

Qualifying Exam for the MA in English Education

Students earning an MA in English Education student must take a qualifying exam in the early part of their program. The purpose of this exam is to establish the student's ability to prepare the final project or thesis at the end of the program. The qualifying exam consists of two parts: an annotated bibliography and a synthesis paper. Together, these two artifacts should showcase the ability to engage with, to critique, and to reflect on the implications of theory and research on literacy teaching and learning.

Timeline and Deadlines

In a student's first or second semester, he/she should meet with an adviser to discuss what the student is interested in pursuing as part of a more focused exploration of topics and issues related to English Education.

In the student's second or third semester, he/she should meet with an adviser to discuss the bibliography and to co-construct a question for the synthesis paper. Typically, the deadline to take the exam will be after completing two semesters of course work and at least two courses for graduate credit that address content-specific pedagogy (such as E 401, E 402, E 503, and/or E 632).

Deadlines for submitting completed work to the Director of English Education occur twice per year: September 1 and February 1. The student may write the synthesis paper for either deadline, but they must receive a "pass" before defending the project or thesis. A minimum of two English Education faculty members will read and respond to the student, typically within two weeks.

Preparation for the Exam

Through the annotated bibliography, the student should demonstrate the skills of summary and critique. The bibliography should relate to course work, and the content should be representative of the student's interests and curiosities.

- The annotated bibliography should consist of a minimum of 15 entries, with some coherence that the student can articulate, following the format outlined at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>, using MLA or APA style.
- If the student is completing five entries as part of the graduate components for E 401, E 402, and/or E 405, the student can (and arguably should) include the course readings, but should include an additional five texts beyond the course readings to fulfill the graduate component for the course.
- Students should strive to include a variety of texts (print and non-print, including, but not limited to, books, articles, blogs, and web sites). Students should include a combination of peer-reviewed, practitioner-oriented, and research-based texts.

For the synthesis paper, the student will draw on the annotated bibliography to demonstrate the ability to synthesize, apply, and reflect on texts in the service of constructing a professional argument.

- The synthesis paper should be 5-7 pages in length, similar in format to a literature review.
- The student should synthesize relevant annotated bibliography entries to answer a specific research question.
- Please see <http://www.uhv.edu/ac/wac/pdf/litreview.pdf> for guidance.

Both the annotated bibliography and the synthesis paper must be the student's own work, accompanied by a signed Honor Pledge. Receiving unauthorized assistance or engaging in any other form of academic dishonesty will be grounds for failure of the exam and possible dismissal from the program.