prioritizing core classes.

**Semesters 3 and 4:** Complete your internship and Sites of Praxis course (Eng 6620) and seminar course requirements, prioritizing concentration classes. Also take thesis writing or exam preparation/exam course in your final semester.

## Advising and Planning

- All students can (and should!) meet regularly with their [concentration coordinator](#) for advising and program planning.
- [Worksheets](#) for each concentration and the [annual course schedule](#) are available online.
- Use the worksheets and schedule to review program requirements, keep track of completed and needed courses, and plan for future courses.
- Update your worksheet regularly and bring it to advising sessions with your coordinator.
- Request an advising meeting or email consultation with your coordinator as needed.

## Internships

All students must complete an internship as part of their program.

### *Teaching internships*

Students who are pursuing or planning to pursue teaching careers can complete teaching internships on or off campus.

- For campus teaching internships, students should identify an undergraduate course related to their concentration and arrange to “shadow” the professor, including attending all classes, meeting regularly with the professor, ghost grading papers, and teaching at least one class meeting.
- Alternatively, students may do a teaching internship at different site than CSUSB, with the approval of their graduate coordinator.

### *Alternative Internships*

Students who would like to explore other opportunities can arrange for a variety of other internship options, particularly those related to public and professional writing.

- Students who wish to do a non-teaching internship should work with the CSUSB Career Center and CAL Professional & Career Readiness Center to identify opportunities.

### *All Internships*

- All students must take Eng 6620: Sites of Praxis (one of the five core classes) alongside their internship experience. This course guides students through the process of exploring and developing connections between their learning in MA coursework and their experiential learning in their internship sites.
- Students must complete an Internship Contract and submit it to their coordinator in order to enroll in Eng 6620. You must also have completed at least some of your core classes (particularly Eng 6000, 6120, and 6150) in order to enroll in Eng 6620.
- More [information on internships and internship contracts](#) is available online.

## TA Program

- The program currently offers two TA programs in composition and literature, which provide opportunities for additional professional development.
- Composition TAs teach one section of First-Year Writing (Eng 1070A or Eng 1070B).
- Literature TAs teach one section of Eng 1210: Diversity Literature & Social Justice.
- All students, regardless of concentration, can apply to these competitive programs.
- To be eligible for TA positions, you must complete relevant coursework and teaching internships before applying. (All relevant courses are also program requirements; no additional courses are required.)
- If you would like to apply for a TA position, please meet with your coordinator to make sure you are taking the courses required for eligibility.
- The call for applications comes out around week 8 of spring semester for positions available the following fall semester.
- More information on the [TA Program](#) is available online.

## Culminating Experience—Overview

The culminating experience for your M.A. is designed as an opportunity for you to build on your coursework and develop and demonstrate the knowledge and expertise you have developed during your time in the program. The department has created two options for your culminating experience: the thesis option and the comprehensive exam option.

Both options are rigorous experiences in terms of academic reading, scholarship and research, and writing, and both offer opportunities to demonstrate your learning. Both are useful for students planning to apply to PhD programs, and successful completion of either, in conjunction with your coursework, results in an MA degree on your diploma.

That said, the thesis and exam options *are* different experiences, and so the following sections offer an

overview of each option. As you reflect on which choice is best for you, please feel free to discuss your decision with your coordinator(s), your professors, and mentors (particularly professors who might serve as thesis readers, if you are considering that option).

## Thesis Option

- The thesis option offers a depth model for demonstrating your knowledge and learning in the program, allowing you to craft your own focused research project.
- Thesis projects ideally draw on projects you started in one (or more) of your classes and extend your work in focused ways.
- A thesis offers an opportunity to do a deep dive into a project you are excited about and to craft that project with more autonomy and creativity.

### *Two Thesis Options: Traditional and Alternative*

**Traditional thesis:** One longer project (approximately 60 pages), usually with three chapters, focused on a more expansive project.

**Alternative thesis/Professional Paper:** A multi-part project including a shorter manuscript (approximately 30 pages), a project abstract, and a project presentation at the annual Alternative Thesis presentation event in spring semester.

- Options for alternative theses include:
  - Academic journal article
  - Scholarship of teaching and learning article
  - Policy paper
  - Public or Professional Piece (especially for Public & Professional Writing Concentration students)

### *Thesis Readers*

- Two faculty members will provide feedback and guidance on your project, from the proposal-writing stage to final submission.
- You are responsible for identifying potential readers and asking faculty if they will serve on your committee.

