

Goddard College

MFA in Creative Writing Program

HANDBOOK
ADDENDUM

2018/2019

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WELCOME

Welcome to the MFA in Creative Writing Program Handbook Addendum. As of June 2018 this addendum and the documents to which it refers, including the [Graduate Student Handbook](#), represent current Goddard policies and procedures specific to the MFA in Creative Writing Program and supersede previous policy statements distributed by the College. Goddard College reserves the right to revise any policy or procedure in this addendum without written prior notice. This addendum is not a contract nor is it intended to create contractual rights.

By accepting admission to Goddard College and completing registration, the student acknowledges that the College has provided the student with a Graduate Student Handbook and, when appropriate, a program-specific addendum (all handbooks are available [online](#); printed copies are available upon request to the Academic Services Office). The Graduate Student Handbook details information related to the terms and conditions of enrollment including the College's policies and the student's responsibilities in attending the College. As a condition of enrollment and attendance at Goddard, the student hereby agrees to become familiar with the contents and comply with and abide by the terms and conditions detailed in the Graduate Student Handbook, program-specific addendums, and future revisions. Students understand that if they have questions about the Handbook or any addendum(s), they should check the College's website to review the current versions of the documents and consult with the program director, or other College administrators for assistance.

Policies or protocols not addressed here, or in the Graduate Student Handbook, may be referred to the appropriate administrative official(s). Refer to the Goddard College's website (<https://www.goddard.edu/people/>) for a list of College officers and their areas of responsibility.

A Note about Language

In keeping with our community values of inclusiveness, this handbook does not use gendered pronouns. Goddard also uses the language of progressive education and has its own language, as explained in the Graduate Student Handbook.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Goddard College does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, marital/civil union status, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, veteran/uniformed service status, disability or other legally protected classification in any of its policies or procedures – including but not limited to those related to admission, employment, the provision of educational services, and the granting of financial aid – or in its services, facilities, privileges or benefits in compliance with and to the limits of applicable state and federal laws. All Goddard scheduled and sponsored programs and activities are open to all individuals on an equal basis or on the basis of gender identity or expression.

Accreditation Statement

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

Goddard College is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.

Accreditation of an institution of higher education by the Commission indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of institutional quality periodically applied through a peer review process. An accredited college or university is one which has available the necessary resources to achieve its stated purposes through appropriate educational programs, is substantially doing so, and gives reasonable evidence that it will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Institutional integrity is also addressed through accreditation.

Accreditation by the Commission is not partial but applies to the institution as a whole. As such, it is not a guarantee of every course or program offered, or the competence of individual graduates. Rather, it provides reasonable assurance about the quality of opportunities available to students who attend the institution.

Inquiries regarding the accreditation status by the Commission should be directed to the administrative staff of the institution. Individuals may also contact:

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
3 Burlington Woods Drive, Suite 100, Burlington, MA 01803-4514
(781) 425 7785
E-Mail: cihe@neasc.org
www.cihe.neasc.org

Washington Student Achievement Council

Goddard College is authorized by the Washington Student Achievement Council and meets the requirements and minimum educational standards established for degree granting institutions under the Degree-Granting Institutions Act. This authorization is subject to periodic review and authorizes Goddard College to offer specific degree programs. The Council may be contacted for a list of currently authorized programs. Authorization by the Council does not carry with it an endorsement by the Council of the institution or its programs.

Any person desiring information about the requirement of the act or the applicability of those requirements to the institution may contact the Council:

Washington Student Achievement Council
P.O. Box 43430
917 Lakeridge Way SW
Olympia, WA 98504-3430
www.wsac.wa.gov

MFA IN CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

Program Vision Statement

The Goddard College MFA in Creative Writing (MFAW) Program views creative writing as a transformative means of personal engagement with the aesthetic, political, and spiritual reverberations of content and form, as well as a powerful force for social justice, understanding, compassion, and cooperation.

Program Mission Statement

The MFA in Creative Writing Program (MFAW) Program provides a creative home where writers—both emerging and established—from a diverse spectrum of backgrounds discover the transformational power of literature through individualized mentorship, community support, and rigorous academic inquiry as they develop their own voices as writers of substance and quality.

Introduction

The MFAW Program embodies a broad community of advisors and students engaged in the serious practice of the art and craft of writing. All members of the community, from the first-semester learner to the faculty, are expected to consider writing a significant part of their life's work. The combination of short, intense residencies followed by individual work away from the College campus allows participants to explore writing in various settings. Members of the Goddard community believe that all writing grows out of a context that includes many cultures. Participants in the MFAW Program are required to explore this cultural context through their reading and their critical writing.

However, because Goddard believes in the importance of the individual's ability to take charge of their own learning, the responsibility on how to approach this context resides with the student with their advisor's guidance. Students are expected to use the intellectual rigor they gain through reading and critical work as a way to develop their own creative work. Members of the Goddard community are expected to share that work in readings and workshops, while students are expected to take what they have learned about writing and apply it in their Teaching Practicum.

The Teaching Practicum helps students look at their own creative work as part of a larger context and to begin recognizing their place within a larger community of writers. Through the close relationship of the student and their advisors, membership in the school community, as well as an awareness of the broad culture in which we live, the Goddard MFAW Program fosters the growth of the individual writer by helping students explore their predecessors, critically examine at each other's writing, learn to share their skills with others, and achieve their individual creative visions.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The MFA in Creative Writing is a terminal degree. To earn the degree, students must successfully fulfill the requirements for a graduate degree at Goddard College as laid out in the Graduate Student Handbook, in addition to the requirements of the MFAW Program as detailed in this Handbook Addendum.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with both documents. For questions on these policies, consult with your advisor or the program director.

MFAW students are required to successfully complete a minimum of four semesters. In cases where a semester of transfer credit is accepted toward the degree, a minimum of three successful semesters is required. As per the Graduate Student Handbook, satisfactory completion of the work of the semester at Goddard College includes the following:

- The student has attended and participated fully in the residency that begins each enrolled semester.
- The student is devoting at least 26 hours per week to their studies throughout the semester.
- The student has fulfilled the goals of the study plan made and approved at the beginning of the enrolled semester.
- Significant and demonstrable progress has been made during the semester toward fulfilling the Principles of Graduate Study and the program-specific degree criteria.
- The student has submitted four acceptable packets to the advisor and participated in one virtual packet in a timely manner consistent with the schedule agreed upon at the residency.

The MFAW program does not award partial credit. If the criteria above are not met, and the student is determined to have an unsuccessful semester, the student will not receive credit for any work submitted in that semester (i.e. annotations, critical papers, etc.). However, a Teaching Practicum completed in an unsuccessful semester may be considered acceptable. The program director will consider acceptance of the Teaching Practicum on a case by case basis.

As academically necessary, in consultation with the advisor and approved by the program director, students may take an additional semester (in some cases, up to two additional semesters) to complete the degree requirements.

It is necessary for a student to complete three semesters and approximately half of their 45 minimum annotations in the genre in which they receive their degree. Therefore, a declaration of genre must be made by the end of the first semester. If, in consultation with the advisor and the program director, a student decides to change their genre focus during or after their second semester, they will be required to take an additional semester.

The core of MFAW study is a student's creative work. Strengthening and supporting the creative work are two additional degree requirements that students need to fulfill to earn an

MFA in Creative Writing degree: the critical reading and writing component and the Teaching Practicum. Graduates must complete the following:

- 45-60 annotations (or 12-15 annotations per semester) on works in your chosen bibliography, with the expectation that no more than nine outstanding annotations will be remaining going into the final semester.
- Two short (5 page) critical papers and one long (20 page) critical paper, completed prior to entering the final semester.
- The 15 hour Teaching Practicum, completed prior to entering the final semester.
- A complete creative thesis judged to be of professional quality and appropriate length.
- Graduating final paperwork, including a process paper.

As stated above, critical work (the two short papers and one long critical paper) and the active portion of the Teaching Practicum must be successfully completed prior to students beginning the final semester. This allows students to fully focus on the revision and completion of the creative thesis. Although the Teaching Practicum must be conducted prior to entering the final semester, students may receive permission to work on the written portion, which includes the teaching essay and other practicum documentation materials, during the final semester.

