APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE CREATIVE WRITING MAJORS

2023 Academic Year

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The UBC Creative Writing Major

The Bachelor of Fine Arts Major program in Creative Writing (BFA CRWR Major) is a full-time two-year studio program usually taken in years three and four of an undergraduate degree.

The BFA CRWR Major program is unique within North America. It offers you the chance to grow and develop as an emerging writer in small, focused writing workshops, learning from and with a committed cohort of early career writers. The workshops are guided by practicing, experienced writers across many genres: fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, writing for children, lyric forms, dramatic writing for the screen, dramatic writing for the stage, new media, and writing for graphic forms.

As a student in the BFA CRWR Major program, you will also learn and grow outside the workshop. We offer a variety of reading series, publications, and performances, such as our annual theater festival, Brave New Play Rites, or the Creative Writing affiliated literary journal PRISM international. Our BFA CRWR Majors (BFAs) gather each month for OutWrite, an open-mic evening where you can read your work to an appreciative, supportive audience, and strengthen connections to your own community of literary peers.

You'll also be offered the opportunity to participate in literary events and festivals, both on-campus and in the vibrant literary milieu of Vancouver. We bring in a diverse, talented and inspirational series of guest writers every year, who add to our teaching, and who also offer mentoring advice, lectures and seminars in craft, readings and more. Our own faculty offer a variety of craft-based lectures open to all of our undergraduate and graduate students. Graduating BFAs also contribute work to *Fourth Floor*, an anthology produced and edited by our students.

Our Creative Writing Students Association (CWSA) arranges professional and social events for our BFA and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) students. A BFA representative works closely with the MFA Chair of the CWSA to bring the whole of our student community together, and represents and advocates specifically for BFAs at faculty program meetings and in consultation with the program.

Understanding the Application Process

The guidelines contained here give you a detailed guide on the steps to take if you want to apply for the BFA CRWR Major. Please read through the guidelines carefully and take some time to understand the contents before applying, and do seek advice or clarification if need.

Important Note:

Current UBC Students: Applicants who are current UBC students and wish to apply to the BFA CRWR Major need only submit their application to the CRWR program through the online form.

Non-UBC Students or Former UBC Students Reapplying to UBC: Applicants intending on transferring to UBC, reapplying for admission to UBC after time away from the program, or pursuing a second degree must submit an application through Enrolment Services – Admissions prior to applying to the BFA CRWR Major. The deadline for the UBC application is earlier than the BFA CRWR Major application deadline, typically in mid-January.

The Application Process

There is only one application cycle each year for the BFA CRWR Major. For admission to the BFA CRWR Major for the 2023 academic year, applications will be accepted between January 9 and February 28, 2023. The deadline to submit completed applications is: **February 28, 2023.**

Once received, the applications are checked for completion and eligibility. Incomplete applications or applicants that do not meet the eligibility requirements outlined in this guideline will not be considered.

Manuscripts are read, discussed, and assessed by the Creative Writing faculty, and applications are ranked on the basis of literary merit and potential. Please note that faculty will not review and provide feedback on a portfolio prior to application submission. Decisions on admissions are based on ranked standing with regard to the number of seats available.

We receive more submissions than we have seats to offer. Our best advice to you is to provide us with writing that you feel is the strongest and truest representation of who you are as an apprentice writer. We want to hear your unique voice. We can't provide personal advice, review manuscript submissions, or offer further explanations to students who are not accepted into the program.

We will make offers in early May 2023 for places starting September 2023.

Eligibility

There are three eligibility requirements you must meet in order to apply for the BFA CRWR Major: third year status, completion of CRWR 200 or equivalent, and standing as a current UBC student or someone who has applied to UBC (either as a new or returning student).

Third Year Status

No one can begin the BFA CRWR Major without formal UBC Vancouver 3rd year standing at the start of their program. This is a formal requirement of the University for admission to the BFA CRWR Major program.

This means that most applicants will have completed or be about to complete a second full year of university study by May 2023 so that they will have 3rd year status for September 2023. Generally, 3rd year status equates to 54 credits of completed undergraduate courses.

You should confirm that you will have the required standing before applying to the BFA CRWR Major by consulting with the appropriate Faculty Advising office (for current UBC students), or Enrolment Services - Admissions (for non-UBC students).

