

# 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

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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/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 15
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

Details about the admissions process can be found on the MFA admissions (<https://creativewriting.wisc.edu/gradapply/>) page.

## FUNDING

### 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.

#### PROGRAM RESOURCES

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

## REQUIREMENTS

### MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

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

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

#### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

#### Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW-Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

### CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

#### Requirement Detail

Minimum Credit Requirement	42 credits
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Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	30 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	27 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/</a> ).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203</a> ( <a href="https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/">https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/</a> ).
Other Grade Requirements	To be considered a student in good standing in the MFA program in creative writing, a student must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and receive no grade lower than an AB in any creative writing course. If a student does not meet this requirement, or if a student receives an F in any course, the student could no longer be considered to be in good standing. Consequently, a student who is not in good standing could have their teaching assistantship or other financial aid support revoked, and could be asked to leave the program.
Assessments and Examinations	MFA candidates must submit a publishable written thesis in the genre in which they were admitted (fiction or poetry).
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

## REQUIRED COURSES

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Writing Workshops</b>		<b>9</b>
Students take workshops in their primary genre (fiction or poetry) which are held in the first, second, and third semesters. Workshops include:		
ENGL 781	Graduate Fiction Workshop (Fiction Genre)	
ENGL 782	Graduate Poetry Workshop (Poetry Genre)	
<b>Pedagogy (typically during the first semester)</b>		<b>3</b>
ENGL 783	Creative Writing Pedagogy Seminar (Both Fiction and Poetry Genres)	
<b>Thesis</b>		<b>15</b>
ENGL 785	MFA Thesis	
<b>Electives</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>42</b>

### Thesis

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.

### Electives

Students take **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.

## POLICIES

### 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 Credits Earned at Other Institutions

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

#### Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

No credits from a UW-Madison or other institution's undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

#### Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

#### Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW-Madison

With program approval, students are allowed to transfer no more than 10 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW-Madison University Special student. Coursework earned ten 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 LIMITS

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

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

## 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://employeeabilities.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. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

## OTHER

Each student receives financial aid in the form of teaching assistantships, scholarships, tuition remission, and health benefits. Students may also receive prizes or fellowships.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

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

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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

### PEOPLE

MFA Faculty & Staff (<https://creativewriting.wisc.edu/mfa-faculty-staff/>)

**Faculty:** Professors Amy Quan Barry, Amaud Jamaul Johnson, Beth Nguyen, and Porter Shreve

**Staff:** Faculty Associates Sean Bishop and Ron Kuka, Mendota Lecturers Leila Chatti and Dantiel W. Moniz