



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

M.F.A. in Creative Writing Application Guidelines

Contacts

Program Inquiries & Information

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Technical Questions

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Application Process

1. Potential students apply to UBC by using the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies online application form. Applicants upload all required documents, including scanned copies of previous university transcripts, a Statement of Intent, a literary CV and their creative portfolio. Applicants also enter referee names and email addresses; referees will be contacted automatically by the online application system.
2. Our faculty select the successful applicants through a competitive reading process. We usually accept less than 25% of applicants.
3. Successful applicants who are selected by our faculty and who meet UBC's academic qualifications will be formally offered admission at UBC.
4. Successful applicants arrange for official transcripts to be sent to Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies for final review.

We expect to offer admissions by mid-March, 2018.

Application Details

Deadline

All online applications must be completed and submitted by **midnight PST on Monday, January 8th, 2018.**

On-Line UBC Application Form

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/application-admission>

Please review UBC's admission requirements and application instructions. You will create a CWL (Campus Wide Login) account when you apply (if you applied in 2015 or 2016, please use the same CWL account you used then).

Choosing the correct program

When you start the application process, you must search for the program you want to apply to (using the "Program Search" button). Ensure you select UBC's **Vancouver** Campus. Search for "creative" as the **Program Keyword**.

You have three program choices when applying:

1. M.F.A. in Creative Writing and Theatre
2. M.F.A. in Creative Writing
3. M.F.A. in Creative Writing (Optional Residency)

Note: you'll also see the Film Production and Creative Writing degree listed. This degree is coordinated by the film program, not by Creative Writing. Information about it is here: <http://theatrefilm.ubc.ca/graduate-studies/film-production/mfa-filmcreative-writing/>

Application Fee

The current fee is CDN \$100 for Canadian applicants. International applicants pay CDN \$162. This fee is set by UBC Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies.

Academic Requirements

Students must have an existing **four year** undergraduate degree (or the equivalent for international students) with a minimum B+ average in order to pursue graduate studies at UBC. Please see the Prospective Students section of the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies website at <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students> for more information.

We strongly recommend reviewing all UBC Graduate requirements in advance of your application to determine eligibility and to help you prepare for the process. If you are not considered eligible by UBC you will **not** be able to enter the program, even if we have accepted your portfolio. Under some circumstances, students with less than a B+ average may be accepted into UBC; in these cases, if a student is recommended for admission by our faculty we will work with the student to create a letter of rationale requesting a waiver of the GPA requirement.

GRE/GMAT & Other Academic Scores

GRE, GMAT and other academic scores are not required.

Transcripts

Applicants must upload scanned or photographed transcript copies in PDF format to the application website when they apply. Original copies are not required unless the Creative Writing Program makes an admission offer.

Letters of Reference

UBC requires three letters of reference with each application. References are most commonly submitted using UBC's E-reference system, which is part of the online application. They **do not** have to be academic references if you are not able to get current references from academic sources – work or personal references are acceptable.

Deadline: References should be received by **Monday, January 19th, 2018**. A late reference will make it more difficult to evaluate your application, so please ensure your referees will be able to submit their references on time.

Electronic references: In the online application system, applicants are asked to provide an e-mail address for each referee (Please note, that they are unable to accept e-mails from Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail, MSN or other free e-mail accounts for referees.) A unique link will be emailed to each referee, allowing them to log in to a secure site and submit an online reference or upload a reference document as an attachment.

Paper references: For referees unable to use the electronic reference system (due to having a non-accepted email address, mostly), reference letters must be sent to the Creative Writing Program. They must come directly from the referee or if issued to the student, they must be in a sealed envelope with the referee's signature across the seal. Faxed or emailed reference letters are unacceptable. Referees may use the [official form](#), letterhead or plain white paper. For mailed references we accept a postmark date before January 19th; letters do not have to be couriered.

