

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING TO THE ENGLISH Ph.D. PROGRAM**  
APPLICATION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 1

***Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all application materials are received by December 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](mailto: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. If you do not meet this minimum you should address this in your Statement of Objectives (item 5, below).
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](mailto: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 the statement, which is your chance to give the admissions committee a clear sense of why you want a doctoral degree in English, why you have chosen our program in particular, what you hope to gain from your studies, and what you hope to contribute to the discipline or profession. We recommend that you refer to our website (<http://www.english.hawaii.edu/>) to familiarize yourself

with our program and the areas of specialization we offer. Your statement should be two single-spaced pages.

- 6. Three letters of recommendation.** Additional letters will not be accepted. The letters should be from professors from whom you have recently taken courses in your field or who have directed you in independent research or in your thesis. 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.*

- 7. A writing sample.** Submit a single critical essay that you have written that demonstrates your ability to do graduate work in English. The sample should be your best work that relates to your intended area of study; if it does not relate, write a brief explanatory note on the first page. *The critical sample should be a Word document, 15-20 pages in length (including end notes and Works Cited pages), double-spaced, 12 point font, with one-inch margins and pages numbered. A Works Cited page must be included. Your name should not appear anywhere in the document, including headers.* Writing samples that do not adhere to this format may be returned.

The 20 page maximum is firm. We will accept an excerpt of a longer work, but recommend submitting a complete work if possible, as that gives the reviewer a fuller sense of your writing skills. Our best advice is that you submit what you consider to be your best work. If you choose to submit an excerpt, include an introductory paragraph that summarizes the work, particularly the excluded sections, for the reviewer.

8. If you are planning to do a creative dissertation, 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 admission to the PhD program to pursue a scholarly project, 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.

Our application deadline is December 1 but earlier submissions are appreciated.

**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 February, 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](mailto:vjun@hawaii.edu).

## English PhD Admissions Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. Who is eligible to apply?**

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

*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.*

In addition, applicants to the PhD program must hold, or expect to hold prior to matriculation, a master's degree in English or a closely related field.

### **2. What is the minimum GPA requirement?**

Graduate Division sets a minimum GPA of 3.0. If you feel your GPA is below average and would like to address it, you may do so in your Statement of Objectives.

### **3. 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.

Individuals who are unsure of whether they would qualify for admission often choose to first enroll in graduate English classes as a post-baccalaureate unclassified (PBU) student. See the **What is a PBU Student?** section at the end of this FAQ sheet.

### **4. How many applications do you receive each year? How many are accepted?**

We receive roughly 50 PhD applications each year. The number of applicants admitted depends on the strength of the pool, but approximately 15-20 PhD applicants are offered admission.

## Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

### **5. How much is tuition? Housing?**

Tuition charts are posted on the Registrar's website:

[https://manoa.hawaii.edu/records/tuition\\_fees/tuition.html](https://manoa.hawaii.edu/records/tuition_fees/tuition.html)

See Student Housing Services for housing information:

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

### **6. Do you have teaching assistantships available? How do I apply for a position?**

All applicants are automatically considered for teaching assistantship positions; there are no additional steps to apply. Positions are awarded to the highest-ranking applicants as determined by our admissions committee, so awards are fully dependent upon the strength of your application. For more details on assistantships, see the Graduate Funding page of the English Department website:

<https://english.hawaii.edu/graduate-funding/>

### **7. 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.

### **8. 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 and 625) with the approval of the instructor and Graduate Director. These courses can later be transferred toward the degree if the student is admitted to the graduate program.

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/>