

Frequently Asked Questions – Admissions Process Ph.D. Program

Q: How can I apply to the Ph.D. Program?

A: You can apply online (<https://gradadmit.berkeley.edu/apply/start.html>). Please refer to our website for deadlines. Generally, applications can be submitted from early September to early December for the following fall semester.

Q: What does the application consist of?

A:

- The online Graduate Application, including Personal Statement and the Statement of Purpose.
- Transcripts of all college-level work uploaded as a PDF to the Graduate Application.
- Scores for the GRE General Test and Subject Test in English (*scores from tests taken after November may not reach us in time*). GRE Institution Code: 4833, Department Code: 2501 .
- Three letters of recommendation submitted through the University online application.
- A critical or scholarly writing sample of no more than 20 pages uploaded as a PDF to the Graduate [insert “Application”?].

Q: Is the GRE required?

A: Yes, the GRE is required for all applicants.

Q: How important is my GRE score for my application?

A: The Admissions Committee uses a holistic approach when considering applicants and will examine all aspects of your application. Your application should show why you are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in English as well as why you’d like to get your Ph.D. [in] the English Department at Berkeley. The GRE score is important, but will not be the only measure [in considering] your application for admission.

Q: I am not sure if my GRE scores will arrive in time. What should I do?

A: Please contact [ETS](#) to find out if your scores will get to the English Department in time.

Q: My letter of reference might arrive late at the English Department. Will my application still be considered?

A: Please get in touch with the English Department Graduate Office at 510-642-6732 to discuss.

Q: My letters of reference are several years old. Can I still use them for my application?

A: Yes, the decision about what to submit is yours, but bear in mind that letters of reference should give the Admissions Committee a clear picture [of] why your recommenders consider you qualified for graduate school. Please also review the information on letters of reference offered by the Graduate Division: [Link](#).

Q: Do I have to have a MA degree to get in?

A: No, we admit many students with only the BA degree.

Q: Does the English Department at UC Berkeley offer a MA program?

A: No, the English Department does not offer a MA program.

Q: I can't afford the application fee. Can the English Department waive the fee?

A: The department is not in charge of the application fee. If you would like to be considered for an application fee waiver, you must submit proof of your financial hardship to the Graduate Division. Please follow this [link](#) to find out if you are eligible for a fee waiver.

Q: Can I meet with faculty or graduate office staff at the English Department to discuss details of my application?

A: The English Department is happy to answer your questions about the application *process* in person, via email (gradadvisor_english@berkeley.edu), or phone (510-642-6732), but can't reply to detailed questions regarding the content of individual applications. Thank you for your understanding.

Q: Will I get funding upon admission?

A: We try to fund every admitted student, but cannot guarantee funding for the entire length of the program. Please refer to our website for detailed funding information:
<http://english.berkeley.edu/graduate/funding>.

Q: Does the English Department offer additional language or conference travel funding?

A: The English Department offers one conference travel and one archive travel reimbursement for up to \$400 each fiscal year. In addition, graduate students can apply for language study funding once during their academic careers in the department.

Q: How much does living in Berkeley cost?

A: Please refer to the [Graduate Student Budget](#) Information.

Q: Can I work as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) while I am enrolled in the program?

A: Yes, we encourage students to work as Graduate Student Instructors, Graduate Student Researchers, and Readers if they are eligible to do so and working as a GSI does not interfere with their academic progress.

Q: How can I find out about GSI salaries?

A: Graduate Student Instructor Appointments are 50% time appointments. Please review the current rates for GSIs at [UC Berkeley HR website](#).

Q: Can I work full time off or on campus while I get my Ph.D. in English at UC Berkeley?

A: Working full time while going to class full time (12 units per semester) is not recommended. The Graduate Division asks students to not work over 50% time on campus. If you must work over 50% time you need the Head Graduate Advisor's and your dissertation director's approval. If you must work over 75% time you will need the Dean's approval.

Q: Can I take some or all of the graduate classes at the UC Berkeley English Ph.D. program online?

A: We do not offer graduate courses online.

Q: Can I get credit for prior course work?

A: Students who have completed graduate-level course work at other institutions may submit a written petition to the Graduate Chair requesting that specific courses be considered for credit (transferred) toward satisfying course and breadth requirements. The petition should provide a brief description of the course(s) to be considered. In no case will such credit be given for more than three courses.

Q: How long does it take to finish the program?

A: The normative time for the program is 5 -6 years. The first three years are considered "time to candidacy," during which students satisfy course and language requirements and take their qualifying oral examination. Having passed the qualifying exam, students "advance to candidacy," and proceed to the prospectus and dissertation.. For more information, please refer to our [Handbook for Graduate Study in English](#).

Q: I am a parent. Does the university offer additional financial support for graduate student parents?

A: The University offers various sources of support for graduate student parents. While working as GSIs, for example, graduate students can be reimbursed by the university for some of their daycare expenses. The university also offers affordable family housing. For detailed information, please refer to the Graduate Division Guide ["Families Matter."](#)