### *Thesis Proposals*

- All thesis writers must write a [1000-word proposal](#) outlining the project scope, methods, and likely argument.
- You must also attend the proposal-writing workshop, offered around week 3 or 4 in the semester before you plan to write the thesis, to learn more about proposals and the submission process.
- Your proposal must be approved by both of your readers in order for you to take Eng 6973, the thesis writing course.

### *Eng 6973: Thesis Writing Course*

- This 3-unit course is designed to support you through the drafting, writing, and revision process.
- To register for Eng 6973, you must complete the [Thesis Declaration of Intent form](#) and submit it to your coordinator. You will then receive a permit to enroll.
- If you do not finish your thesis project during the course, you may opt to enroll in continuous enrollment units for a subsequent semester via the [College of Extended and Global Education](#) at a greatly reduced cost. This option may affect your financial aid commitments, so please consult with a financial aid advisor prior to enrolling.
- You will receive a grade in this course when your final thesis is submitted to Graduate Studies. If you do not complete your thesis during the semester you take Eng 6973, you will receive a grade of RP (Report in Progress) until your thesis is completed.

### *Submitting Your Thesis*

- When your thesis is complete and approved by your readers, you will submit it for certification via the [Graduate Studies Office](#).
- Graduate Studies holds regular thesis formatting and submission workshops; you should plan to attend these workshops to prepare for filing your thesis.
- Please also check the Graduate Studies website for [format review and submission deadlines](#).

### *Additional Information*

Faculty do not typically read thesis proposals or thesis drafts over the summer or winter break, so you should plan to complete your project during fall or spring semester.

## **Comprehensive Exam Option**

- The [comprehensive exam](#) offers a breadth model for demonstrating your knowledge and learning in the program. Exams are a good option for students with a variety of academic and career goals.
- Exams are designed to both draw on and extend your learning experiences in program courses.
- The exam option offers a structured experience with questions prepared by faculty, exam preparation and study support, and take-home essays exams.

### *Exam Structure*

- Two take-home essays completed over a two-week period (one week per exam).
- Essays are 3500 words long, maximum.
- Each concentration includes two types of questions: Breadth Exam and Depth Exam.
- Breadth Exam: broad questions about the field and its histories, theories, and practices.
- Depth Exam: more focused questions about particular issues, sites of inquiry, practices in the field, or applications of theory to text.
- Essays are open book—you are free to consult your readings and notes, but not other people (e.g., classmates, tutors, professors, or friends).

### *Registration*

- You must register for BOTH 6983 AND 6980.
- Eng 6983 is a 3-unit course in which you will work with your peers and professor to understand the exam questions and structure and prepare study materials. Ask your coordinator for a permit to enroll in this class.
- Eng 6980 is a 0-unit course in which you will actually take the exams.
- In order to register for ENG 6983 and 6980, you must complete a [Declaration of Intent to Take Exams form](#) and submit it to your coordinator. You will then receive a permit to enroll in ENG 6983 and 6980.
- Students commonly take both 6983 and 6980 in the same semester, but you may delay 6980 if



needed.

- If you only need to enroll in Eng 6980, you may opt to [enroll via the College of Extended and Global Education](#) at a greatly reduced cost. This option may affect your financial aid commitments, so please consult with a financial aid advisor prior to enrolling.

#### *When to take Eng 6983 and 6980*

- Students typically take Eng 6983 and 6980 in their last semester.
- You must have completed (or be completing) all other program requirements in order to enroll in ENG 6983 and 6980.

#### *Exam Timeline*

- Exam questions are released in Week 11 of the semester.
- You have two weeks total to complete the exams.
- You must turn in your first essay at the end of the first week and your second essay at the end of the second week.
- You can choose which essay to write first.

#### *Exam Grading Process*

- Exams are graded by program faculty, two graders per exam.
- Identifying information is removed from essays, so faculty do not know the identity of exam takers.
- Both readers must pass the exam for it to pass. If the readers do not agree, a third reader grades the exam.
- Students who pass both exams have successfully completed the program.
- Students who fail one or both exams will receive feedback on their essay(s) and have the opportunity to revise and resubmit exam(s).
- Students who do not pass after revising exam(s) can register for exam(s) the following semester and retake it/them, using new question(s).
- For more information, please see the current Exam Procedures Bulletin and Exam Preparation Booklet on the [MA program website](#).

