

University of Chicago Writing Program

OPPORTUNITY APPLICATION PACKET 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

Application Deadline: Friday, April 12th at 2:00pm CST

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We hire graduate students from all divisions and programs,
to teach students from all divisions and programs.

NB: We hire graduate students who are covered by the terms of their Pedagogical Teaching Plans and those who are not covered by said plans. Please check with your department to see if Writing Program positions are covered by the terms of your Pedagogical Teaching Plan. Some departments have asked students who want to teach outside their Pedagogical Teaching Plans to follow departmental policies for accepting opportunities outside their departments. Please check with your department to see if it has developed such a policy.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS - BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

Application Deadline: Friday, April 12th at 2:00pm CST

We offer several teaching positions for graduate students:

1. **Lectors** are graduate students teaching as course assistants in [our advanced writing course ENGL 13000/33000: Academic and Professional Writing \(a.k.a. Little Red Schoolhouse\)](#). Lectors typically work one or two quarters a year, depending on scheduling and course demand. Lectors may also have opportunities to work in summer quarter. To work as a Lector, you must complete our Lector training course in Summer 2024 or Autumn 2024. This course may be taken for course credit (ENGL 50300). After you have taught as a Lector, you are automatically eligible to teach as a Lector in other courses.
2. **Writing Tutors** are graduate students who work individually with students in the College Core sequences. The Writing Tutor positions are staffed on a quarterly basis, the position is ordinarily renewable each quarter, as we hire Writing Tutors to work in Autumn and Winter quarters, with limited shifts available in Spring quarters. Writing Tutors will participate in a training course in Summer 2024. Writing Tutor positions do not count toward students' Pedagogical Teaching Plans.

For more information about the Lector and Writing Tutor positions, see our [Teaching Opportunities for Graduate Students webpage](#).

General Qualifications

- A. To apply to teach as a Lector or Writing Tutor, you must in most cases be enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Chicago. You do not need to be in advanced residency to apply and to work in these positions.

We ask all graduate students to check with their departments to determine whether the Lector position will count toward their Pedagogical Teaching Plan, and whether they are eligible to teach with the Writing Program outside of their Pedagogical Teaching Plan (if applicable).

- B. Current MAPH, MAPSS, and CIR applicants are an exception to our general qualifications about current enrollment in a degree program by special arrangement. We welcome your application!
- C. MAPSS and MAPH applicants who are incoming students must receive permission from their graduate departments prior to applying for 2024-25 Writing Program positions.
- D. **We welcome applicants from throughout the University.** You do not need prior experience teaching writing; you do not need to be in a literature department; you do not need to have been an undergraduate major in rhetoric, composition, or literary studies. You do not need to be a native English speaker.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS & PROCEDURE

The application requires the following six components:

1. **One Letter of Recommendation**

The letter of recommendation should be from someone familiar with your teaching or your potential as a teacher. It's less important to get a letter from someone who can speak to the quality of your scholarly work than it is to get a letter evaluating the way you interact in a classroom.

If you have no previous teaching experience, we suggest you ask someone who has seen you participate in a class, seminar, or workshop. The letter does not have to be from a member of the University of Chicago faculty, so if you have teaching experience at another institution, a letter from a faculty member there may be best. A second letter of recommendation is permitted, but not at all required.

Please ask your recommendation writer to send the letter by email to **writing-program@uchicago.edu** by the application deadline. Recommendations may not be accepted after **Monday, April 15th at 5:00pm CST**.

You will submit all your other materials (below) to us on the Writing Program website by the application deadline. Prepare the five materials below **before** you start submitting them on our website, as they must be submitted at the same time.

2. **Personal Statement and Cover Sheet**

In 1-2 pages (single-spaced), please let us know about your writing and revision experiences, your approach to writing, and/or anything else you think relevant to the work of supporting and teaching student writers. The cover sheet is included in this packet.

3. **Resumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

A resumé or CV detailing your education and teaching experience.

4. **Writing Sample and Cover Sheet**

7-10 pages (double-spaced). You are welcome to submit a *portion* of a longer paper. Do **NOT** put your name on this. The cover sheet is included in this packet.

5. **Sample Student Paper Comment**

The paper itself is included in this packet. Do **NOT** put your name on this. If Microsoft Word automatically inserts your name anywhere in the file, rest assured that we will take care to anonymize it before distributing the application for review.

You may take up to an hour to comment on the paper, using any combination of end comments and marginal comments that you think appropriate. We ask you to pretend you're writing to the *author* of the paper, *not* to us. We're interested in how you engage with the writer, and the way you use the paper comment as an opportunity to teach the writer something about writing.

[When you have all of these items assembled and you are ready to fill out the application form, you may do so here.](#)

FORMS FOR APPLICATION MATERIALS BELOW

Cover Sheet One: Personal Statement Cover Sheet

Please create a copy of this cover sheet as a separate Word file and submit it with your other application materials.

Your first name:	Your last name:	Your email:

Recommender's name and email:

Personal Statement

In 1-2 pages (single-spaced), let us know about your writing and revision experiences, your approach to writing, and/or anything else you think relevant to the work of supporting and teaching student writers. You may paste your statement below or include it in a separate document.