It is the Faculty you are in or entering that determines your formal standing. Creative Writing is a Fine Arts program within the Faculty of Arts, so most of our BFA CRWR Majors are or will be Faculty of Arts students. For potential Double Majors whose second Major is in another Faculty, it is important that you also check permissions, your standing, and other potential issues with the advising service for that Faculty before applying to the BFA CRWR Major.

We may consider your application if you intend to take one or two courses during the summer session (i.e. after May 2023) to meet the credit requirements. If this is you, you will have a chance to explain your completion plan as part of the online application.

For all applicants, even if the School of Creative Writing accepts you based on your portfolio and presumptive standing and makes you an offer of a place, you will not be able to progress in the program if you do not have 3rd year standing by the start of the relevant academic year. Our offers are reviewed by Admissions after we make them, and they make the final determination of eligibility.

CRWR 200

The only specific course requirement for admission to our program is three credits of CRWR 200, or equivalent. CRWR 200 is the introductory CRWR course we offer at UBC, so we will consider a wide range of alternative options, as long as they are college/university level Creative Writing courses. This is a prerequisite for entering the program.

For applicants from outside UBC, this means that you must have taken a recognized (for academic credit) introductory creative writing course. We will give special consideration to transfer students whose home institution did not offer any suitable courses – you are given space to indicate this on the application form.

UBC Status

Only UBC students with active undergraduate degree status may be enrolled in the BFA CRWR Major. We are unable to offer seats to unclassified students, or any other category of UBC student not eligible for an undergraduate degree.

If you are an unclassified UBC Student, or have another non-undergraduate degree standing, and you want to apply, you should consult with Enrolment Services – Admissions and your appropriate Faculty Advising office on the steps you take to change your status, and advise us when applying that you are making the necessary change.

You can apply to the BFA CRWR Major if you are or have been a student at another college of university recognized by UBC, as long as you have sufficient transferable undergraduate credits for 3rd year UBC status. You can also apply as a second-degree student if you have already completed a bachelor's degree in another subject at a recognized institution. For both these categories – external applicants and second-degree students – you must have already applied to UBC before submitting your BFA CRWR Major application. The note below on Admissions to UBC gives you further information.

Admission and Readmission to UBC

If you are not currently a UBC student, you must first apply for admission to UBC before submitting your BFA CRWR Major application.

The admissions deadline for UBC precedes the BFA CRWR Major application deadline, so you need to complete and submit your UBC application before applying to Creative Writing. The BFA CRWR Major application requires a valid, active UBC student number (issued to applicants) to proceed. The UBC admissions deadline is usually in mid-January.

We will not process any application that does not have a valid associated UBC student/applicant number and account.

To make an application to UBC, to find associated deadlines and other relevant information, start from the Admissions page. In applying to UBC, you should indicate that your first choice of Major is Creative Writing, and should also list it in an alternative major. If you are interested in a Double Major, or you wish to be admitted to UBC even if you are not successful in being admitted to the BFA CRWR Major, seek advice from Admissions on submitting and managing your application.

Transcripts must be sent directly to Enrolment Services - Admissions by their deadline.

Enrolment Services may wait to finalize or approve admissions decisions until Creative Writing sends them a list of students to whom the program has offered a place.

The School of Creative Writing cannot assist or advise on admission to UBC or enrolment status. Even if we offer you a place in the BFA CRWR Major, you will not be permitted to take that place if Enrolment Services – Admissions determines that you cannot be admitted to UBC or that you do not have the required status. All offers from Creative Writing of a place in the BFA CRWR Major program are conditional on final approval from Enrolment Services - Admissions.

UBC students who are in good standing but have taken more than 12 months away from their program must apply for readmission to UBC. This can be done through the “admissions” tab in the Student Service Centre account. Once this step is complete, they must submit a new application and portfolio to the School of Creative Writing, and notify the Undergraduate Advisor (crwr.undergrad@ubc.ca) that they are reapplying to the Creative Writing Major after a leave. **Applications must be received by the annual deadline in order to be considered.**

Internal UBC Transfers

Current UBC students who are currently in a program outside of Faculty of Arts will also need to submit an application to transfer to Faculty of Arts. The deadline to apply is May 15, and information on the requirements and process can be found here: https://www.arts.ubc.ca/degree-planning/admissions/new-to-arts/

Notes on Double Majors and Second Degrees

These two options, pursued by some BFA CRWR Majors each year, can present administrative complexities, some of which are discussed below. If you are accepted into the BFA CRWR Major and pursue either of these options, it is a good idea to check in periodically with your faculty and/or program advisors to ensure that you are on track.

