



College of Letters and Science
Department of English
Creative Writing Program

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The Unofficial Guide to Applying to the UWM Creative Writing Program

Why “unofficial”? Because the [UWM Graduate School](#) actually has the last word on all this. But, being writers, we thought we could improve on the prose.

Math, on the other hand, isn’t our specialty. It nevertheless seems to us that applying to the creative writing program involves four phases.

1. Prepare.

First, research creative writing programs across the U.S. and Europe at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs: <http://guide.awpwriter.org/>.

Once you’ve decided Milwaukee is where you want to be, figure out which program you want to apply for here: **if it’s the Ph.D. program, you need to have already earned an MA or MFA.** If you want to apply to the MA program, you need to have earned an undergraduate degree. (And if you’re applying from outside the U.S., great: you have to start here: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CIE/IA/IA-Intro.shtml>.)

Next, assemble your materials, including: an excellent creative writing sample (30 pp. of fiction or creative nonfiction, or 10-15 poems), an example of your academic writing (we find that a recent literary analysis essay usually makes for a good sample), GRE scores (we don’t require the subject test, just the general). Check the actual application forms for other requirements.

About the writing sample. People ask if they should send part of a novel, or short stories, or long poems, or poems and stories, or poems, stories and nonfiction. The answer—and we’re not being coy—is that you should send your absolute best work.

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Useful Links

The UWM Creative Writing Program : www.uwm.edu/Dept/English/cw/
Applying to the UWM Graduate School (Step 2) : www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/apply/
Applying to the UWM English Department (Step 3) : www.uwm.edu/Dept/English/graduate/admissions.html
Sources of Financial Support at UWM : <http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/financial-support/>
Living in Milwaukee : www4.uwm.edu/future_students/general_information/location/index.cfm

2. Apply to the UWM Graduate School.

This step is mostly paperwork, but it's important. You need to a) fill out the Graduate School Degree application, entering your Statement of Purpose directly into the application, b) ensure that official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate studies are delivered to the Graduate School, and c) pay the application fee. The best part is this all happens mostly online. Visit the UWM Graduate School Admissions site to get started:

<http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/prospective/onlineapp.html>.

When—**and only when**—your Graduate School application is complete, it is sent to us for further review. In other words, if you send us your writing samples, but don't complete the Graduate School application, we'll never get to read your work. Conversely, if you file your Graduate School application but never send us your writing samples, you will not be considered. So: on to number 3.

3. Apply to the Creative Writing Program.

This is the fun part (we think so, anyway). First, get the English department's **Domestic Application Form** ([Word](#), [PDF](#) 144k) and fill it out. (*Again, if you're an international student, you need to start your application at UWM's [Center for International Education](#), and then complete the English Department's **International Application Form** ([Word](#), [PDF](#) 139k).*) Then, carefully follow the instructions for submitting materials to the Department of English:

- MA: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/English/cw/requirements.html#ma_admission
- Ph.D.: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/English/cw/requirements.html#phd_admission

And, yes, because we know you'll ask: you can apply for a Teaching Assistantship on the Department of English admissions application. We do not have funding for all we admit, but we do encourage you to apply for support.

4. Wait.

We try to make this phase as brief as possible, but reading all your work takes time. Remember, applications **must be completed by December 15** to be considered for admission in the following fall semester. The Creative Writing program does not admit students in the spring semester.

We usually start contacting students about our decisions in February, but if you don't hear from us right away, please be patient.

What now? Polish your writing and start [researching Milwaukee](#). We look forward to reading your work.

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