Each component is described in detail in the following sections. Consult with your advisor or the program director for questions on these requirements.

For suggested page lengths by genre, see section: [The Culminating Semester, Digital Final Product](#).

Residency Requirement

Students enrolled in the MFA in Creative Writing Program must attend and participate fully in the residency that begins each semester (for more information, refer to the Graduate Student Handbook). The MFAW Program has residency options at two instructional sites in Plainfield, VT and Port Townsend, WA. Students must select their preferred residency location at the time of admittance. Transfer between the two residency options is permitted only in exceptional curricular circumstances and with the approval of the program director.

Policy on Advising

Goddard College believes that students will benefit from more than one perspective on their work. Therefore, students are asked to work with a single advisor for no more than two consecutive semesters. New students are pre-assigned an advisor by the program director. Returning students have the opportunity to participate in the process of selecting their advisor. While every possible effort is made to honor students' choices, there is no guarantee that students will be able to work with their first choice of advisor.

Study Plan as a Whole

At the residency of their first semester in the program, each student writes, in consultation with their faculty advisor, a Study Plan as a Whole. This document sets forth the overall goals and schedule for the entire span of the MFAW degree, including the proposed creative thesis, resources that will be used for the student's studies, and how the degree requirements will be met each semester.

Semester Study Plan

Each semester, students write a study plan that lays out their learning objectives for the semester, discussing those goals within the context of the particular semester they are starting and their overall progress towards earning the degree (see the Graduate Student Handbook for full description). Producing the semester study plan is one of the main goals of the program residency. This study plan is the basis for describing and discussing the semester's achievements in the end-of-semester narrative evaluations written by the student and the advisor. The study plan also includes the packet due dates and a bibliography of books to be annotated that is typically developed collaboratively in discussion between the student and advisor during the residency.

Failure to complete a faculty approved study plan by the close of the residency may prompt a student's withdrawal from the semester, and failure to carry out the activities and meet the goals included in the study plan may be grounds for an unsuccessful semester.

Your study plan is your contract with the College. If it is not followed, that can constitute an unsatisfactory packet or semester.

Packet Guidelines

Packets are due to your advisor four times during the course of the semester on the due dates that are included in the residency schedule and available online on the MFAW Program's website: <https://sites.google.com/a/goddard.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/>

A packet submitted after the due date is considered late unless the delay has been negotiated in advance with the advisor.

A packet is considered unsatisfactory if the creative work included is not in the genre indicated on the study plan and/or has not been negotiated with the advisor (e.g. a student is writing nonfiction and submits a packet of poetry). It is also unsatisfactory if it deviates substantially from the description and length specified in the study plan.

The Virtual Packet

The virtual packet consists of three elements:

- A detailed **agenda** to be sent to the advisor 48 hours before the virtual meeting
- The **virtual meeting**; a live conversation between you and your advisor

- A written **process/reflection** and summary to be send to your advisor after the meeting

The date and time are to be determined by you and your advisor -- either during your residency or your Packet One letter exchange.

A detailed **agenda** must be emailed to your advisor 48 hours in advance of the virtual meeting. An hour can go by quickly -- be sure to structure your time thoughtfully so that you cover the most important topics. For first- and graduating semester students, the virtual packet call should be scheduled midway between the delivery dates of Packets One and Two. For all other students, it should be scheduled midway between the delivery dates of Packets Two and Three.

The **virtual meeting** may be on the platform of your choice – video conferencing (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout, Zoom, Facetime), or phone call. You will determine in advance what to discuss, depending on your academic and creative needs. This virtual meeting is an excellent opportunity to raise any questions you might have about your annotations, an upcoming practicum, the long critical paper, possible additional titles to add to your study plan, other degree requirements, and so on. It can also be a time to ask for professional advice (e.g. self-publishing, how to get an agent, how to deal with writer’s block, etc.). You may want to spend a portion of your virtual meeting discussing your thesis work: seeking clarification about advisor feedback, sharing thoughts about revisions, and exploring possible new directions in your work.

Within three days after the virtual meeting, you will email a **separate process/reflection letter** that summarizes the virtual meeting, reflects on what you learned, and outlines how you will implement this in your remaining packets. *Note:* This requirement should NOT be incorporated into the next packet letter. Pay careful attention in writing this letter and ensure it is comprehensive and thoughtful, reflecting the full conversation and lessons learned during the meeting. This letter must be approved by your advisor, just as your packets are approved, and you will receive a response by your advisor in the following packet exchange.

Self-Plagiarism

The same material cannot be submitted to advisors in different semesters without revision, documentation, and discussion of the revisions with your current advisor. This does not pertain to the submission of the creative thesis at the beginning of the final semester.

Creative Work and Genres

Creative writing is the backbone of the MFA in Creative Writing Program (MFAW). Students are expected to engage actively in creative writing during each semester, including those semesters when they are also working on critical papers and teaching. During the first three semesters, it is expected that students’ writing will consist of a combination of revision and new work. It is important that students revise their work from the beginning, making revision an intrinsic part of the process.

Genres for which a MFAW degree is granted include: Poetry, Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction, Graphic Novel, Playwriting, Television Writing, Screenwriting, Libretto Writing, and Hybrid

Forms. While most students work in a single genre you may, in consultation with your advisor, choose to develop a cross-genre work, provided that it is organically interrelated and works together as a whole. Students are encouraged to experiment with different genres and methods at each residency and during their first semester.

You may decide to change genres after you have successfully completed your G1 semester **and** after a discussion with your advisor and in consultation with the program director. However, switching genres requires that you enroll in an additional semester in order to complete the degree, so plan accordingly.

To graduate from the program, a student must have a satisfactory genre focus: you must select a genre for your final thesis and must spend three consecutive semesters working in that genre, and you must have also completed approximately half your reading and annotations on works in that genre.

By the end of your final semester, you are asked to produce a unified creative thesis of professional quality, conforming to the standard industry length. For suggested thesis page lengths, according to genre, refer to the [Creative Thesis](#) section in this handbook.

During the Commencement Residency, students share their work at a public reading from their creative thesis, known as the Graduating Student Reading.

Critical Reading and Writing

Reading and thinking about your reading, and applying that thinking to your writing is expected throughout the four semesters you are enrolled in the program. Sometimes this process will be reported in the form of annotations, sometimes in the form of critical papers.

When constructing your semester bibliography, carefully consider the themes, technical/craft issues, and literary communities or traditions you want to explore in depth; doing so will help make the critical writing more focused and productive. Take your own personal experiences, educational background, and reading habits into account, paying attention to factors such as the period(s) of history, gender, genre, and multiculturalism, among others.

Aim for both coherence and variety. Think about the craft issues you want to explore (e.g. exploring the balance of dialogue and physical action in a dramatic scene, strengthening characterization, non-traditional approaches to storytelling, analyzing the use of meter in formal poetry, or looking at the “college essay” format for structuring creative nonfiction). Delve into the history of the literary genres that most interest you. Build in a few titles that will jolt you out of any ruts you’re in. Literary theory and books on writing craft may be included on your reading list at the rate of about one per semester, but **your annotations should not be written on these types of books.**

Close reading is the foundation of your critical writing. Close reading means avidly exploring the construction of the text, and moving beyond general impressions to note specific choices the author made and to consider their implications (for meaning, emotional impact, etc.).

The critical writing degree requirements include 45-60 annotations, two 5 page critical papers, and one 20 page critical paper. All sources in your critical papers should be properly cited and a bibliography included as appropriate. Your critical writing throughout your four semesters should be an organic part of your studies rather than an assignment that reads like an afterthought or something optional. Samples of annotations and critical papers are available on your Program Resources page (<https://sites.google.com/a/goddard.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/>).

