

CREATIVE WRITING, MASTER OF FINE ARTS

The Graduate Program in Creative Writing offers an M.A. and MFA in four concentrations: Genre Fiction, Screenwriting for Film and TV, Nature Writing, and Poetry. It also offers an M.A. in Publishing. Western's curricula differ from most other comparable programs by emphasizing intense training in craft, imitation of models as the basis of study, and formal exposure to the business side of the profession.

All degree programs in the Graduate Program in Creative Writing use a low-residency format that engages students in two ways:

1. on-campus intensive seminars and workshops for two weeks during either two or three consecutive summers (depending on the degree), and
2. a plan of non-residency study during either four or six full-time academic semesters (depending on the degree), during each of which students work one-to-one with writing faculty and members of their peer cohort of students.

All programs require a high degree of commitment and excellence from candidates, who must maintain a 3.000 course average to complete the program. A minimum grade of B- in each course is required. Summer residency courses within concentrations require students to prepare for the intensive by completing pre-assigned reading as well as preparing assignments to maximize the time for discussion during the course of studies on campus.

In the first and second summer residencies, candidates in both the M.A. and MFA degrees complete one credit each summer of CRWR 600 Summer Orientation which involves learning or updating online tools mastery, attending faculty and student readings, and meeting with professors and visiting faculty. MFA third-summer candidates earn one credit attending and participating in critiques and readings for cohorts attending their first and second summers. All students also complete 2-credit intensive workshop courses in their concentrations each summer they attend.

In their third full non-residency semester, all MFA candidates are required to take one 6-credit out-of-concentration course from the options in the course menu.

During the academic year, full-time students should expect to spend a minimum of 25-30 hours per week to complete writing assignments, for which professors will provide weekly feedback online. Students also participate regularly in online discussion boards and videoconference calls with other students and professors. Students earn 12 credits each semester for this work (six credits per course).

Program Information

Western's low-residency MFA in Creative Writing offers a rigorous, terminal degree in the field. Pursuit of the MFA involves extensive creative work, development of critical skills, and study of the business side of being a writer. Students select one of four concentrations: Genre Fiction, Screenwriting for Film and Television, Nature Writing, or Poetry.

The three on-campus residencies occur during the month of July, and the program takes 25 months to complete as a full-time student.

The low-residency component of the program involves four online semesters of coursework that use a combination of online writing submissions and critiques as well as regular real-time discussions with professors and peers.

During each of the three required summer residencies on Western's Colorado campus, students network with their peers as well as attend student and faculty readings, workshops on craft and literature, and master classes with renowned visiting writers.

Total Credits for the MFA in Creative Writing

Two summer residencies @3 hours/summer = 6 credits

Third summer residency, with capstone = 4 credits

First two academic semesters @12 hours/term = 24 credits

Second two academic semesters @13 hours/term = 26 credits

Total Credits: 60

Requirements for Full Admission to the MFA in Creative Writing

Candidate must submit:

- An official transcript of the bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university showing recommended 3.0 cumulative GPA or higher, including grades of B- or above in at least two (2) undergraduate or graduate courses in literary and/or film studies.
- An 800- to 1,000-word personal statement describing writing experience and commitment to writing. This statement should include a self-assessment of qualifications for admission to Western's Graduate Program in Creative Writing for the chosen degree and concentration.
- A writing sample in the appropriate genre, double spaced and numbered, or properly formatted for the appropriate genre:
 - The Genre Fiction concentration sample should include 20 to 25 pages, ideally from a single work.
 - The Screenwriting concentration sample should include a complete scene or short.
 - The Nature Writing concentration sample should include 20 to 25 pages, in any genre or a mix of genres.
 - The Poetry concentration sample should include 10 to 15 pages of poetry.
 - The Publishing concentration sample should consist of a 3- to 5-page critical assessment of a story's suitability for publication (story to be provided to applicant during application process).
- Two letters of professional recommendation from those capable of assessing the applicant's preparation to succeed in graduate-level work. All letters must be originals submitted on letterhead, must be signed by the person giving the recommendation, and must be less than a year old.
- Payment of university application fee

Provisional Admission to the MFA in Creative Writing

An applicant who does not meet the requirements for full admission to the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing may be considered for provisional admission upon the recommendation of the program director and approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. A provisionally admitted student will have a maximum of one calendar year to complete any

pre-requisite academic coursework. The program director or Dean of Graduate Studies may set additional timeline requirements.

Program Requirements for All Concentrations

Western's low-residency MFA in Creative Writing offers a rigorous, terminal degree in the field, including intensive creative work, development of analytical and critical skills, and study of the business side. Students select one of four concentrations: Genre Fiction, Poetry with an Emphasis on Versecraft, or Screenwriting for Film and Television, and Nature Writing.

The three on-campus residencies occur the last two weeks of July, and the program takes 25 months to complete as a full-time student. The low-residency component of the program involves four online semesters of coursework that use a combination of online writing submissions and critiques as well as regular real-time discussions with professors and peers.

During each of the three required summer intensives on Western's Colorado campus, students network with their peers as well as attend student and faculty readings, workshops on craft and literature, and master classes. Each summer culminates in the national conference Writing the Rockies, which is required of students and open to the public.

Program Concentrations

- Concentration in Genre Fiction (<https://catalog.western.edu/graduate/programs/creative-writing-mfa/genre-fiction/>)
- Concentration in Nature Writing (<https://catalog.western.edu/graduate/programs/creative-writing-mfa/nature-writing/>)
- Concentration in Poetry (<https://catalog.western.edu/graduate/programs/creative-writing-mfa/poetry/>)
- Concentration in Screenwriting for Feature Film and Television (<https://catalog.western.edu/graduate/programs/creative-writing-mfa/screenwriting/>)