

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING TO THE ENGLISH M.A. PROGRAM

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 1

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all application materials are received by January 1, 11:59PM HST.

Submit the following items to Graduate Division. See the *Prospective Students* page of their website (<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/prospective-students/>) for links to the online application and Supplemental Documents Upload Website.

Questions about items 1-4 should be directed to Graduate Division (gradss@hawaii.edu).

1. The **Graduate Admissions Application**. Select “English” as the program. Our concentrations (e.g., Creative Writing) are not listed on the application’s dropdown menu but you can indicate your concentration in your Statement of Objectives.
2. The admissions **application fee**
3. **Transcripts** from each postsecondary institution you have attended. Unofficial copies are acceptable for the admissions application, but admitted students must submit official transcripts in order to enroll at UHM. Graduate Division sets a minimum GPA of 3.0.
4. Certain applicants may be required to submit the following items:
 - Residency Declaration Form (applicants who qualify to pay resident rate tuition)
 - Confidential Financial Statement Form (international applicants only)
 - Official TOEFL or IELTS exam scores (international applicants only).

Questions about items 5-8 should be directed to Valerie Jun (vjun@hawaii.edu) of the English Department. You may submit a CV if you wish. Any other additional items will not be considered.

5. A **Statement of Objectives**. In evaluating applications, we place a great deal of weight on your statement, which is your chance to give the admissions committee a clear sense of why you want a master’s degree in English, which concentration you are interested in, why you have chosen our program in particular, and what you hope to gain from your studies. We recommend that

you refer to our website (<http://www.english.hawaii.edu/>) to familiarize yourself with our program and the concentrations we offer. Your statement should be one single-spaced page.

6. **Three letters of recommendation.** Additional letters will not be accepted. The letters should be from professors (not lecturers or graduate assistants) from whom you have recently taken courses in your field. These letters should assess your abilities and achievements, and they should evaluate your potential for success in our program. For your letters of recommendation, you should choose professors who know your work well: a general statement of approval is worth much less than a precise and detailed account of what kind of work you have done and what kinds of abilities you have demonstrated. It is usually helpful to your recommenders if you provide them with a brief curriculum vitae and a copy of your statement of objectives.

If you are not able to obtain letters from professors, we will accept letters from employers. However, be aware that such letters often do not provide the information that the admissions committee needs to best evaluate your potential for graduate study in English. Although your recommenders may be able to attest to your writing abilities, they may not be familiar enough with your ability to interpret or analyze a text, or other such skills that are best assessed in an English class.

Use the Supplemental Documents Upload Website to send prompts to your letter writers; as a courtesy to your writers, do this well in advance of the application deadline. As the deadline approaches, check the status of your letters on the upload site; it is your responsibility to ensure that your letter writers follow through.

Creative writing applicants: At least one letter of recommendation should attest to your abilities in analytical writing.

7. **A critical writing sample.** Submit a single critical essay (one that involves analytical and interpretive writing and includes outside sources) that you have written that demonstrates your ability to do graduate work in English. The sample should be your best work and does not need to relate to your intended area of study. The critical sample should be 8-12 pages in *length (including end notes and Works Cited pages)*, *double-spaced, with one-inch margins and pages numbered. A Works Cited page must be included. Writing samples that do not adhere to this format may be returned.* Although the critical writing sample is a required application item, it is not as heavily weighted as your Statement of Objectives and letters of recommendation.

8. *If you are planning to do a creative thesis, you must also submit a creative writing sample illustrating your creative work in the genre of your choice. The creative writing sample should be 15-20 pages in length, with one-inch margins and pages numbered. Your name should appear on the first page. Fiction samples should be double-spaced, but poetry samples need not be. If multiple works (multiple short stories, poems, or a mix of the two) are submitted, the page*

count should not exceed 20, and a table of contents should be included. Writing samples that do not adhere to this format may be returned. Spoken word poets are encouraged to also submit an audio file to accompany the written works. Your creative writing sample is key to your admission to the creative writing concentration.

If, in the event that you are not accepted to the creative writing concentration, you would like to be considered for another concentration (composition and rhetoric, literary studies, or cultural studies in Asia/Pacific) you should state this clearly and detail your interests in your Statement of Objectives. In addition, at least one letter of recommendation should attest to your abilities in analytical writing.

Check your email regularly around the application deadline, as this is how you will be notified of missing or problematic application items which must be addressed immediately. You will receive status updates from two offices: from Graduate Division regarding items 1-4 above, and from the English Department regarding items 5-8. Once our department has received all items (1-8) you will receive an email confirming that your application is complete. While we appreciate hearing from you, please understand that excessive inquiries about your application status will slow down the admission process.

The official notification of your admissions decision will come from Graduate Division in late March, either via a FileDrop email or via postal mail.

Questions? Continue reading for answers to frequently asked questions. If you have further questions, email Valerie Jun, Associate Director of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs, at vjun@hawaii.edu.

English MA Admissions Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible to apply?

The following statement is excerpted from Graduate Division's Admissions Standards website:

To be eligible, an applicant must hold or expect to hold prior to matriculation a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, or an equivalent degree from a recognized non-U.S. institution of higher education. At minimum, the applicant needs to demonstrate above average academic performance (B average, usually a 3.0 on a 1.0-4.0 scale) for undergraduate course work and for any post-baccalaureate or graduate course work. Because the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of spaces available, admission is competitive. Meeting minimum admissions standards does not guarantee admission.

2. I earned my previous degree in a field other than English. Can I still apply to the program?

In the past we have accepted students from other disciplines, particularly those that require critical skills similar to those developed in English degrees, if their applications were strong enough. Your statement of objectives should explain why you would like to pursue this degree and how it would fit into your career plans. It would be most helpful if your three letters of recommendation were from professors in English, or closely related fields, who could attest to your ability to do graduate level work in the discipline. See the What is a

3. How many applications do you receive each year? How many are accepted?

We receive roughly 30 MA each year and the number of applicants admitted depends on the strength of the pool.

4. How much is tuition? Housing?

Tuition charts are posted on the Registrar's website:

https://manoa.hawaii.edu/records/tuition_fees/tuition.html

See Student Housing Services for housing information:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/housing/>

5. Do you have teaching assistantships available? How do I apply for a position?

All applicants are automatically considered for teaching assistantship positions. The highest-ranking applicants, as determined by our admissions committee based on the strength of the applications, are invited to interview for the assistantship positions. For more details on assistantships, see the Graduate Funding page of the English Department website: <https://english.hawaii.edu/graduate-funding/>

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

6. I missed the application deadline. What can I do in the meantime?

The English Department only admits students for the fall semesters. Individuals who miss the application deadline often choose to enroll as post-baccalaureate unclassified (PBU) students and take graduate English courses while waiting for the next admission cycle.

7. What is a PBU student?

Post-baccalaureate unclassified (PBU) students are students who enroll to take classes at UHM but are not admitted to a specific degree program. PBU students are allowed to enroll in graduate English courses (with the exception of ENG 605) with the approval of the instructor and Graduate Director. If the student is later accepted to the graduate program, they may discuss with the Graduate Director the possibility of counting their PBU credits toward their degree. This is at the Graduate Director's discretion; there is no guarantee that PBU credits will be accepted.

Enrolling as a PBU allows students to demonstrate their abilities in a graduate level English class, become familiar with the faculty and program, and gives them the opportunity to request letters of recommendation from English professors. Details on how to apply as a PBU can be found on Graduate Division's website:

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/graduate/applying-as-a-pbu-student/>