Annotations

A MFAW annotation is a brief analytical reflection on a literary text or other creative work (as per agreement with the advisor) that you have selected for your bibliography because it relates to or complements the formal and thematic concerns of your study. It is **not** a book review, a plot summary, a grab-bag of interesting reactions, a digest of published criticisms of the work; rather, **it is a focused response to at least one aspect of a writer's craft.**

First and foremost, treat the annotation as a *focused* exploration of the text, a chance to mud-wrestle with the mystery of *how* meaning happens in language. Given its brevity, you obviously can't deal with more than a fraction of the mystery, so choose your focus carefully. For instance:

- You might tackle a problem that puzzled you while you were reading. What triggered your ambivalent reaction to the tone of Jamaica Kincaid's *My Mother*?
- Perhaps you want to examine a craft issue that closely relates to your own writing concerns. How does Faulkner go about weaving exposition and backstory into the highly subjective first person narratives of *As I Lay Dying*, and what aspects of his technique might be transferable to your own first person narrator?
- Perhaps you are struck by a formal or thematic issue that the work itself proposes. How does Audre Lorde's reading of West African traditions and cosmology shape *The Black Unicorn*? How does Emily Dickinson's use of the dash as punctuation affect the sound and sense of her poems?

It may be helpful to think of an annotation as a way to answer specific questions you have about your own writing. For instance:

- If you are writing a novel from a child's point of view and are struggling with perspective and narrative voice, you could examine how another author handles these issues in the text.
- If you are writing a series of poems about addiction, you might look at a poem about this issue by a particular writer.
- If you have trouble with voice and dialogue, identify a writer whose voice or dialogue you admire and explore how that writer's craft and choices work in a particular text.

As a basic guideline, in a standard annotation, you would present your thesis or craft focus (such as diction, syntax, character development, etc.) succinctly in the opening paragraph and use the rest of the annotation to cite and engage with specific examples from the text. Usual length is two to three pages, double-spaced.

Each annotation corresponds to a single text, and only one annotation can be written per book or source (unless specifically allowed by your advisor). When the focus of an annotation is on a collection of stories, poems, or essays, you may focus on one or more texts within the collection, but the entire collection must be read. On occasion, as per agreement with your advisor, material other than written texts may be allowed.

You are required to complete between 45 and 60 annotations prior to graduation. Allocate an appropriate amount of time to do these in each semester. No more than nine annotations should remain to be completed during the final semester. This means a minimum of 36 annotations must be completed in the first three semesters. It is recommended that students who enter their final semester with 45 annotations already completed continue to annotate at least two or three additional literary texts.

Short Critical Papers

The short critical papers are five pages long. Like annotations, these should center on your close analysis of another author's text. Your advisor may require you to argue a thesis, or simply to present a coherent investigation of a compelling question about the work(s). **As with annotations, you need a clear, tight focus.** Secondary sources are not required, and some advisors strongly discourage their use for the short papers.

Unlike annotations, the short critical papers may offer a suitable opportunity for comparison and contrast of two texts (though check with your advisor first). If you would like to use a text that you have already annotated for a short critical paper with a different focus, you should also get the approval of your advisor first. Material already covered in an annotation cannot be duplicated in a short or long critical paper.

It's very helpful, though not required, to discuss your planned approach to your short critical paper(s) with your advisor prior to beginning your draft. Not only will this save you time and energy but it can help you think through your own definition of the topic. Think of writing a critical paper as a process of trying to pin down nebulous first impressions, then going back to the text with questions stemming from that initial formulation, then refining your statements and questions based on the evidence you gather (and so on).

Revision is an important part of the process. It is expected that you will be revising your work. A successful paper rarely rests with articulating a perception you had prior to beginning your draft; rather, it expresses conclusions that take place through the writing process itself.

Your short critical papers are required elements of your degree and both are usually completed during your first semester.

Long Critical Paper

The long critical paper must be 20 pages in length. In it, you closely examine a literary text or texts by an author or authors other than yourself; alternatively, you may investigate a thematic or formal question through an analysis of examples from a range of relevant texts. Discuss your ideas with your advisor.

An example of a thematic approach would be a paper that explores the theme of “vanished Indians” in Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House* and other examples of her fiction. The “formal question” approach might involve a comparison between the “story within a story” format of *The Professor’s House* and several other works that employ a similar structure. Many approaches are possible and, once again, different advisors have different priorities. (For instance, some welcome “craft-oriented” long papers while others want an approach closer to traditional literary criticism.) In all cases, however, you should strive to explore relationships between form and content: not just “**what** does it mean?” but “**how** does it mean?”

You must also make use of at least two secondary sources (including, but not limited to, books, articles, and interviews). “Secondary” means a theoretical or critical text rather than a creative/literary text used for comparative purposes. So if you compare Terry Tempest Williams’s approach to writing about place in *Refuge* with John McPhee’s approach in *Coming into the Country*, McPhee would be considered an additional primary source, not a secondary one. **Your secondary sources need not refer specifically to the primary text that is your focus.** Toni Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* might be a good secondary source for the paper on “vanishing Indians” in Cather, because Morrison raises questions about white writers’ projection of unconscious agendas in their portrayals of African-American characters that might illuminate parallel processes in Cather’s portrayal of Native Americans.

Try to incorporate a search for secondary sources into your early thinking about your paper topic. In this way, you can build in dialogue with other critics rather than bringing them in after the fact. Appropriate inclusion of secondary texts is a way to bring the argument into a larger literary/cultural/social conversation, but not in such a way as to overshadow the writer’s own argument (i.e. this is not a research paper).

Expect to spend some time developing your topic, and to submit several drafts to your advisor. Your long critical paper is one of the required elements of your final product and is usually, but not always, completed during your second semester.

Use MLA (Modern Language Association) format for all textual citations and bibliographic references (<https://style.mla.org>).

Teaching Practicum

Because the MFA in Creative Writing is often sought as a teaching credential for faculty positions in Higher Education, students are also required to complete a Teaching Practicum that includes teaching of writing, a teaching essay, and the compilation of a teaching packet (refer to the extended [Teaching Practicum](#) section for details on the required components, selected samples, and links).

Students electing to pursue Vermont teacher licensure are also required to participate in supervised student teaching under the auspices of the Goddard’s Education Program (for more information, refer to the section on [Teacher Licensure](#)).

Graduating Student Reading

As part of the degree requirements, students must present their work to the Goddard community in a public reading from their creative thesis. Each graduating student is scheduled to read for ten minutes during the Commencement Residency.

Note: Students are advised to practice and time their readings before the Commencement residency. Each student is limited to ten minutes and needs to ensure their selection does not go over the time allowed.

If, in the rare circumstances, a student is granted permission to miss the Commencement Residency, they must do an off-site reading under the auspices of a sponsoring institution (bookstore, library, community center, etc.). The sponsoring organization sends confirmation that the reading took place (on letterhead) to the program director and the registrar prior to the commencement residency.

Graduating Student Workshop/Panels

Graduating students have the option to offer a workshop or participate in a panel presentation. If you decide to do a workshop or panel presentation, choose a topic that is related to your creative interests. For instance, what are some of the techniques you used to get to know your characters better and present them more richly on the page? How have you worked with metaphor in your poems? From which writers have you learned the most and what did they teach you? Your workshop can be interactive, or a lecture, or a directed discussion. Team up with a friend. Try something new. Play around and have fun!

Student Readings

Opportunities are provided every residency for students to share their work with the program in a formal reading setting. Students are encouraged to participate in at least one student reading prior to their Commencement Residency as it's considered an excellent way to prepare for the required Graduating Student Reading. More opportunities for readings may occur during residencies as students can (and have in the past) organized after-hours student salons in their dormitories. Students are encouraged to seek opportunities to attend and participate in public readings as presenting and speaking in public are important skills to master in the writer's professional life.

Returning Student Workshops

Goddard students bring with them rich, varied, and fascinating backgrounds and experiences. They are encouraged to share their knowledge and expertise by offering a workshop at the residency. Past offerings have included genre-specific writing workshops, discussions of specific books and authors, how to compile an anthology, book arts, yoga, practice and training for public readings, just to name a few. Students have also offered staged readings of plays and screenplays in progress. If you are unsure of what to offer, consult with the program director. New students are asked not to offer a workshop during their first residency.

