MFA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN THE MFA PROGRAM?
The total number ranges from 20-25 students each year.

HOW LARGE ARE THE WORKSHOPS?
The limit is 15 students, but workshops are usually smaller.

DO YOU HAVE A PROGRAM IN CREATIVE NON-FICTION?
The UW MFA program offers no track in literary nonfiction per se, but applicants may submit nonfiction as all or part of their prose writing sample, and once enrolled in the program, students are encouraged to explore the form. Works of creative nonfiction may be submitted in the graduate fiction workshops; David Shields teaches a graduate course in the personal and lyric essay; and prose students may include nonfiction in their final creative manuscript. Interested students should apply in the fiction category.

IS A CERTAIN TYPE OF WRITING EMPHASIZED OR FAVORED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON’S CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM?
We do not have programs in any sort of genre writing. Within the category of literary fiction and poetry, our faculty write and teach in a wide variety of styles.

HOW MANY APPLICATIONS DO YOU TYPICALLY RECEIVE EACH YEAR?
We receive over 200 applications and generally admit less than 10%.

IF I SUBMIT MY APPLICATION ON-LINE, HOW DO I GET THE WRITING SAMPLE TO YOU?
All materials including writing samples are to be submitted online.

WHAT IS THE ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE? ON WHAT DO YOU BASE ACCEPTANCE?
The faculty members read the writing sample first (but only if the file is complete). If there is interest in the sample, the faculty will then review an applicant’s entire file. At that point, they are especially interested in statements of purpose and letters of recommendation.

WHAT CAN I DO TO INCREASE MY CHANCES OF BEING ACCEPTED INTO THE MFA PROGRAM?
Submit your very best writing. Get letters of recommendation from people familiar with your creative writing and with you as a student. Make sure your application and all supporting material arrive here in a timely manner.

WILL I IMPROVE MY CHANCES FOR ACCEPTANCE IF I VISIT YOUR CAMPUS?
No. Some applicants do choose to visit the UW campus to help them decide if they want to apply to the MFA program. As a rule, the Director of Creative Writing meets with applicants only after they have been accepted. The best time to visit is after we've accepted you. Then you can meet students, as well as get a sense of the faculty and the place so you can make an informed decision about coming here.

**IS THERE ANY ADVANTAGE TO SENDING IN AN APPLICATION LONG BEFORE THE DEADLINE?**

No. The faculty members begin reading the writing samples after the deadline has passed.

**WHAT KINDS OF FUNDING ARE AVAILABLE?**

Financial support can consist of a Teaching Assistantship, a Fellowship, or a combination of Fellowship and Teaching Assistantship. In addition we now offer the Pollock GO-MAP Fellowship which was established to increase and support diversity in the Creative Writing Program. The Pollock GO-MAP Fellowship is a two year Fellowship which provides the recipient with a yearly stipend, health insurance, and a tuition waiver provided by the Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program.

**WHAT DOES THE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP INVOLVE?**

During the first year, you will teach one section of freshman composition each quarter. While you are responsible for your own class, you will get lots of training and help from the Director of the Expository Writing Program. In the second year, TAs may be able to teach the introductory class in their genre, under the supervision of the Director of Creative Writing. In return, you will receive a tuition waiver, student health, dental and vision insurance, and a stipend.

**CAN I APPLY TO THE MFA AND MA/PHD PROGRAMS SIMULTANEOUSLY?**

You need to apply to each program separately, which means two separate applications and two fees.

**CAN I APPLY IN BOTH PROSE AND POETRY?**

Yes. Indicate on your application that you are interested in both prose and poetry and then send online samples of both. Separate faculty committees review each genre, and should you be accepted, it will be in one genre only. Students may take workshops in the other genre, but their thesis must be in the genre in which they were accepted.

**DO I NEED THE GRE GENERAL TEST OR THE SUBJECT TEST SCORES WHEN I APPLY?**

We require the GRE General Test scores. We do not require the Subject Test.

**DO MY LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION HAVE TO BE FROM COLLEGE PROFESSORS?**

The most useful letters of recommendation come from teachers familiar with your creative writing and with you as a student. Letters from other college professors, who may be familiar with your habits as a student and with your academic writing for example, can also be helpful. Letters from employers, unless the work was directly related to writing, are less helpful to us.

**CAN I GET ADVICE FROM A FACULTY MEMBER REGARDING MY APPLICATION?**

No. Since we receive approximately 200 applications each year, the Program is not in a position to critique an applicant's writing sample—or any other part of the application—before or after the process takes place.

**IS THERE A FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT?**

No.
WHAT IF I MISS THE JANUARY 2 DEADLINE?

The application, fee, and writing samples must be posted online by the deadline or the application may be rejected. The other materials (letters of recommendation and GRE scores for example) may trail in later, but if the file is not complete by the time faculty are ready to review it, it may be rejected. In that case, you would need to apply again the following year.

IF I AM ACCEPTED, CAN I DEFER MY ENTRANCE INTO THE PROGRAM?

Acceptance in the Creative Writing Program is for Autumn quarter only. Occasionally, under special circumstances, students have deferred their entry until winter or spring quarter. It is not possible to defer entry until the following Autumn.

CAN I TRANSFER CREDITS FROM ANOTHER GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Once an applicant has been admitted, a limited number of credits may be transferred to apply toward the literature requirements of the degree. This evaluation is done on a case-by-case basis.

WHEN WILL LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE BE SENT?

We send out letter of acceptance in mid March.

WHAT IS A PROFILE OF THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT?

Most successful applicants to our program have GRE scores above 600, a GPA of 3.7, majored in English, completed at least two writing workshops in his/her genre at the advanced level, and have completed his/her undergraduate degree within the last 2-10 years.

I’VE BEEN ACCEPTED. WHAT DO I DO NOW?

Please inform us in writing as soon as possible about your intentions to attend or not. If you do decide to attend, you will receive materials later in the spring detailing the procedures for registering for classes, etc.

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