

Department of English
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751

Street address:
405 Neuberger Hall 724 Harrison
Portland, Oregon 97201

Application Procedures

Students must send **two** separate applications: to the University **and** to the English department.

1. Send the completed University application, official transcripts from all postsecondary institutions attended other than PSU (including community colleges), and a \$50 fee to:

Office of Admissions
Portland State University
P.O. Box 901
Portland, OR 97207

Use the major code ENG for English Literature or WR for each of the writing programs. A PSU transcript is not required for those students attending or who have attended PSU recently. Applicants whose native language is not English and who have not completed an undergraduate degree from an accredited U.S. institution are required to submit official TOEFL or IELTS scores. Do not send this application to the English Department. Do not send cash. The \$50 fee is subject to change by the Oregon University System.

2. Send the completed Department application and materials described below in "Admission Requirements" to:

Department of English
Attn: Graduate Secretary
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, OR 97207-0751

Application Deadlines

There is a once-a-year admission deadline for the M.A. in English Literature and the M.F.A. in Creative Writing:

- **January 18** of each year for the academic year beginning that September. Applications must be postmarked by this deadline and include all departmental application materials.
- The M.A. and M.S. in Book Publishing and Professional/Technical Writing have rolling admission. These follow the University's admission deadlines as follows:
 - Fall Term: April 1 [**Please note that if you want to be considered for a Graduate Assistantship you must apply by the earlier fall deadline of January 18.**]
 - Winter Term: Sept. 1
 - Spring Term : Nov. 1
 - Summer Term: Feb. 1

The University application must be sent several weeks in advance of the Department application. The department application will not be reviewed until the University application has been submitted. Applicants will be notified of Department and University acceptance by mail only.

Failure to supply complete and accurate information will delay the admission process and subject applicants to the University's policies governing academic dishonesty.

Department Admission Requirements

Admission to graduate study is granted on the basis of satisfactory evidence of preparedness to undertake advanced work and the probability of successful completion of the degree. All applicants must hold a B.A. or B.S. degree from an accredited college or university by the time they enroll for graduate courses (the degree may be in progress at the time of application).

Applicants to the English literature M.A. are expected to hold a B.A. in English, with a minimum GPA of 3.25 in all English courses. Literature applicants whose bachelor's degree is not in English may be considered for admission if they have: 1) taken 20-30 credit hours in British and American literature (survey and upper division coursework) with a 3.25 GPA, or 2) 16 credits of graduate English courses.

Admission to the Writing program is granted on the basis of evidence of suitable preparation, the probability of success in the intended field of study, and a 3.25 GPA in undergraduate coursework.

Each admission file will be evaluated as a whole, and all aspects of the application will be weighed in determining suitability for the program.

The Department application must be submitted to the Department of English along with the following materials:

For English Literature M.A. applicants

- Departmental Application
- Statement of purpose—why do you want to do advanced work in English? What led you to this decision? Why Portland State?
- Complete set of transcripts (copies or unofficial transcripts are acceptable for the Dept. application only. The university application requires official transcripts).
- A separate list of all undergraduate English courses taken, with grades, that displays the average GPA for these classes.
- Two letters of recommendation. These, ideally, should come from individuals who can comment on your academic performance, but professional references may be substituted in some cases, as we realize that some applicants may be several years removed from their undergraduate programs. [Should a professor prefer to send the recommendation to the department's Director of Literary Studies, that is acceptable, but you are responsible for reminding them to meet the application deadline.]
- Two recent samples of written work, including at least one scholarly essay
- GRE scores [English subject test not required, but suggested as valuable for our decision]
- Stamped, self-addressed notification postcard

*Students who attended PSU as undergraduates must submit a PSU transcript (official or unofficial) to the English Department, but do not need to submit a copy of their PSU transcript to the University. If you are currently taking post-baccalaureate courses at PSU, include a copy of your transcript or list your in-progress courses.

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For M.F.A. applicants

Applicants to the M.F.A in Creative Writing must provide satisfactory evidence of preparedness to undertake advanced work, which would include a B.A. or B.S. degree from a regionally accredited college or university. The application deadline is January 18.