Teacher Licensure

Students who wish to achieve Teacher Licensure for the elementary or secondary level must apply to the [Goddard College Education Program](#) and successfully complete the Teacher Licensure requirements. While students can work directly with their home state's Agency/Department of Education to align their study plans with their state's licensure requirements, it is strongly recommended that students enroll in Goddard's Education Program, which is certified by the Vermont State Board of Education to offer a Teacher Licensure degree. A Vermont Teacher License has reciprocity in many other states through the [Interstate Certification Compact \(Reciprocity Agreement\)](#). Goddard and the MFAW Program do not take responsibility for licensure requirements in other states when students work directly with their state's licensure officials.

Students must enroll in the Education (EDU) Program and attend the EDU residency for the semesters in which they are working on their licensure requirements. Seeking the Vermont Teacher Licensure in conjunction with an MFA degree necessitates at least two additional semesters once the minimum number of semesters are successfully completed for the MFA in Creative Writing degree.

Goddard's Education Program licensure process includes, among other requirements, the successful completion of a pre-student teaching portfolio in the endorsement area you are seeking licensure, plus 15 weeks of pre-approved, supervised student teaching with a final portfolio. The EDU supervised student teaching experience can be substituted for the required MFAW Teaching Practicum. However, a completed MFAW Teaching Practicum **cannot** replace the supervised student teaching experience necessary for the Vermont Teacher Licensure.

Candidates who successfully complete Goddard's approved licensure certification program receive an initial Teacher Licensure through the State of Vermont. This licensure has reciprocity in most other states through the [National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification](#) (NASDTEC) interstate education certification/licensure agreement.

For more information on Vermont Teacher Licensure, consult the Education program director or the Admissions Office.

Note: The Education Program for Teacher Licensure is not offered at Goddard's instructional sites in Washington. The Teacher Licensure degree is only offered Goddard's main campus in Vermont. Should a student enrolled in the Port Townsend residency option decide to pursue Vermont Teacher Licensure, typically after the completion of the MFAW degree, the student must transfer to the Education Program's Vermont residency option. It is the responsibility of student who decides to pursue the Vermont Teacher Licensure, to make the appropriate inquiries to Washington's [Professional Educator Standards Board \(PESB\)](#) concerning their licensure requirements, the benefits of reciprocity agreements, and the student's own plans.

Washington State citizens: Goddard College's Education Program offered through the Seattle, WA site is **not** intended to lead to teacher certification. Teachers are advised to contact their individual school districts to inquire whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

PROGRESS THROUGH THE MFA PROGRAM

A typical student's program progresses as follows (consult with your advisor if you need to rearrange the order of tasks accomplished each semester):

Semester One

In addition to writing and revising a significant amount of creative work of acceptable quality, you are required to develop a literary bibliography, and to read and annotate between 12–15 books. You are also expected to complete two short critical papers of five pages each (see description in the [Degree Requirements](#) section) as an indication that you are engaged in critical as well as creative writing, and that you are learning the skills necessary to write and organize a longer critical paper.

You should expect to complete more than one draft of the short critical papers and plan your time accordingly. It is highly recommended that you complete both short critical papers during semester one.

Students who have completed their first short critical paper and a first draft of the second short critical paper may be allowed to continue working to finalize this paper in their next semester with their advisor's permission.

Semester Two

As in semester one, in addition to your creative work, reading and annotations, you are expected to complete your required long critical paper, ideally in the second semester. However, both short critical papers must be completed before beginning the long critical paper.

As with the short critical paper, expect the long critical paper to have several drafts. With permission of your advisor, you may continue working on this in the following semester. However, the long critical paper **must** be completed before you can enter your final semester.

In this semester, you should also begin preparing for your Teaching Practicum, which is usually completed in semester three. You must attend the Degree Requirement Workshop on the Teaching Practicum at the residency before beginning your teaching. You may attend this workshop more than once. Additionally, it is recommended that you read two teaching resources this semester to begin preparing yourself for the teaching semester, draft a sample syllabus and lesson plan for practice, and have a discussion with your advisor about your plans and progress, even though your advisor may be different once your practicum is confirmed.

MFAW's semester will likely not coincide with your teaching semester, so plan ahead and confirm your teaching site early in the semester. You may need to do your supervised teaching in semester two and submit your teaching packet in semester three. If this happens, and if you change advisors between semester two and semester three, verify that your semester two advisor included a summary of your supervised teaching in the Advisor End of Semester Evaluation, which you can then show to your semester three advisor.

Semester Three

As with semesters one and two, you will continue with your creative work and annotations. During semester three, you will also complete your Teaching Practicum. If the long critical paper is outstanding, you must also complete it in this semester. **You must have all your critical papers, at least 36 annotations, and all components of your Teaching Practicum finished in order to be allowed to enter your final semester.**

Note: In rare circumstances, though this is not recommended, it is possible for the teaching packet to be submitted by the second packet due date of the final semester. This may occur *only* in consultation with your advisor and program director, and if the supervised teaching component of the Teaching Practicum has been completed, and if you are on track in all other areas of the degree.

At the end of your third semester, you should have done considerable thinking and writing toward the final semester's creative thesis. You should enter semester four with the first draft of your thesis. If, by the end of the third semester, you and your advisor realize that you are not in a position to complete a final creative thesis during the semester four, you may be asked to complete an additional semester. Remember that four semesters are the minimum required to earn the MFAW degree. Students may take five (but no more than six) semesters to finish.

Semester Four

The focus of semester four is the revision and completion of a final thesis representing the culmination of your creative work in the program. In addition to working with an advisor, you will also be assigned a second reader to assist you in your revisions. For information on second readers, see the section on the [Culminating Semester](#).

By the beginning of this semester, your thesis should be in a well-developed draft stage. **A full draft is due to your advisor and second reader at the first packet due date.** You will receive feedback from your second reader and advisor after their first review of the thesis. You will submit the final, revised draft of your creative thesis to your advisor and second reader in either the third or fourth packet. The exact schedule will be determined in consultation with your advisor either during the residency or after the first packet.

In this semester, you will also finish all remaining annotations (ideally between three and six but no more than nine) and complete your process paper, your general and annotated bibliographies, your course equivalents and course descriptions, and graduating student paperwork.

Semester Five

Students with significant work remaining on their creative thesis (more than eight weeks—the length of two final product extensions) and/or uncompleted program requirements will need to enroll in a fifth semester to graduate. As in previous semesters, you will be expected to continue to read and annotate at least two to three literary texts. This is a full semester and requires attendance at the residency.

The Commencement Residency

Culminating students attend a three-day commencement residency following their final semester. At this residency, graduating students are scheduled to do their Graduating Student Readings, offer workshops and/or participate on the Graduating Student Panel (both optional), and participate in the Commencement Ceremony, which features a Commencement Speaker nominated by members of the graduating class during the previous residency. Prior to the commencement residency, students complete all administrative requirements for graduation including thesis submission, financial aid exit interview (if necessary), payment of the graduation fee, etc. The Registrar's Office sends upcoming graduate students a Graduation Checklist one month prior to graduation.

TEACHING PRACTICUM

History and Rationale

The original inspiration for the Teaching Practicum came from Goddard College's belief that education is a privilege that should be shared with your home communities. Recently, the practicum has developed into an opportunity for writers to learn more about their craft through teaching, and to develop not only as a writer, but also as a teacher of creative writing.

Because the MFA in Creative Writing is a terminal degree, graduates frequently become teachers in universities, community colleges, high schools, and independent arts programs. To prepare Goddard graduates to teach, and inspire students who have teaching experience to experiment with new ideas, approaches, student populations or material, the practicum encourages students to consider how to engage with different writing communities and, in the process, enhance and expand their own perspectives on what it means to be a professional in the world of writing, whether that profession is in teaching, curating, or a related field.

Teaching Practicum

To complete the MFAW Teaching Practicum, a student must conceive, develop, organize, prepare, conduct, and evaluate a creative writing class in their community and document it in a teaching essay and packet. The course must consist of at least 15 hours of instruction time, with a minimum of three students. The teaching packet must contain a syllabus; lesson plans, student work and other documentation, as well as the teaching essay (see [Specific Requirements](#) below).

Your practicum is your responsibility to design and plan. You can offer a course in anything related to creative writing: nonfiction, fiction, graphic novels, and dramatic writing, poetry, libretto, and hybrid texts— in fact, any genre offered by the MFAW program. The only requirement is that you engage with pedagogy consistent with the teaching of creative writing (as opposed, say, to the teaching of literature). Also note that a class offering more than one genre option is likely to increase the number of participants.

