Applying for an additional semester of teaching

If extreme circumstances have made it impossible for students to finish the PhD during the standard five years of guaranteed funding, they can apply to be considered for an additional semester of teaching. Examples of such circumstances might include a debilitating or chronic medical condition, disability, death of mentor, or ongoing family emergency. Students who are granted an additional semester of teaching by the department will then be recommended to the Office of Graduate Studies for a tuition waiver for that semester.

Although the department provides only five years of funding, the Office of Graduate Studies allows a longer time frame for completing the degree. The Office of Graduate Studies requires that a student complete the comprehensive exam within five years of beginning the PhD program and that the dissertation be completed within five years of passing the comprehensive exams. This means that most students requesting an extra semester of teaching will not need an “extension” for their time to degree from the Office of Graduate Studies. If an extension is needed, please consult with the DGS.

To apply: By Sept. 1 or Feb. 1 in the final semester of funding (depending on if that final semester is in the fall or the spring), students should submit a letter to the DGS stating the reason for the requested additional semester of teaching. The advisor should also submit a letter of support to the DGS that addresses the student’s progress. Any supplemental documentation (e.g., letter from the Disability Center, doctor’s note) can be attached to the request.

Selection Process: Applications will be evaluated by a subcommittee of three faculty members (chosen by the DGS) from the English Department’s Graduate Studies Committee and the DGS, who will serve ex officio. Faculty members who are advisors of students requesting additional teaching cannot serve on this subcommittee. Should the DGS be the advisor of students making the request, the Associate Chair will choose the subcommittee and serve ex officio in the DGS’s stead. This subcommittee will rank the applications. The DGS will take the ranked applications to the Chair and the Associate Chair, who will decide, based on the budget and projected enrollment numbers, if any requests for additional teaching can be granted for the following semester. If the Associate Chair has been involved in the first part of the process, the Chair will make this final decision alone. Students will be notified as soon as possible of the department’s decisions. The Chair will convey to the Office of Graduate Studies the department’s commitment to funding selected students for an additional semester and request tuition waivers on their behalf for the additional semester. The Office of Graduate Studies projects making decisions about tuition waivers within approximately a month of receiving these requests.