Applicants must submit the following:

- A Departmental application form indicating which genre they will focus on: fiction, nonfiction, or poetry.
- One transcript from each post-secondary institution attended.
- A 3.25 GPA in undergraduate work.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- A two-to-three-page, 1.5 spaced personal introduction describing the applicant's background as a writer, goals, and interest in this particular program.
- A manuscript in the applicant's primary genre, which should be typed, double-spaced, and the pages numbered. Poetry manuscripts may be single-spaced. Previously published, single-authored work will be accepted but should be photocopied, not bound. Manuscripts should demonstrate mastery of basic craft and literary promise, and should represent your best work regardless of whether or not it has been published. Applicants should submit work in the genre to which they are applying.
- In poetry: 12-15 pages, as in manuscript form.
- In fiction: 20-30 pages, double spaced and numbered as in manuscript form.
- In nonfiction: 20-30 pages of magazine articles or creative nonfiction, double-spaced and numbered as in manuscript form.
- A stamped, self-addressed notification postcard.

Please do not put application materials in any form of binder or in sheet protectors.

Please note: Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not required for admission to the M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

Application Deadlines

There is a once-a-year admission deadline for the MFA of January 18 of each year for the academic year beginning that September. There is no flexibility on this deadline. Applications must be postmarked by January 18 and include all departmental application materials (any materials that are sent separately must also meet the deadline).

For Writing Program M.A. and M.S. Applicants:

- A Departmental Application (bundled with these instructions as Eng_grad_application.pdf)
- A one-page personal introduction describing your background as a writer, a statement of purpose, and a proposed plan of study
- A complete set of transcripts from all postsecondary institutions attended (referees may send letters directly to the English Department's Graduate Secretary, but they must meet the Feb. 1 deadline)
- Three sealed letters (with the referee's signature across the envelope flap) of academic recommendation (referees may send letters directly to the English Department's Graduate Secretary, but they must meet the Feb. 1 deadline)
- Typed or word-processed manuscript(s) in the applicant's primary genre(s) or form(s). Previously published, single-authored work will be accepted but should be photocopied (do not send bound books or binders)
- A stamped, self-addressed notification postcard

Please note: Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are not required for admission to the M.A. or M.S. in Writing.

Manuscript Submission Guidelines

- For all programs, work that has been previously published may be included in the published format (e.g., off-prints, etc.), but bound work (in books or magazines) should be submitted as photocopies (do not send bound books or binders).
- In creative writing: 15 pages of poetry, 30 pages of fiction, or 30 pages of screenwriting, double-spaced in manuscript form. Manuscripts should demonstrate mastery of basic craft and unmistakable literary promise.
- In nonfiction writing: 30 pages of news features, magazine articles, or creative nonfiction, double-spaced in manuscript form. Manuscripts should demonstrate mastery of basic craft and promise of success in nonfiction writing.
- In professional/technical writing: 15-30 pages from customary genres, including (but not limited to) descriptions, specifications, computer documentation, proposals, memoranda, formal reports, newsletters, on-line documentation, and web pages. Manuscripts should demonstrate mastery of basic craft and promise of success in professional/technical writing.
- In book publishing: 15-30 pages of written work demonstrating promise of success in the publications industry. Genres are open.

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Applicant Guidelines for the Statement of Purpose (SOP)

The following are some general guidelines for writing an effective Statement of Purpose for admission to the English and Writing graduate programs. The primary purpose of the SOP is to present yourself to the admissions committee as a viable candidate for graduate study in the program of your choice. These guidelines are general because the specifics will vary depending on the program to which you are applying. You should indicate:

- 1** Your purpose in graduate study. You should have given this plenty of thought before writing the statement.
- 2** The area of study in which you wish to specialize. You should make it clear that you know the field well enough to explain your choice.
- 3** Your future use of graduate study. This may include career or creative goals.
- 4** Your particular suitability for work in this field. This point allows you to relate your academic goals to your background or experiences that make you a good candidate.
- 5** Any problems or inconsistencies in your records or scores. Make a brief explanation and give a mitigating rationale for your qualification.
- 6** Indicate your familiarity with the program to which you are applying and why you have chosen it.

Your statement should be an example of careful, persuasive writing. It may be personal but should not be a narrative biography. Describe specific strengths and goals as objectively as possible. The statement should be well-edited and contain no typographical or grammatical errors.