The MFAW Teaching Practicum may be completed at a physical location or online. Goddard MFAW students have offered creative writing courses at colleges, grade schools, retirement communities, libraries, juvenile detention centers, and even cafes. Regardless of location, your practicum must be offered under the auspices of a supervising institution that will verify completion of the course you teach.

Specific Requirements

1. **To prepare for your Teaching Practicum, you are required to take the Teaching Practicum Workshop at the residency before you begin (either G2 or G3, or both).** This workshop will help you think about the content and form of your lessons: what topics do you want to cover? What combination of lecture, writing exercises, reading, workshopping, group discussion, revision, etc. would work best for you and your students? You will also be guided to think about the length and scheduling of your workshops, and what is most effective for different student populations. You'll hear valuable advice from students who have recently completed their practica and have the chance to ask questions.
2. **Your Teaching Practicum must include a minimum of 15 hours of instruction time.** These teaching hours can be divided in many different ways from one hour/week over the course of a semester to several intense weekend workshops. While shorter teaching experiences can be useful, this time requirement insures that students will be in a teaching setting long enough to have a variety of experiences in their classrooms and handle a range of challenges during their practica. The minimum 15 hours of instruction time does not include preparation hours.
3. **Your Teaching Practicum must be completed under the sponsorship of an institution** that will host and verify the completion of the course with a letter that includes the number of hours; dates, times and place of the meetings; and number of students. *The verification letter should be printed on the sponsoring organization's letterhead and include a contact person's name and phone number where they can be reached, if needed.* The institution may, for example, be a college, a high school, a library, a bookshop, a YMCA, a designated after-school program, or a local arts center. Be sure to work with your advisor as you design your practicum, so that the advisor can give you specific advice on the appropriateness of a particular setting.
4. **Your Teaching Practicum must include at least three students.** Generally, this is not a problem, especially for those who are working in educational institutions. For those doing practica in less formal settings, enrollment sometimes is small. Three students are an absolute minimum for a good teaching experience. With fewer students, it becomes more of a tutoring experience, which is quite different from group teaching.
5. **Your Teaching Practicum must include one session in which there is an outside observer present, and a written report from that observer must be submitted as part of the teaching packet. If you have designed an intensive class, then the observer must be in attendance for at least one hour. ([Guidelines](#) below).** The observer cannot be one of your students or the same person who writes your verification letter. Ideally, your observer

will have some previous teaching experience. The observer must agree to be contacted by your faculty advisor, in case additional information or clarification is needed.

6. **Your Teaching Practicum *must be verified, in writing, by each sponsoring institution (See guidelines below).***
7. **Your Teaching Practicum *is not complete until you have submitted a teaching packet that includes a 10-20 page reflective essay, which must be approved by your faculty advisor (See guidelines below).***
8. **All teaching hours *must be completed before the beginning of your final semester.***

Setting up the Practicum

Plan Ahead

At least one semester before you begin your practicum, think about the lessons, skills and insights that have been most important to you as a student of creative writing, and consider how you might share them. Review the various topics and approaches your advisors, mentors and faculty have taken in workshops you've attended. How might you adapt those that worked best for you? What age and educational level would you like to teach? What genre(s)? Reflect on your own learning style, and experiment with different tools and methods that might help you reach your intended students. Keep in mind what you have absorbed about Goddard's student-centered learning approach. Experiment. Get creative. What will you title your course? What would your ideal classroom look like? Start preparing your syllabus.

It is recommended that you make the logistical arrangements for your practicum the semester before it actually takes place. Most schools need at least that much time to develop schedules, but even less formal organizations like libraries or bookshops need time to arrange space. If you are planning a practicum in a small community--in a local library, for example--you might want to offer a class that covers more than one genre, to cast a wider net for participants. You should meet with the person who is responsible for the management of the organization/institution and discuss your Teaching Practicum so that the organization understands the rationale and expectations of your request, and, if all goes well, agrees to sponsor you.

Not only will advance planning help you make practical arrangements, but it will also give you time to locate resources for yourself and for your students, and give you a chance to read the books you need to prepare yourself for teaching.

Note:

- Sometimes a student arranges a practicum during the break between two enrolled semesters, or has a practicum that extends beyond the end of the semester. If you are considering this possibility, make sure to discuss this with your advisor. You would then submit your teaching packet either in packet one or packet two of the following semester.
- **Students may not do their Teaching Practicum during a semester when they are on leave from the program.**

- **All teaching hours must be completed before the beginning of the final semester.**
- Note: Practica that may involve working with vulnerable groups (see [Working with Vulnerable Groups](#) above) require a great deal of pre-planning and may need to be submitted to the Goddard's Institutional Review Board for approval. Review and become familiar with the policies involved and plan accordingly.
(<https://www.goddard.edu/academics/curriculum-guides/>)

Think About Advertising

How do you plan to attract students? Is your sponsoring institution going to assign or advertise your course, or are you? Do you need to send press releases to your local paper and hang announcements in strategic places? Does the institution have a newsletter that circulates to its members? If so, be sure to get the information about your program to the editor.

Helpful tip: A class that offers more than one genre option will attract more participants.

Have a Clear, Active Plan for the First Day

A solid lesson and activity plan for the first day of your practicum will help you feel confident, which in turn will make your students feel secure and engaged. Don't be alarmed, however, if you need to adapt the plan, going forward. Most teaching situations, like most of life, do not develop exactly as anticipated. Students often have different needs than expected, or lessons that looked wonderful on paper do not work at all in practice. The best laid plans will inevitably change, so try to remain flexible.

Take notes or keep a journal of your teaching experience. Jot down memorable comments your students make, unexpected reactions to your lessons, unanticipated challenges and victories. The more detail, the better. These notes will be immensely valuable when you write your teaching essay.

The Teaching Packet

After you have finished your Teaching Practicum, the next step is to document your experience with the creation of a Teaching Packet. A Teaching Packet must contain:

- A teaching essay
- A copy of the syllabus
- A sample lesson plan
- Examples of student work (minimum of 3 student samples)
- Evaluations by each student
- An Observer's Report
- A verification letter of completed teaching

The Teaching Essay

After you have completed your practicum, write your teaching essay while the experience is fresh. The teaching essay gives you the opportunity to explore, assess, and reflect upon your teaching experience, as well as on the pedagogical insights that you gained during your practicum. It is the primary documentation of the process and experience of your practicum, so it should include details of what happened as well as a thoughtful, personal reflection on your successes, failures, and revelations about learning and teaching. It should take the form of a carefully composed and well-constructed personal essay.

Make sure to include your planning and decision-making process. For example: How did you choose your site? How did you consider your potential students' needs and their own learning goals? What goals and objectives did you set for yourself? What resources were important to you, and how did you use them? As you document what happened during the lessons, also take time to reflect on how the experience compared to your expectations and assumptions (about the process, the students and yourself) and how you might have adjusted your plans and lessons in response. Sometimes, the most valuable practica (for the Goddard student) are those that are not effortless or predictable in the classroom, so don't be afraid to discuss what didn't work, or what you wish you had done differently. Since the teaching essay also functions in part as an evaluative element, make sure you go back to reflect on the goals you set for yourself, and for your students' learning when you were planning the practicum and discuss how you met them, or how they changed. Did the quality of your students' writing, or their relationship to writing and their stories, or their skillset change? How do you measure that? How does that compare to your hopes, and their own?

This reflective assessment on the entire experience of the practicum will be an invaluable record if you decide to pursue a teaching career. The reflective assessment will also help formalize the lessons and benefits of the experience to you as the writer and master of your craft.

The essay may be 10 – 20 pages, and should include at least two outside texts on pedagogical theory. Remember, it should take the form of a personal essay, not a sterile "report."

Although you will be submitting the teaching essay as part of a comprehensive packet that includes lesson plans and a syllabus, it is an optional component of your Final Digital Product in your graduating semester. The teaching essay needs to be clear, comprehensive and understandable to any reader, not just to someone familiar with the full packet, so compose it as a stand-alone essay, and be sure to include all relevant details about your student participants, what happened in the classroom, and the observations by your observer, as necessary.

