

What You Will Need

Although program requirements *do* vary, below is a basic list and description of graduate application requirements.

1. GRE general scores.

Most MA and PhD programs still require GRE general scores be sent to them. Additionally, some programs require that students meet a minimum GRE score. It is important to know any minimum score requirements in advance, to see whether you would be considered competitive.

2. GRE subject test in literature.

Many schools are starting to steer away from this additional requirement, but there are still *some* schools that do require students to take an additional GRE in literature exam.

3. A polished, error-free writing sample of 10-25 pages.

If you are applying to an MA program, you will be asked for a shorter writing sample of 10-15 pages. If you are applying to a PhD program, you will likely be asked for a longer sample of 15-25 pages. In either case, the writing sample should be your best work and should represent your potential to succeed in graduate school. It should be error-free and very polished.

4. Statement of Purpose / Intellectual Statement / Research Statement

Almost all programs require a concise statement, of roughly 1,000 words, that details your objectives for their graduate program. Most programs will specify what they want that statement to include. It is important to adhere to all word count and content requirements. One example from Syracuse University, required for both their MA and PhD programs, is listed below.

5. Teaching Statement

Some schools ask that students submit a brief statement of teaching experience or interest. What skills, experiences, or community service can you speak to that would make you a strong writing center tutor or teaching assistant? These schools will offer competitive graduate student funding for on-campus teaching jobs and will use this statement as one indicator of success.

6. All Official Undergraduate Transcripts

You will send all official undergraduate transcripts, including any study abroad experiences.

7. Letters of Recommendation

All graduate programs will require letters of recommendation. Most will ask for three. For a letter of recommendation to be persuasive, your letter writer must make specific reference to your work as support for their claims about you. This means you should provide them with strong examples of written work that you completed in their class, your writing sample, CV, and remind them of extra-curricular activities that may be relevant (such as Harold Frederic, attending the Lunch Hour Series, etc.). If you are a student that actively participates in class, meets with your professors during office hours, or excels at in-class presentations, gently remind your letter writers of these strengths, so that they can consider using those classroom attributes in their letters of recommendation.

* **An example of an “Intellectual Statement” prompt (from Syracuse University):**

In a separate statement of no more than 800 words, outline the intellectual history that informs your decision to pursue graduate study in English. In what historical period(s), body of texts, and/or mode(s) of inquiry are you particularly interested and why? Do you bring any relevant experience, beyond that of a student, to this course of study? What do you plan to do with your degree? Be specific in your responses.

You do **NOT** have to submit a Statement of Purpose in addition to the Intellectual Statement. The Intellectual Statement is to be submitted in lieu of a Statement of Purpose.

So in other words, **M.A. & Ph.D. applicants submit the Intellectual Statements instead of a Statement of Purpose.**