1) Double Majors

If you want to graduate with a Double Major (i.e. completed two Major programs) you must qualify, apply, and then meet all requirements for each Major as if it were being completed alone, and you should carefully consider the demands this will make on you. It's not unusual for this path to add an extra year or more to your studies.

For Double Major students in Creative Writing whose other Major usually leads to a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, you can choose whether to graduate with a BA or BFA degree. You need to meet the degree requirements of your chosen credential – for example, the BA currently has language, literary, and science requirements which the BFA does not, so if you want the BA as your degree on your transcript and academic record, you will need to meet those requirements.

For students double-majoring with another BFA program (Visual Arts e.g.) you will receive a BFA degree in both.

A small number of students may also be considering a Double Major where the other major is not administered within the Faculty of Arts, but within another Faculty at UBC. You must seek advice and may require formal permission from the Faculty in question before proceeding with this option.

For external students applying to UBC wanting a Double Major, you will need to ensure you meet the application requirements both of UBC and of each Major program. An offer from one Major – Creative Writing for example – does not mean that you have been accepted for the Double Major. You may receive two offers, each of which has to be separately accepted or declined, for each Major, you may be offered one but turned down for the other, and so on. If you are interested in pursuing this option, you should seek advice from Admissions as well as the programs you are interested in.

2) Second Degree Students

If you have already completed a bachelor's degree in another subject at an institution recognized by UBC, you can apply to Creative Writing to earn a BFA in Creative Writing as a second degree. You follow exactly the same application process as any other student, ensuring that you apply to UBC separately by the January admissions deadline and then applying to the BFA CRWR Major.

Your previous degree must have been in another subject.

If eligible for this option, you will be credited with the equivalent of two years of a four-year program, and some requirements are waived; you should then be able to complete this second degree within two years.

Applying to the BFA Creative Writing Major

Application and Portfolio Requirements

BFA CRWR Major applications are anonymized and reviewed by UBC School of Creative Writing faculty members.

There are four components to the BFA CRWR Major application; the online form, a personal statement, a manuscript of writing in a primary genre, and a second manuscript of writing in a second genre.

Online Application Form

You can find the form on the Apply for the Major page on our website once the application window is open. No email or paper applications will be accepted.

On the form, you will need:

- To positively affirm that you have read and understood these guidelines
- To provide your UBC student number and legal name as it appears on UBC records (you will also be able to indicate your preferred name if this differs from your legal name).
- To indicate how many course credits you will have completed by mid-May (54 required) of the application year
- To answer whether you already have a bachelor's degree and if yes, from which institution and in which subject
- To affirm that you have completed the pre-requisite 200-level Creative Writing course or equivalent, stating the course number and institution where the course was completed.
- If unable to affirm the above re: CRWR 200, to indicate that you are registered or planning to complete this pre-requisite before the program start, and/or (for transferring of second-degree students) that the institution you attended did and does not offer an equivalent.
- To indicate whether you intend to pursue a Double Major, and if yes, in which subject
- To indicate which two genres have been included in the writing sample and which further genres you intend to study if accepted
- To confirm that you have removed your name and any identifying details from all application materials

General Formatting Guidelines for Personal Statement and Manuscript Submissions

As part of the online application form, you will upload ONE document in MS Word or PDF format. This document must contain all of your submission materials (clearly labeled) in the following order: Personal Statement, Primary Genre, Secondary Genre.

Unless a genre conventionally uses a particular font (e.g. screenwriting and courier), use a regular body text font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial) at 12-point size, on a page with regular margins.

Name your file using last name in capitals, then first name in lower case. Please use your legal name as it appears on your application form to name your file.

LASTNAME_firstname_PORTFOLIO

Personal Statement (250-500 words)

In a one-page (single-spaced, maximum 500 words) statement, tell us about yourself and who you are – and want to be – as a writer. Let us know how your background and experiences have shaped your writing. We want to learn about the questions, commitments, and interests that drive your work. In addition, please introduce yourself as a person interested in working within a community of writers – how do you learn from and with others? What experiences have prepared you to engage in the work of others and support their growth? You might also share accomplishments and goals as a writer; describe publications, awards, and previous experience in writing workshops as applicable.

While we want to learn about you, we will be assessing your materials anonymously. Do not sign your statement or include your name in it.