Most teaching essays are revised more than once, so you should expect to rewrite your draft essay a few times and plan accordingly. Samples of teaching essays are available on the MFAW Program Resources page and in the final products of some program graduates. Take the time to read essays that others have written before you write your own.

Observer's Report Instructions for the Student

The main purpose of the observation is to give you an objective way of assessing and reflecting on your teaching capabilities with a group of students. Your advisor will not use the observer's report to judge or grade your teaching performance.

Before you ask someone to observe your teaching, discuss your choice with your advisor. You will want to choose a person who is not too close to you, who is not a member of your class or your co-teacher, who has good writing and observation skills, and who feels comfortable in a classroom (though not necessarily a teacher). Once you've selected an observer and they have agreed, you will need to:

- Discuss with your observer the expectations for their observation and report.
- Verify the observer knows what is required, including the time constraints, and is willing to be contacted by your advisor, if any clarification is necessary. (*Note: If you have designed an intensive class, then the observer must be in attendance for at least one hour.*)
- Your observer will need to take copious notes during the observation and write up their notes into a report, which is due within a week. . It is important that the observer write-up the report as soon as possible, otherwise it may not be as useful.
- Ask your observer to print and sign their name at the bottom of their report once it's completed. If time allows, request a meeting with your observer to discuss their observation report with you (a few minutes are better than none). Notify your students in advance that the observer will be attending the class.
- Provide a detailed explanation and expectations of the observer's visit, including that the observer is not actively participating in the class.
- On the day of the observation, remind the students not to ask the observer to participate in the class in any way.
- If you submit your Teaching Packet in digital form, scan your observer's report and include it as a PDF.

Instructions for the Observer

Dear Observer:

Thank you for contributing this service! The purpose of this exercise is to give the teacher a way of looking at and reflecting on their teaching and not to judge or grade the performance.

Helpful Tips:

- Situate yourself in a position where you can see as much as possible of the class, both teacher and students. You will be spending the time in the class observing and taking notes; please do not participate in the class in any way.
- Use direct observation rather than summary in your notes.
- When you compile your notes into an observation report, please concentrate on telling as much as you can about what you saw and heard.

- Your observations will be more useful if you write, "a person in the back row shouted out, "I see!" or "Oh, no!" rather than "students seemed engaged and involved."
- Please type up your notes, on your letterhead if available. Date the report, print and sign your name, include your contact information.
- Give your signed Observation Report to the teacher within a week after the observation. (Much of the detail and context of your observations may be lost if the writing of the report is delayed by more than a week.)
- If you have time to meet and review your Observation Report with the teacher, even for a few minutes, that will make the exercise even more meaningful and helpful to the teacher.

Guidelines for Observations (Feel free to adapt it to best fit the observation):

- **Briefly describe the setting.** What kind of room is it? How many people are in it? Who are they, and how are they arranged? Where is the teacher in relation to the students? What is the general atmosphere of the classroom?
- **Notice how the class begins.** What does the teacher say and what do the students say? Do the students drift in gradually or are they all there to start with? If there are handouts of any kind, describe them.
- **What is going on in the class?** Who talks? What is said? What happens first, what next? Is the class working together on one activity throughout the hour? If so, describe that activity. If there are several activities, describe them and the transitions between them.
- **What is the teacher doing?** Does the teacher move around or remain in one spot? Is the class addressed as a whole; called as individuals, or some of both? Does the teacher listen to students? How do they signal that they have heard the student? In what other ways do they respond to students? Can the students hear the teacher? How does the teacher get the students to participate, to be quiet, and to listen to each other? Do the students seem to understand the directions?
- **What are the students doing?** How do the students interact with one another? Do they speak to each other, or only to the teacher? Who is actively involved? Who is not? Is a small group responding while the rest are silent or vice versa? Do they initiate discussion?
- **How does the teacher respond to text?** Whether by the students or other writers?
- **Observe the body language, mood, and pace.** Does the class seem to slow down at some points, speed up at others? How is the class period organized?
- If there is a **peer workshop**, how does it proceed?
- **How does the class end?** Does it just stop or is there a more formal ending?
- How would you (briefly) **describe what the students learned** during this hour?

Evaluations by Participants

At the end of your Teaching Practicum your students are expected to evaluate your class. Some institutions have a standard evaluation form, which you can use, or, if you have specific questions for your students to answer, you can design your own evaluation form. These evaluations are not used to judge your practicum but are for your use in assessing your teaching performance and interactions with students. Make the effort to develop your own evaluation form to collect the information necessary to assess yourself and work on improving your future teaching experiences. **Evaluations from all of your students must be submitted as part of your Teaching Packet.**

Verification Letter

At the end of your practicum, request a letter from the sponsoring organization verifying that the Teaching Practicum was conducted and completed. The verification letter should include the number of hours; dates, times and place of the meetings; and number of students.

The **verification letter should be printed on the sponsoring organization's letterhead and include a contact person's name and phone number where they can be reached**, if needed. (If you submit your Teaching Packet in digital form, scan this letter with signature and submit it as a PDF.)

An unverified practicum will not be accepted.

Teaching Packet Submission Due Date

You and your advisor will determine the due date for your teaching packet. Typically, the teaching packet is submitted on the packet due date *after* the Teaching Practicum is completed and preferably before the last packet due date for the semester. The earlier packet due date will allow time for the anticipated revision of the teaching essay.. You should also expect to revise your teaching essay at least once after your advisor has reviewed your teaching packet.

If you complete your practicum between semesters, make sure to discuss this with your next advisor at the residency and include it in your next semester's study plan. You would need to submit your teaching packet either in packet one or packet two of that semester. **Note: All teaching hours of the practicum must be completed before the first day of the final semester.**

In rare circumstances, it is possible for the teaching packet to be submitted by the second packet due date of the final semester. This may occur *only in consultation with your advisor and program director*, and if the supervised teaching component of the Teaching Practicum has been completed, and if you are on track in all other areas of the degree.

Note: If you submit your Teaching Packet as an e-packet, your verification documents, student samples, and student evaluations, must all be scanned and included as PDFs.

Final Note

The teaching packet is considered to be its own entity, and is the only packet a student will submit to an advisor that does not contain creative work. It does contain a process letter and

may also include other materials (annotations, revisions of critical papers, etc.) that the student and advisor deem appropriate.

Working with Vulnerable Groups

Occasionally a practicum is suggested that involves working with a group of students who are considered vulnerable, i.e., the students may not be voluntary participants and/or may not be able to make legal decisions on their own behalf (such as in prisons, juvenile treatment centers, etc.). These practica raises serious concerns about the possible exploitation of the potential students, including having access to confidential or deeply personal information from the students who may feel compelled to reveal confidential or deeply personal information because of the involuntary nature of their positions and/or because they are not fully capable of making informed decisions on their own behalf. Not only do MFAW students need to understand the issues in these settings for themselves and for their students, but practica in these types of settings can put Goddard College at risk as well.

Students who are planning practica in institutions where the participants may not be volunteers or where the Goddard student may be privy to privileged or confidential information **must** read the posting on "Research/Projects Involving Human Participants" found on GNet: <http://gnet.goddard.edu/irb>.

Students should discuss these kinds of practica with their advisors, and these practica may need to be submitted to Goddard's *Institutional Review Board* for approval. Because of the potential risk involved, students must present a compelling rationale for this type of Teaching Practicum. **All necessary approvals must be in place before the Teaching Practicum begins.**

Partial Bibliography for Teaching Writing

There are many, many books available on teaching. Your advisor will have favorites, as you probably do yourself. A partial bibliography for the teaching of writing is available on the MFAW Program's Resources area (<https://sites.google.com/a/goddard.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/student-resources/teaching-practicum>).

THE CULMINATING SEMESTER

Students are required to complete all their critical papers, at least 36 annotations, and their Teaching Practica in order to be allowed to enroll in their final semester. A student's culminating semester is devoted to revising and completing the creative thesis, writing their process paper, finishing any outstanding degree requirements, and compiling and submitting their Digital Final Product, which includes the thesis, final graduating paperwork, and selected other degree requirements as listed below.

