

GRADUATE ADMISSION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS)

UCLA Chicana and Chicano Studies Graduate Program

Updated August 2016

FAQ

➤ **What is the application deadline?**

The online application (<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/admissions/applicat.htm>) is due on December 15th. Supporting materials should arrive on or before December 15th or the following Monday after if December 15th is on a weekend.

➤ **Where should I send my supporting materials?**

Mail to César E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Attn.: Graduate Admission, UCLA, 7349 Bunche Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1559. If you use expedited services, e.g., Fedex, omit the Box number.

➤ **What are the Institution and Department codes for the GRE and TOEFL tests?**

The institution code for UCLA for the GRE is 4837, the department code is 626. The institution code for UCLA for the TOEFL is 4837 and the department code is 696.

➤ **Can I send my supporting materials before I submit the online application?**

Yes.

➤ **Is it a problem if one or two items of my supporting materials (e.g., a recommendation letter) arrive after the deadline?**

You should carefully plan the timing of your application, including making sure that supporting materials arrive by the December 15th deadline. If one letter is missing, your application may be reviewed but still considered incomplete until we receive the third letter. All other supporting materials must be in our possession by the deadline (December 15th) for your application to be considered.

➤ **Can I send more than three letters?**

Yes, but note that quantity does not substitute for quality and 3 letters will suffice.

➤ **How long should my writing sample be?**

A minimum of 10 pages and a maximum of 20-25 pages, double-spaced, typed.

➤ **What kind of writing sample would be best?**

The faculty uses the writing sample to assess your writing skills, analytical ability, and creativity. You should pick a piece of writing that best reflects your ability.

➤ **What do I do if I do not have a writing sample?**

You must write an academic essay on a topic of your choice of at least ten pages double-spaced, typed.

- **Can I send a co-authored paper?**
No.
- **Can I send more than one writing sample?**
Yes, but no more than two and should not exceed 35 pages both together.
- **When are decisions made?**
Usually by the middle to the end of February. The department will notify you unofficially via email a few days after decisions have been made. Official notifications from the UCLA Graduate Division Admissions Office via email notification will follow.
- **What is the Minimum GPA?**
3.0
- **Which GPA should I report on the application?**
Compute your GPA for your junior and senior year, i.e., the last 60 semester units, or last 90 quarter units, completed in undergraduate status. Use a four-point system (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1). Ignore pluses and minuses, unless the grade points are clearly stated on your transcript. If your school uses another system, and it cannot be converted to a four point GPA, leave the GPA boxes blank. This applies in particular to most international institutions. We will confirm and calculate your GPA when we receive your transcripts.
- **What parts of the application materials are given more weight?**
We do not weigh any part of the individual application items nor do we use formulas to make decisions. All applications will be reviewed and rated by the established criteria and standards. We use a holistic approach to arrive at decisions.
- **Can the application fee be waived and if so how do I obtain a waiver?**
Yes, the fee may be waived for two types of applicants. If you are a current McNair Scholar or are currently receiving need-based financial aid, you can apply for a waiver of the application fee. In those cases, you must mail a letter from the McNair Director and/or your Financial Aid Office verifying your status and stating that payment of the fee would be a financial hardship. The request for a waiver should be sent directly to the Graduate Division's Admissions Office, Box 951428, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1428. International applicants are not eligible for fee waivers or deferred payment of the application fee. Please note that without an approved waiver or the application fee payment, Graduate Division will not release your application to the department.
- **Do you accept applications for winter and/or spring admission?**
No. We only review applications once a year for fall admission.
- **Will you accept/consider students who did not major in Chicana and Chicano Studies?**
Yes.

- **Can I apply if I only want to get the M.A. degree?**
No. Our highly selective graduate program is devoted only to persons who seek the Ph.D. degree. We admit students who aspire to careers in research and university-level teaching. The master's degree is earned as part of the process of completing the requirements for the Ph.D.
- **Do I have to have an M.A. or M.S. degree before I can apply for your Ph.D. program?**
No.
- **Can I pursue the doctoral degree without pursuing the M.A. degree from UCLA?**
No. Our students must complete the M.A. as part of the requirements for the Ph.D. If you have an M.A. degree in Chicana and Chicano Studies from another institution, please read the next question and answer.
- **Will I have to get another M.A. degree or repeat M.A. requirements if I already have an M.A. degree?**
If you already have a master's degree from another institution, you must submit your Master's thesis once admitted to the program. Our Graduate Committee will evaluate your work to determine whether or not it fulfills the requirements for a Master's thesis in our department. If your Master's thesis is deemed satisfactory, you will not be required to write a new M.A. thesis. However, students entering the Ph.D. program with an approved M.A. thesis are expected to take a minimum of 44 units (regularly 11 courses) necessary to provide more depth to the student's preparation in the field and research agenda. These 44 units include our three core graduate courses, plus one course in each area of study (16 units), one of which must be a methodology course. (See <https://grad.ucla.edu/gasaa/pgmrq/chicano.asp>)
- **Will my previous M.A. course work count?**
If you completed and received your M.A. degree, please see the previous answer. If you have taken graduate courses but did not complete your M.A. degree, you can petition to transfer two courses or 8 units towards your UCLA program.
- **Is there a preference for students with masters over those with bachelor degrees?**
No. Admission is based on the above-mentioned criteria, and a holistic judgment of the potential for graduate work.
- **How can I fulfill the Foreign Language Requirement?**
In practical terms, the purpose of the Spanish language requirement is to prepare students to read literary and critical works in Spanish, be able to carry out research on the Mexican-and other Latin American- origin populations in this country, and participate in the bilingual communities of scholars in the U.S., Mexico and other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Students are required to satisfy the language requirement in one of the following ways: 1) documenting satisfactory completion of two full years of coursework in Spanish at the college level; or 2) passing a language proficiency examination deemed appropriate by the department. It is recommended that this requirement be met in the first year of graduate work.