Manuscript Submission

The minimum page requirement for all genres is 10 pages. **Applications that do not meet the minimum page requirement will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed by the faculty readers.** The page length requirement for each genre should be followed as closely as possible without going over. If you have one short story of 15 pages, you could submit it alone, but if you submit only one story of 5 pages, this is not enough. You may send more than one piece in a particular genre, as long as the total page count does not exceed the limit for the genre. You can also send part of a longer piece – e.g. you have a screenplay which is 120 pages in total – submit the first 20 pages to meet our requirements.

It's also fine to submit work you have done for class previously; in classes, you can't submit work that you have previously submitted for a grade, but for this portfolio, it's acceptable to use previous assignments. They must however be solely your original work – no collaborative work of any kind will be accepted.

If a sample for a genre contains multiple works, please include a brief table of contents at the beginning.

We will accept submissions in the 9 genres listed below with specific requirements.

Fiction: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum of 20 pages, double-spaced, numbered pages. Submission may be one long piece or a number of shorter works totaling 10-20 pages. Short or long fiction (i.e., short story or novel excerpt) constitute one genre.

Poetry: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 15 pages, single-spaced, numbered pages. Each new poem must start on a new page (i.e. no more than 15 poems). Even a poem of only one or two lines must be on its own page, while a longer poem can spread over more than one page.

Dramatic Writing for the Screen/TV: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages of a screenplay (film or TV). This can consist of short screenplays or the first 20 pages of a feature-length work. 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 and development of characters etc. must be original to you alone. Screenplays should follow industry-standard formatting.

Dramatic Writing for the Stage: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages: excerpt from a full-length play, or one or more one-act plays for Stage are acceptable. Adaptations or collaboration of any kind are not acceptable. The writing and development of characters etc. must be original to you. Stage plays should follow industry-standard formatting.

Writing for Children and Young Adults: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum of 20 pages, double-spaced, numbered pages. Illustrations do not count toward the page requirement. The manuscript may be a short story, novel, picture-book text (formatted like a short story with no descriptions of art unless absolutely necessary – e.g. the visuals juxtapose with text), poetry, stage play, or screenplay but the target audience should be children, including young adults.

Creative Nonfiction (CNF): Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages, double-spaced, numbered pages. Preferable forms of CNF include memoir, personal essay, lyric essay, and literary journalism. Other forms of nonfiction writing, so long as they highlight personal voice and narrative, that might serve as an application material include, but aren't limited to, commentary, personal journalism, newspaper and magazine writing, blogs, and travel writing. Do not submit academic essays or reports.

Lyric Forms: For both lyric and libretto submissions, please submit a minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages of work, single-spaced, numbered pages. Song lyrics should be accompanied by audio recordings of the songs. These recordings do not have to be professionally produced—phone recordings would be fine or something recorded in a DAW (digital audio workstation) like GarageBand or Audacity on your computer. Recordings should, of course, be clear and audible and free of background noise. Please upload your audio files to an audio hosting site like Soundcloud or YouTube and include this link in your application or if you prefer, you may send MP3s of your recordings to crwr.undergrad@ubc.ca.
Note: If Poetry is your first genre for the portfolio submission, Lyric Forms cannot be your second genre.

Graphic Forms: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages. Maximum file size 19MB. PDF only. Material can be script only, or script and art if you illustrate your own work. Scripts should be properly formatted and images should be finished art, scanned at print resolution.

New Media: Minimum of 10 pages, maximum 20 pages, double-spaced, numbered.
Recommended samples:

- Podcast scripts (fictional or narrative): We recommend that students use the BBC format sample. Scripts should be orderly and reflect not only dialogue, but also sound cues.
- Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality or other Immersive scripts: Dialogue in fairly traditional script format, while also describing user experience, audience, platform, and style/setting. Recommended formats can be found at https://info.finaldraft.com/how-to-write-for-vr and https://vrscout.com/news/vr-scriptwriting-beginners-guide-writing-unframed/.

Optional: You may also share a link to an audio or video recording or play-through video (no more than 10 minutes in length) on a hosting site such as Vimeo, YouTube, or Soundcloud. If you choose to share a link, make sure that 1) permissions are set to allow access to anyone with link, and 2) that your legal name is not visible on the hosting site.
Note: Video Game Writing is not currently accepted for the portfolio submission.

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