Working with the Second Reader

Each final semester student is assigned a second reader from among the program faculty in addition to their advisor. The second reader serves a dual function. The first is to provide you with another "critical friend" to read and comment on your creative thesis. The second is to provide the college with an additional faculty assessment of your creative work. This "committee" approach to your creative thesis is typical of most colleges and universities.

Your creative thesis is due to your second reader twice during your final semester. The first submission occurs at the time your first packet is due to your advisor. Your second reader will respond in writing to this draft and provide a critical overview. Second readers also communicate their feedback to the advisor.

The second submission occurs when the third or fourth packets are due to both your advisor and second reader; the exact delivery date will have been determined by you in consultation with your advisor earlier in the semester. With the second submission, you **include a letter to both your advisor and second reader outlining and discussing the revisions**, by page number if necessary, that you've made since the packet one draft. You may also mark or track the changes in the manuscript itself (consult with your advisor about the best way for you to document your revision process). Your second reader does not respond directly to you about the final draft. Following this second review, the second reader writes a Second Reader's Report, which is submitted via the Student Information System. This is a descriptive evaluation of your creative thesis that supplements your advisor's Faculty Transcript Statement.

Approval of the creative thesis from both the advisor and second reader is required for the student to be able to graduate.

DIGITAL FINAL PRODUCT

Final products at Goddard College are submitted in digital form for approval by your advisor and second reader, for storage by the College, and for access through the College's library services. Included in the Digital Final Product submission are:

- The full, official title of the thesis
- An abstract and keywords for the thesis

- The final product, uploaded in PDF format **as a single, compiled document**, which includes the following:
 - Table of contents
 - Creative thesis
 - Process paper
 - Long critical paper
 - Teaching practicum essay (optional)
 - Annotated bibliography of 15-20 books
- The general bibliography of all books and resources consulted and/or annotated during the degree enrollment, uploaded as a separate file.
- Any additional material (e.g. illustrations, as appropriate) included in the final product, uploaded as a separate file. This is a college-wide option and is usually not necessary for the MFAW program. All of your required papers and documents, except the general bibliography, should be compiled into a SINGLE PDF file, as indicated above.

Students can submit the digital final product after the advisor and second reader have both confirmed that it is complete and ready for approval. Submission of the final product must be made by the last day end of the semester. **NOTE: Your final product must be approved by your advisor and second reader before your advisor can complete your final evaluation.**

Follow the guidelines for standard formatting (double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point standard fonts, page numbering, etc.)

Digital Final Products are submitted through the Student Information System (SIS): <https://sis.goddard.edu>. Submission instructions are sent to final semester students mid-way through the final semester or can be requested by contacting the Registrar's Office. Refer to the Graduate Student Handbook for additional information.

Creative Thesis

The creative thesis represents the culmination of your work in the MFA in Creative Writing Program. The thesis must be complete, substantial, and judged to be of professional quality. The thesis will vary in length according to what is considered appropriate to the project and genre.

Suggested lengths by genre (double-spaced pages) are:

- Novels: 150 - 300 pp
- Memoirs: 150 - 300 pp
- Essay collections: 150 - 200 pp
- Short story collections: 150 - 200 pp
- Plays: 90 - 150 pp
- Screenplays: 100 - 150 pp

- TV Writing:
 - Two half-hour TV episodes: 60 - 70 pp and 20 - 30 pp bible **OR**
 - One 1-hour TV episode—60 - 70 pp and 20 - 30 pp bible
- Libretto: 75 - 120 pp
- Graphic novels: 75 - 150 pp
- Poetry collections: 48 - 60 pp (single-spaced)
- Book-length poems: TBD with advisor (single-spaced)
- Hybrid work or Cross-Genre: TBD with advisor

Any deviation from these suggested page lengths in your genre must be discussed with your advisor and the program director at the end of your G3 semester.

Process Paper

As a final semester student you must submit a process paper of 10 - 20 pages that describes how you have developed as a writer and how the creative thesis is representative of that development. You should expect to complete more than one draft of the process paper and plan your time accordingly.

The process paper is a personal essay in which you reflect upon your own work aesthetically and historically, documenting your progress and evolution during your MFAW studies, and reflecting on how you became the writer you now are. Some questions you may want to consider are:

- What are your literary influences?
- How do you acknowledge those influences?
- Why has your final creative project taken the exact form that it has taken?
- What informed your creative decisions?
- What were your strategies and goals for your degree studies? How did you achieve your goals?
- How did you evolve as a writer and how did your writing evolve during your studies?

The process paper is not an academic treatise. Think about the paper holistically. In order to describe the evolution of your creative thesis, you will have to discuss previous semesters of learning and other areas of your life. Artistic decisions are made in complicated ways. Intuition, aesthetic theory, technical considerations, historical influences, political principles and much more influence how and what you write. Stanley Kunitz, in an essay called “The Layers” in *Next-to-Last Things*, writes: “One of the great resources of the poetic imagination is its capacity to mount thought on thought, event on event, image on image, time on time, a process that I term ‘layering.’ The life of the mind is largely a buried life.” Explore some of these layers in your process paper.

All sources in your process paper should be properly cited and a bibliography included.

Discuss the process paper with your advisor at your culminating semester residency. Your advisor will work with you on how to shape your process paper, as well as requiring specific things to be included.

Samples of the process paper are available online on the MFAW Program Resources web page, <https://sites.google.com/a/goddard.edu/mfa-in-creative-writing/student-resources/final-semester-graduating-students>.

Annotated Bibliography

The annotated bibliography includes fifteen to twenty books and follows the MLA style (<https://style.mla.org/>). You should include books that were particularly important to your learning and to your growth as a writer. Write a two- to three-line description of each book and make a connection between the book and your creative and/or critical work.

A Short Sample

Guest, Judith. *Ordinary People*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

Guest's skillful use of the third person narration illustrates how the writer can take the reader right into the characters' minds. Reading this novel provided an example of how to bring the narration very close to the characters. It was also another valuable example of a story of family dysfunction, which is the focus of my novel and much of my other fiction.

Howe, Nicholas. *Not Without Peril: 150 Years of Misadventure on the Presidential Range of New Hampshire*. Boston: Appalachian Mountain Club Books, 2000.

Howe provides a history of catastrophic climbing expeditions on Mount Washington and other peaks in New Hampshire's Presidential Mountain Range. This book provided valuable history and information about Mount Washington, which is a prominent feature of the landscape in my novel. Howe's writing also demonstrates how plain language can convey a powerful sense of dread to the reader, which was also useful to my novel and my writing in general.

Tannen, Deborah. *I Only Say This Because I Love You: Talking to Your Parents, Partner, Sibs, and Kids When You're All Adults*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2001.

Tannen's analysis of family talk and conversational styles provided key insights into how the three main characters of my novel could and should talk to each other. Specifically, it informed how my narrator and her grandmother would talk to each other, which led to a fundamental change in the character of the grandmother. In this respect, this examination of conversational style helped reshape my novel.

General Bibliography

The general bibliography covers your reading for each semester you have been enrolled, including reading you did for annotations, the critical papers, the Teaching Practicum, and the process paper, as well as books you include on your annotated bibliography. Basically, it documents all the reading you did in order to complete the MFA Creative Writing degree

requirements. **Do not annotate the entries on the general bibliography.** The general bibliography follows Modern Language Association (MLA) style and is included in your Digital Final Product submission.

Samples of the General Bibliography

An alphabetical listing:

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Anchor Books, 1959.

Austen, Jane. Mansfield Park. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001.

Bender, Amy. The Girl in the Flammable Skirt. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.

Boyer, Paul, and Stephen Nissenbaum. Salem Possessed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Burroughs, Augusten. Running with Scissors. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002.

Calvino, Italo. Italian Folktales. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1980.

Organized by content, genre, how the resources were used, etc. For example, one student broke down their general bibliography this way:

- *Sources for annotations and short critical papers*—which includes all the books the student annotated and use for their short critical papers.
- *Sources consulted for Teaching Practicum*—which includes books the student consulted for the Teaching Practicum and cited in their teaching essay.
- *Sources consulted for the long critical paper*—which includes books and articles the student read and cited in the long critical paper.
- *Other explorations*—which included other books read that complemented the student's work but were not formally part of each semester's work (books were not annotated but related to the student's work, for example).

