CREATIVE WRITING, MFA

The program in creative writing offers a two-year master of fine arts degree in creative writing in the areas of fiction and poetry. The MFA program is a small program within a large and vibrant writing community. The program typically admits six new students each year.

The MFA program is the only program of its kind to have an ‘alternating genre’ admissions policy. The program admits fiction writers in even-numbered years and poets in odd-numbered years. This alternating admissions schedule allows the program to provide a 2-to-1 student/teacher ratio and lets fiction instructors focus entirely on one group of fiction writers, and poetry instructors on one group of poets for the two-year instructional period.

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program’s admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program’s website. Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).

Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Deadline</td>
<td>December 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Deadline</td>
<td>The program does not admit in the spring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Deadline</td>
<td>The program does not admit in the summer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)</td>
<td>Not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Proficiency Test</td>
<td>Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements (<a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency</a>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Test{s} (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters of Recommendation Required</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details about the admissions process can be found here (https://creativewriting.wisc.edu/teachingaid.html#financialaid).

FUNDING

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

PROFILES

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Prospective students should see the program website (https://creativewriting.wisc.edu/teachingaid.html#financialaid) for funding information.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Evening/Weekend**: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Online**: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules.

Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**Hybrid**: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Accelerated**: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

CURRENCIAL REQUIREMENTS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Detail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Credit Requirement</td>
<td>42 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Residence Credit Requirement</td>
<td>30 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement</td>
<td>Half of degree coursework (27 credits out of 42 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (<a href="https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/">https://registrar.wisc.edu/course-guide/</a>).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REQUIRED COURSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 781</td>
<td>Graduate Fiction Workshop (Fiction Genre)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 782</td>
<td>Graduate Poetry Workshop (Poetry Genre)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 783</td>
<td>Creative Writing Pedagogy Seminar (Both Fiction and Poetry Genres)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students take workshops in their primary genre (fiction or poetry) which are held in the first, second, and third semesters. Workshops include:

**Pedagogy (during the first semester)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
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**Thesis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
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**Electives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Credits 42

1. Students take 3 credits in each of the first, second and third semesters, then 6 thesis credits in the fourth semester. These are not courses—rather, they're the means by which the University gives MFAs credit for their independent writing.

2. **15 credits of electives** drawn from appropriate courses across the curriculum. While students are expected to focus on and produce book-length theses by the end of their two years here, they are also encouraged to pursue other intellectual interests via these electives. In the past, MFA students have fulfilled their elective requirements by enrolling in literature courses, studying foreign languages, pursuing other artistic interests such as dance, book-making, and classical guitar, augmenting research for historical novels by taking appropriate history classes. MFA students may also hone their writing skills in other genres by taking intermediate and advanced undergraduate workshops and graduate level workshops in genres outside the one for which they were admitted, as electives with the permission of the instructor. Students may also take up to 6 elective credits in the form of additional thesis hours in the second and third semesters.

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 12 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

UW–Madison Undergraduate

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

UW–Madison University Special

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 10 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

PROBATION

The MFA advisor (sometimes referred to as the MFA program director) will review student academic performance and conduct in all coursework to determine that students are making satisfactory progress toward the degree. If at any time the MFA advisor determines that a student's academic performance and/or conduct has not been satisfactory, the MFA advisor, with the input and concurrence of the voting members of the Creative Writing Steering Committee, may place the student on probation or may dismiss the student from the program. The period of probation will be one semester in duration. Prior to the end of the probationary period the MFA advisor will review the student's performance and conduct and decide, with the input and concurrence of the voting members of the Creative Writing Steering Committee, to reinstate or dismiss the student.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

The current MFA advisor (sometimes referred to as the MFA program director) advises all MFA students.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME CONSTRAINTS

It is expected that the MFA thesis be completed in May of the second year in the program.

Master's degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students
completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS
These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Dean of Students Office (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
  - Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances.

OTHER
Each student receives financial aid in the form of teaching assistantships, prize scholarships, tuition remission, and health benefits.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
1. Develop the creative and technical skills necessary to conceive, execute, and revise original literary work in a student’s chosen genre (fiction or poetry).
2. Demonstrate sensitivity to language and style on both the artistic and technical levels.
3. Develop the critical, analytical, and editing skills necessary to evaluate literary works in progress, both in the student’s own work-in-progress, and in that of the student’s peers.
4. Develop the ability to read literary works not only for their social, historical, intellectual, formal, and interpretive value, but for their capacity to inspire and generate new work, and to see in a finished work the process of its being made.
5. Develop through study and practice the pedagogical skills necessary to teach creative writing courses to undergraduate students.
6. Demonstrate understanding of professional and pedagogical practices and opportunities within and related to the field of creative writing.
7. Recognize and apply principles of ethical conduct with respect to one’s work.
8. Engage with local communities of creative writers.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Barry, Johnson, Kercheval, Mitchell, Wallace;
Assistant Professor Evans