Full information including the official paper referee form can be found on the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies website at <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/prospective-students/application-admission/letters-reference>

TOEFL Testing

Applicants from a university outside Canada in which English is not the primary language of instruction must present evidence of competency to pursue studies in the English language prior to being extended an offer of admission. See the UBC Calendar for more information - <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,204,345,0>

Class Selection

Do not select or request classes with your application. Students only select workshops once enrolled in the program.

Application to Both MFA Programs

Students may apply to both the on-campus MFA and Optional Residency MFA programs if they wish. Each application will be evaluated by a separate reading committee. Students must pay the application fee separately for each program. The deadlines are the same for both programs.

MFA in Creative Writing & Theatre Applicants

MFA in Creative Writing & Theatre applicants must choose the *M.F.A. in Creative Writing & Theatre* program when applying online. They must also be accepted by the Theatre Program in addition to the approval of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies. Students who apply to the Joint Program in Creative Writing and Theatre (MFA in Playwriting & Theatre) **cannot** also apply to the on-campus or Optional Residency MFA Programs.

Portfolio Guidelines

All work must be in English. All work must follow the guidelines below. If you have applied previously, please note the application process has changed to accommodate the new UBC Graduate Application System instituted in 2015.

We cannot provide critiques of manuscript submissions or detailed explanations to students who are not accepted into the program, nor can we provide pre-evaluation of portfolios. To find out if you will be accepted, you must apply.

File Specifications

All files must be in Microsoft Word, PDF (Adobe Acrobat) or Rich Text format. All modern word processors are capable of producing files in one of these formats. Electronic submissions in other formats will be rejected by the application form.

We require all applicants to upload **three separate files** on the **Experience and Interests** section of the online application. All must be in Microsoft Word, PDF (Adobe Acrobat) or Rich Text format and each can be up to 10MB in size, maximum. The files are:

- 1. Statement of Intent:** This should be up to 500 words (2 pages) and may include:
 - your literary influences in your primary genre (favorite authors / works)
 - other genres you anticipate working in
 - past experiences with other writing teachers / mentors
 - a brief description of your potential thesis project (if you have one in mind)
 - which of our faculty you see as a potential match for your thesis project (please refer to instructor bios on the website)
 - a description of your writing habits over the past three years
 - anything else you'd like to let us know about your creative practice.

- 2. Literary CV/Resume:** This should list any publications, awards and relevant experiences. We don't need to know about your employment history unless it directly relates to your application (if you were a staff writer on a TV series, for example, this is relevant; if you were a biochemist, it isn't relevant).
- 3. Portfolio:** This must include at least **two genres** of writing. It must be numbered and it must be formatted as one complete document. The form will only accept one portfolio file.

Portfolio Details

Table of Contents

Include a Table of Contents for the writing portfolio with the genre of each piece indicated beside its title. Your main genre should be at the top of the list.

Numbering

All pages must be numbered. It is also helpful to place your last name on every page as part of the page footer. Numbers do not have to be consecutive across genres, as long as each piece has page numbering.

Genre Requirement

Your portfolio **must** include a minimum of 2 different genres. Three genres is preferable but not absolutely essential. We would rather you send work in 2 strong genres rather than including a weak genre to make 3.

File Names

Ensure that you name your files correctly with your first and last names. For example: Jules Verne's application contains three files. 1: verne_jules_statement.doc 2: verne_jules_cv.doc 3: verne_jules_portfolio.doc

Length Requirement

The page length requirement for each genre submitted should be followed as closely as is reasonable **without exceeding it**. For example: in short fiction, if you have one short story which runs 15 pages, you could submit it alone, but if you submit only one story of 5 pages, this is not sufficient. You may send more than one piece in a particular genre, as long as the cumulative page count in that genre does not exceed our requirements. Short & long fiction are not considered separate genres, therefore you **must** send in another genre in addition to fiction.

Do not submit work in genres which we do not teach.

Do not use non-standard fonts, font sizes or page margins in order to squeeze in more material; our faculty will be able to evaluate your writing based on the page requirements stated. We prefer 12 point Times New Roman or similar.

Individual Genre Length Requirements

Poetry: 15 pages, single-spaced, one poem maximum per page.