## **Information for All Students**

### *World Language Requirement*

Students in all concentrations must demonstrate minimal competence in a language other than English. This requirement can be fulfilled by one of the options below, but note that a course taken to fulfill the language requirement cannot be applied toward any graduate degree unit requirements. After completing one of these options, students will write a brief reflection (400-500 words) about the experience and submit the reflection to their graduate coordinator.

- One semester of college course work (with a grade of A, B, C, or CR) studying a language other than English;
- Attesting to fluency in a language other than English;
- Meaningfully incorporating multilingual texts in the thesis project.

### *Continuous Enrollment Requirement*

You must maintain continuous enrollment in the program, which means you must be enrolled in courses or units every fall and spring semester.

- Note: If you need to take a leave of absence from the program, you can complete a [Leave of Absence Request](#) via Graduate Studies.

If you have completed all your courses but need additional time to prepare for exams or complete your thesis, you can enroll in Continuous Enrollment units.

Options include:

- Eng 6991 to 6996: Enroll via the University if required for financial aid purposes. You can enroll in 1 to 6 units (e.g., 6991 = 1 unit; 6996 = 6 units). Request a permit to enroll from your coordinator.
- Eng 6980 or 6990: Enroll in a 0-unit course via the [College of Extended and Global Education](#) (CEGE) at greatly reduced cost. Eng 6980/6990 will meet the continuous enrollment requirement but enrolling via CEGE may affect your financial aid commitments, so please consult with a financial aid advisor prior to enrolling.

### Program Plan

- After you have completed 12 units in the program, you may meet with your coordinator to prepare a Program Plan.
- Program Plans outline how you have (or will) complete the requirements for your program.
- You should ensure that your graduate coordinator completes your Program Plan at least one semester before you plan to graduate.
- After your Program Plan has been completed, your coordinator will “advance you to candidacy” through your PAWS report.

### Graduation Requirement Check (Grad Check)

- One semester before you plan to graduate, you must request a Graduation Requirement Check via MyCoyote.
- You must be “advanced to candidacy” (which means your Program Plan has been completed) before you can apply for a Grad Check.
- If your graduation is delayed, you must reapply for a Grad Check.
- More information about Grad Checks is available at the [Registrar's website](#).

## Program Checklist: Start to Finish

*Start: Congratulations! You've been admitted!*

### Getting Started:

- \_\_\_ Read the email from your graduate coordinator carefully and take note of recommended classes.
- \_\_\_ Log in to MyCoyote and register for classes. Email your coordinator with questions.

\_\_\_ First semester: make an advising appointment with your coordinator to address questions you have about courses and identify courses for your second semester.

### Every Semester:

- \_\_\_ Review your advising worksheet to track your progress and plan future classes.
- \_\_\_ Register for classes as soon as you can.
- \_\_\_ Meet with or email your coordinator as needed for advising.

### Major Requirements:

- \_\_\_ Internship: complete your internship and Eng 6620.
- \_\_\_ World Language Requirement: complete required class or meet with your coordinator to confirm having already met the requirement. Complete and submit written reflection on the experience.
- \_\_\_ Program Plan: after completing 12 or more units,

meet with your coordinator to complete your Program Plan.

### Culminating Experience:

- \_\_\_ Use final reflective assignments in courses to explore ideas for thesis projects and/or make connections between courses and exam prep.
- \_\_\_ Consult with your coordinator and professors as needed about thesis and exam options.

### Thesis Option:

- \_\_\_ Attend the thesis proposal writing workshop.
- \_\_\_ Identify your thesis readers and work with them to write, revise, and submit your thesis proposal.
- \_\_\_ Complete a Thesis Declaration of Intent.
- \_\_\_ Register for Eng 6973.
- \_\_\_ Complete your thesis and submit to Grad Studies.

### Exam Option:

- \_\_\_ Complete an Exam Declaration of Intent.
- \_\_\_ Register for Eng 6983.
- \_\_\_ Register for Eng 6980.
- \_\_\_ Complete and pass exams.

### Grad Check:

- \_\_\_ Complete a Grad Check the semester before you plan to graduate.

*Finish: Congratulations! You've completed the program—see you at the Commencement Ceremonies!*