- **Do you give preference to California residents in admission and awards?**
No.

- **How does resident status affect my finances?** California residents pay only in-state registration fees. U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are not California residents must pay non-resident tuition in the first year, in addition to out-of-state registration fees. However, they can be reclassified as California residents for tuition purposes after the first year and if approved, will no longer be charged nonresident tuition. For more information about this, go to: <http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/residence/> International students cannot become California residents for tuition purposes and must continue to pay non-resident tuition until they advance to Ph.D. candidacy (i.e., completed all course and program requirements except the dissertation). Thereafter, there will be a 100% reduction of non-resident tuition (but not of registration fees) for a total of three years.

- **What makes an applicant competitive in the selection process?**
The ideal applicant ranks uniformly high on all indicators (recommendations from faculty, undergraduate work, the quality of written work, the persuasiveness of the statement of purpose, and grade point average), and shows exceptional promise of success in our program and as a future scholar and public intellectual. Decisions are based on merit, promise, and fit with the program.

- **Do I need to contact a faculty member to sponsor or support my application?**
No. It would be important for you to be familiar with the department faculty and their scholarly interests, however, to better gauge your interests and fit with the program.

- **Can I pursue interest X in your program?**
The research interests and publications by our faculty, as listed on our web site, will give you an idea as to which specialties are well represented in our department. Please read through the list of faculty and their interests to get a sense of the work being done in the department. How much financial support is expected for incoming students? Contingent on available funding, award offers will typically be for five years at varying levels of support that include one or two years of fellowship (stipend, fees, and non-resident tuition for the first year if needed) and two years of teaching assistantships (with the exceptional possibility of a third year).

- **How is funding allocated?**
All students who are admitted are considered for department-funded awards and campus-wide fellowship programs for which they are eligible and/or for which they applied. Decisions are made based on merit and need. Contingent on available funding, award offers will typically be for a maximum of four years at varying levels of support that include one or two years of fellowship (stipend, tuition and fees) and two years of teaching assistantships (with the exceptional possibility of a third year). Please see Graduate Student Financial Support for more information (<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/asis/entsup/finsup.htm>).

➤ **Are all students funded?**

The department's current goal is to provide some funding to all entering students. However, this may be limited by the varying resources obtained and/or received by the department for graduate student support.

➤ **Are there opportunities to teach at the University?**

Most of our students will have an opportunity to be a teaching assistant (TA) within the department as part of their graduate education. TAs are part of our award packages. A typical award offer to newly admitted students includes two years of assistantship which generally means a TAship. Continuing students who have used up their guaranteed awards can apply annually for TAships though appointments in the TA title is limited to twelve quarters. What is expected of teaching assistants in your department? Teaching assistants in our department are appointed at 25% or 50% time and are expected, on average, to spend 10 or 20 hours, respectively, per week during the quarter carrying out their TA responsibilities. These responsibilities include attending the lectures of the course to which they are assigned, holding discussion sections with an average section enrollment of 25 students, grading papers and exams, and other duties as determined by the needs of the course and the instructor.

➤ **Are there opportunities for research assistantships?**

Yes. Some professors have funding that allows them to employ research assistants. Our graduate students can also explore opportunities with faculty in other departments or research units on campus, including the Chicano Studies Research Center. There is no central job bulletin board for open research assistant positions. Students interested in research assistantships should inquire with individual faculty and campus research centers directly. Graduate workstudy is also available.

➤ **Are registration fees and/or tuition waived for TAs or RAs?**

Employment as TAs, Graduate Student Researchers (GSRs=research assistants), or Readers for 10 hours a week or more (25% time or more) entitles students to receive a reduction of registration fees, called fee remission benefits. This applies equally to domestic and international students. Fee remission benefits include payment of the educational and registration fees as well as the mandatory health insurance premiums. Students are responsible for paying the miscellaneous fees. GSRs employed at 45-50% time are also eligible for non-resident tuition remission benefits, i.e., full payment of non-resident tuition. Non-resident tuition remission is not available to TAs.

➤ **Can I work full-time while pursuing graduate studies?** Graduate students are allowed to work no more than 50% time on campus or the equivalent of 20 hours per week. Appointments in academic apprentice personnel titles (TAs, GSRs) cannot exceed 18 quarters of which no more than 12 quarters can be as a TA. We do not recommend that our students work full-time off campus. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to work fulltime and simultaneously attend classes and complete course work.

➤ **Where do your graduate students live?**

Entering students will be given priority for spaces in the Weyburn Terrace Housing Complex. The department has a limited number of guaranteed spaces each year and can nominate entering students for them. After the first two years, most graduate students move to off-campus rentals within 5-7 miles from campus. UCLA also has other off-campus apartment complexes for single students and students with families for which graduate students can apply on a first-come, first served basis. For more information on UCLA apartments go to: www.housing.ucla.edu This site has a link to UCLA's Community Housing Office (<http://www.cho.ucla.edu>) that offers listings of private off-campus housing, including rental vacancies and posted roommate notices and provides useful general information about neighborhoods.