

English, MFA

The Iowa Writers' Workshop offers an MFA degree in English with a subprogram in creative writing. The MFA is administered by the Department of English.

Occasionally well-qualified PhD students in the Department of English may obtain permission to submit a creative dissertation for the doctoral degree; the creative writing program assumes responsibility for granting permission for the option of the creative dissertation and for approving the dissertation once it is completed. Contact the director of graduate studies in the Department of English for more information.

Learning Outcomes

Graduates will:

- develop expertise in the art of writing through practical, immersive engagement with techniques and principles of craft in fiction or poetry;
- build deep knowledge and broad appreciation of the literary landscape through immersive engagement with diverse literary traditions;
- gain practical experience teaching literature, rhetoric, and/or creative writing at the college level;
- create and revise a significant body of top-level creative work in fiction or poetry;
- develop a strong individual artistic vision; and
- gain exposure to a wide range of career options in both academic and non-academic literary disciplines.

Requirements

The Master of Fine Arts degree in English (creative writing) requires 48 s.h. of graduate credit taken over four semesters in residence at the University of Iowa. Students must maintain a UI cumulative grade-point average of 2.75.

Students specialize in fiction or poetry. Up to 18 s.h. of graduate transfer credit may be counted toward the degree.

The MFA in English with a creative writing subprogram requires the following coursework.

Required Workshops

Course #	Title	Hours
One of the these:		
CW:7870	Fiction Workshop (taken four times for 1-6 s.h. each)	4-24
CW:7875	Poetry Workshop (taken four times for 1-6 s.h. each)	4-24

Students must enroll in one of these workshops during each semester of residence in the program. In each course, groups of 10-15 students read and critique each other's work.

Elective Courses

In conjunction with an advisor, students select courses that align with their creative research interests. The program is flexible and individualized. Elective coursework may be selected from any course subject numbered 3000 or above and must bring the total credit for the MFA to 48 s.h.

The program's seminars provide students with a thorough knowledge of their chosen literary form and related aspects

of craft. Seminars include CW:7810 Form of Fiction, CW:7820 Form of Poetry, CW:7830 Seminar: Problems in Modern Fiction, and CW:7840 Seminar: Problems in Modern Poetry. Each focuses on a single aspect of modern poetry or fiction, such as a single writer's work or a body of work with a common theme or purpose.

In addition to taking creative writing program courses, MFA students can choose courses offered by other University of Iowa departments and programs, such as the Center for the Book (Graduate College), and the departments of Theatre Arts, Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures, and English (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences).

Examination and Thesis

During the second year of the program, each student must take the MFA examination, an essay exam that may be written outside of the classroom. Students may choose to enroll in CW:7895 MFA Thesis for a maximum of 12 s.h. and submit their graduate thesis during the last semester; the thesis is a fiction or poetry manuscript of substantial length.

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applicants to the Iowa Writers' Workshop must meet the program's admission requirements as well as those of the

Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

A creative writing manuscript is the most important element of the application for admission to the workshop. Submissions for poetry should include 10–12 poems. Submissions for fiction should include two or three short stories, several sections of a novel, or a combination of those. Submissions are typically 30–80 double-spaced pages, and may not exceed 80 double-spaced pages.

Other application materials include a personal statement, official transcripts from all universities and colleges attended, the graduate application form, three letters of recommendation, an application for graduate awards, and an application to the Graduate College.

For detailed information on application materials and procedures, see How to Apply on the Iowa Writers' Workshop website.