It is not recommended that your bibliography be organized according to semester. Since your course descriptions can be holistic (i.e. draw on work done and reading completed during any semester), chronological or semester-based organization of your bibliography may cause confusion if both documents are viewed together.

FINAL GRADUATING PAPERWORK

In addition to your Digital Final Product, the following Final Graduating Paperwork must be on file with the Registrar's Office, which is submitted through the Student Information System (SIS), in order for you to receive your diploma at graduation. Students must also meet the other requirements of the Graduation Policy as laid out in the Graduate Student Handbook.

The Final Paperwork includes:

- Final Semester Self-Evaluation.
- Course Equivalents and Descriptions. This information appears on the coversheet of the transcript and is used to convey the work of the degree in a more traditional manner by assigning course titles and credits to portions of each semester.
- Faculty Transcript Statement. This is the cumulative faculty advisors' evaluation of the student's graduate work as a whole, completed by the final semester advisor.
- Second Reader's Report. This is the second reader's assessment of the student's final product.

Course Equivalents

Course equivalents enable you to translate your holistic learning process into more traditional terms for review by external parties. This is the conventional component of the transcript that many employers in academia and graduate schools are used to seeing. Students create the course equivalent titles and assign credit to each course with the help of their advisors. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that you include brief narrative course descriptions when submitting your course equivalents.

Course equivalents are submitted to your advisor for review near the end of your final semester. Your advisor will expect your initial draft in the second or third packet and any necessary revisions in the third or final packet. The completed document is then submitted by the student and approved by the advisor through the Student Information System (SIS). Approved course equivalents appear on a student's permanent transcript. Pay close attention to spelling and grammar as course equivalents are transposed directly from SIS onto the transcript. **Once approved and submitted, course equivalents cannot be changed retroactively.**

The MFA in Creative Writing Program awards a 48-credit degree. Your course equivalents should accurately reflect the focus of your studies. Six credits should be assigned to your creative work each semester. The remaining six credits should be distributed in three credit increments among your critical reading and writing (annotations, short and long critical papers) and a three-credit "course" for your Teaching Practicum.

The total credit assigned to your course equivalents cannot be greater than 48 credits, even if a G5 or G6 semester was utilized. Like students who completed the program in four semesters, students who have taken a fifth or sixth semester should draft equivalents that include 24 credits of creative work and 24 credits of critical work and reading (using the sample course equivalent format noted below) but should forgo assigning equivalents to a specific semester.

Sample Course Equivalents

Directed Writing: Creative Thesis III	6
The Novel: Language, Narrative Forms	3

Teaching Practicum and Essay..... 3

Sample Course Descriptions

Semester One

Introduction to Fiction (Reading Seminar)

3 Hours

A general overview of classic and contemporary fiction from American and international authors. Readings include *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *Distant Star* by Roberto Bolano, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf, *Hour of the Star* by Clarice Lispector, and *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut.

The Art of the Short Form (Reading Seminar)

3 Hours

The study of short stories and collected vignettes in the areas of literary, surrealist, and magical realism. Readings include *Red Cavalry* by Isaac Babel, *This Way to the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen* by Tadeusz Borowski, *Three Moments of an Explosion* by China Mieville, and *Little Black Book of Stories* by A.S. Byatt.

Directed Writing: Creative Thesis I (Writing Workshop)

6 hours

Fifty pages of speculative fiction completed toward the creative thesis, *Remnant*, as well as three short stories (literary and speculative fiction). In all cases, the mastery of narrative voice was emphasized. Advised by Laleh Khadivi.

Semester Three

World-Building in Popular Fiction (Reading Seminar)

3 Hours

The study of commercially-successful works in science fiction, fantasy, horror, and comics through the elements of world-building, pacing, and tone. Readings include *Pure* by Julianna Baggott, *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson, *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood, and *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore.

Teaching Practicum & Essay

3 Hours

Fifteen hours of Teaching Practicum were completed over a period of five weeks. The workshop focused on techniques for rewriting scenes, chapters, and short stories. Developed syllabus, curriculum, lesson plans, evaluations, and facilitated discussion and critique circles. The teaching essay incorporated lessons learned with teaching pedagogy.

Directed Writing: Creative Thesis III (Writing Workshop)

6 Hours

Parts of the creative thesis, *Remnant*, were adjusted or rewritten as characters, setting, and plot evolved. Emphasis was placed on character motivations and world-building. Advised by Rahna Reiko Rizzuto.

Faculty Transcript Statement

At the end of your final semester, your advisor is responsible for reporting on your graduate work as a whole. In compiling the transcript statement, your advisor will include the Advisor Evaluations from previous semesters (available on SIS), as well as your Course Equivalents.

The completed faculty transcript statement is submitted to Registrar's Office through the Student Information System (SIS), where it becomes part of the student's official transcript from the College.

Second Reader's Report

The second reader will write a descriptive evaluation of your creative thesis that supplements your advisor's evaluation of your degree program and submits it to the Registrar's Office through the Student Information System (SIS). This report is part of the student's official transcript from the College.

TRANSCRIPTS

What is on an Official Transcript?

An official transcript consists of a cover page (that includes identifying information, enrollment and degree information, an accreditation statement, and a listing of course equivalents), the Faculty Transcript Statement, the Second Reader's Report, course equivalent descriptions, and a transcript key. For more information about transcripts, refer to the Graduate Student Handbook or contact the [Registrar's Office](#).

How to Obtain a Transcript?

A transcript request form is required for the Registrar's Office to prepare and issue a transcript. The transcript request form is available on the Goddard website: <https://www.goddard.edu/alumni/ordering-transcript/>.

Allow for up to 15 business days to obtain your transcript. There is a processing fee for all transcript requests. Costs are available at the above link.

GLOSSARY

Annotated Bibliography includes 15 - 20 books and follows MLA style. Write a two- to three-line description of each book and make a connection between the book and your work. Submit to your advisor for review and approval. (See Description of the Digital Final Product—[Annotated Bibliography](#))

Course Equivalents is the traditional transcript employers and graduate schools are used to seeing. You create course titles and assign credits to your work in consultation with your advisor. You can also include narrative descriptions of the course equivalents. The advisor must approve all course equivalents. Course equivalents may not be changed retroactively once they are submitted and approved in the Student Information System (SIS). (See Description of Final Paperwork—[Course Equivalents](#))

Digital Final Product includes the full, official title of the thesis, an abstract and keywords for the thesis, table of contents, creative thesis, long critical paper, process paper, annotated bibliography, teaching essay (optional) all as a single combined document, and general bibliography. Digital final products are submitted through the Student Information System (SIS) by the last day end of the semester. (See [Digital Final Product](#))

Faculty Transcript Statement is written at the end of your final semester. Your advisor writes an evaluation about your work over the entire course of your degree studies and then submits to the Office of the Registrar via the Student Information System. (See Description of Final Paperwork—[Faculty Transcript Statement](#))

General Bibliography covers your reading for each semester, including reading for the critical papers and Teaching Practicum. Send it to your advisor for review and approval during your final semester. (See Description of the Digital Final Product—[General Bibliography](#))

Graduating Student Reading is a required ten minute public reading from your creative thesis. This reading takes place during the Commencement Residency. (See [Graduating Student Reading](#))

Graduating Student Workshop/Panel is an optional workshop or panel presentation on a topic of your choice. (See [Graduating Student Workshops/Panels](#))

Process Paper is an essay describes how you have developed as a writer and how the creative thesis is representative of that development. Reflect upon your own work aesthetically and historically, documenting your progress and the evolution during your MFAW studies, and how you became the writer you are now. Cite your sources in this paper. (See Description of the Digital Final Product—[Process Paper](#))

Second Reader provides the college and you with another opinion on your creative thesis. The second reader writes and signs the Second Reader's Report and sends it to the Office of the Registrar. (See Culminating Semester—[Working with the Second Reader](#))

Second Reader's Report is a descriptive evaluation of your creative thesis. The second reader submits this to the Registrar's Office via the Student Information System (SIS).

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