Fiction: Short Fiction – 20 pages in total, double-spaced. For example this could be two 10 page short stories totalling 20 pages or one 20 page story.

Novel – excerpt of 20 pages double-spaced (outline optional).

If you choose to submit both novel and short fiction, submit no more than 20 pages in total. For example: 10 pages of short fiction and 10 pages of novel. **(Note: short fiction & novel/novella are not considered separate genres; therefore you must submit a second genre in addition to fiction.)**

Graphic Novel: Up to 25 pages. PDF or Word format only. Material can be script only, or script and art if you illustrate your own work. Keep in mind that the entire portfolio cannot exceed 10MB in size.

Screenplay: The first 20 pages of a screenplay as well as a two-page outline for the same screenplay, or a 20 page short screenplay. Standard screenplay format. Sample scripts (also called show scripts) from pre-existing television series as well as **adaptations or collaborations of any kind are not acceptable** -- the writing, development of characters, etc., must be original to you.

Stage Play: 50 page excerpt from a full-length play, or two one-acts totalling 50 pages all together. Standard stage play format.

The exception to this rule: Applicants to the Joint Creative Writing/Theatre Program are allowed to submit one full-length play and/or three one-act plays. There is no page limit for these applicants' manuscripts.

Non-Fiction: Creative Non-Fiction: 25 pages double-spaced. Creative Non-Fiction may include autobiographical writing (including diaries or journals), personal essays (but not academic essays), travel writing, literary journalism (but not newspaper reporting), commentary, and cultural reviews (but not technical reviews). In essence, we are looking for any non-fiction written in your own opinionated voice – as opposed to the more neutral, formulaic style characteristic of most academic, technical or newspaper writing. If you have an insufficient amount of creative non-fiction you may also include up to 10 double-spaced pages of short fiction as a substitute. (If you are also submitting samples in the fiction category, do not submit the same material as your creative nonfiction substitute.)

Children's Literature: 25 pages double-spaced text (no illustrations) for any age level or combination of age levels (chapter books, middle-grade, young adult, picture book). Work should be intended for children and/or young adults.

Translation: 15 pages double-spaced, except poetry, which should be single-spaced (one poem per page). Submit translated work into English in any literary genre. Please indicate language and publication information for source text. Faculty evaluating the translation may request that applicants forward the original source texts.

Lyric and Libretto: 20 pages. Pieces can be song lyrics or short prose/poems you deem conducive to being reworked as song. For libretto, submit 10-20 pages as text, with or without score. In addition to either of the above, include links to three musical pieces hosted online (Soundcloud or similar).

Note: collaborative works of **any type** are not acceptable in any genre. All work must be original to you alone.

Notes on the Portfolio File

Your portfolio **MUST** be uploaded as a single file. If using a word processor, look up how to combine / merge multiple files in Google or in the help documentation of the word processor. There are multiple ways to do this, depending on your word processor and operating system. It may also be possible to combine your portfolio materials into a PDF using Adobe Acrobat or a similar PDF creation program or online utility.

We cannot provide technical support for students having trouble creating their portfolio file. Please do not leave this to the last minute.

If you have submitted your portfolio and need to update it before the deadline, or if you submit your application without uploading your portfolio (this is possible, as it will trigger your electronic referee requests), you must contact us directly to update/add the portfolio file, as you cannot add this yourself after the application has been submitted.

Maximum file size: 10MB

Portfolio Deadline: Midnight PST, Monday January 8, 2018

Address for referees sending paper letters of reference by mail:

Alexandra Tsardidis
UBC Creative Writing Program
Buchanan Room E462
1866 Main Mall *
Vancouver, BC
V6T 1Z1
CANADA

*Couriers should be told to deliver to the East Mall side of the building.

The address must exactly as stated above. Your material will not be automatically forwarded to the Creative Writing office if received in another UBC office.

Email is the primary means of communication for this program. Applicants will be notified by email of the results of the competition.

Please ensure that you update your UBC Application and CWL account if your email address changes after your application.

Students are accepted for the academic year beginning September 2018.