Cover Sheet Two: Cover Sheet for Writing Sample

Office Use Only: Application number _____

Please paste this cover sheet to the beginning of your writing sample. To allow us to judge this portion of your application anonymously, **please do not include your name on this cover sheet or the writing sample itself.**

1. Is your submission (part of) a:

__dissertation chapter __journal article __conference paper

__ paper for coursework

__ other: _____

2. Please provide a brief synopsis of the piece you have submitted: what is your overall argument, and/or what are the main points that you're trying to communicate to your readers?

3. Is this an excerpt of a larger project? If so, how does it fit into the larger project?

4. Who are your intended readers? What disciplines are you writing for, and what might your imagined audiences care about? [For example: perhaps you're writing for a Sociology audience, but also for a more interdisciplinary audience of scholars interested in urban studies.]

5. What about the piece are you most happy with?

6. Few writers believe their writing is perfect. You may feel that a central concept eluded description, or that a key paragraph escaped all bounds of rational structure, or that a sensitive issue might not have been framed in the best possible way. In a paragraph or less, please tell us what about this piece gave you the most difficulty as a writer.

Sample Student Paper for Commenting

For this portion of the application, we ask you to spend **no more than 80 minutes** to read the sample student paper below and perform two kinds of tasks, detailed below.

Context for this paper: Your student, Jamie, has sent the following draft to you and would like feedback. Don't feel that you need to demonstrate to us everything you know about writing; likewise, this is not a copyediting test. We are more interested in what you would do to support this student's growth as a writer.

Task 1: Diagnosing the Paper for Us.

After reading the sample paper, use the template below to list *for us* two writing skills that you believe the student has already mastered fairly well and two to three writing issues that you believe should be priorities for this student over the course of the quarter. Use the template provided below and limit yourself to about 50 words per item. Please spend no more than 20 minutes on Task 1.

Positive Writing Skills the Student Displayed	Writing Issues the Student Should Work On
1.	1.
2.	2.
	3.

Task 2: Write a Paper Comment to the Student. Write a fairly long, detailed comment meant for the student writer, Ellen, whose paper you will find below. Your feedback should be about 3/4s of a page long (single-spaced). You are welcome to include bubble comments as part of your feedback.

Please use your feedback as an occasion to teach the student one or at most two writing skills you believe will help the student address a writing issue you identified in Task 1. (Don't forget, the student won't have access to what you've written for us in Task 1. Anything you want the student to understand about their writing will have to be explained in the paper comment.)

Ellen's paper is a memo in which she is trying to convince a group with power that they ought to use that power to address a specific problem. The group that this student is seeking to convince is the Cape Cod Commission, which is composed of Officers of the Natural Resources and Land Protection Program for Cape Cod. Ellen has shared the memo with you and has asked you for feedback on her draft.

While your comment should keep in mind that this is a draft that can be revised, your comment should, at the same time, teach the student something about writing that they can use in future papers. Please spend no more than 60 minutes on Task 2.

Submit Comment 1 and 2 as one Word document.

Ellen
Memo Assignment

Who can say when a building is too tall? In Cape Cod, Massachusetts, the Cape Cod Commission has tried to make this distinction, albeit unsuccessfully. In an effort to preserve the visual character of the Cape, the Commission has limited the heights of various residential and commercial structures. In particular, the Commission has sought to restrict the construction of structures designed to serve the growing market for wireless communications. These structures, known as personal wireless facilities, can serve more customers as their heights increase. The Commission argues that, absent restriction, innumerable tall buildings will be constructed, destroying beautiful ocean views and natural landscape along the Cape. However, the Commission fails to realize that while these restrictions benefit some, they may hurt others. That is, building guidelines may impose unnecessary costs on wireless service providers, consumers, and taxpayers, and as such hinder social efficiency. Rather than limit building construction, the Commission should allow wireless service providers to negotiate privately with the inhabitants of the neighborhoods in which they plan to build. This ensures that the needs of the involved parties are taken into account and that the efficient number of personal wireless facilities is constructed at the lowest cost to society.

Although removing the Commission from such negotiations might sound unconventional, it actually maximizes the total value that society receives from the construction of wireless service facilities at the lowest possible cost. We can understand this using basic economic principles established by Nobel Laureate, Ronald Coase. According to Coase, private parties will achieve socially efficient outcomes (i.e. outcomes that maximize societal gains at the lowest possible cost) when property rights are well-defined and the costs of negotiating are low.

In the case of personal wireless facilities, there are two main parties, the wireless service provider and the owner of the land on which the structure is to be built. When the wireless service provider constructs a new building, it imposes a cost on the landowner by obstructing views and destroying the natural landscape. Under Coasean logic, the service provider and the landowner will bargain privately and achieve the socially efficient outcome given that property rights are well-defined and negotiation costs are low. In the case of a private landowner and a wireless service provider, negotiation costs reflect how costly it is for the parties to transact privately. That is, how much time and trouble will it take for them to get together and discuss the problem? Will it be hard for them to agree on a negotiation strategy? Will they be able to enforce the outcomes of their negotiations? In this scenario, the landowner and service provider should be able to negotiate at a low cost because two, easily identifiable parties are involved. As stated above, the second condition of Coase's Theorem deals with property rights. Property rights between the landowner and the wireless service provider are well-defined because both parties know that the landowner has the initial right to the land.

With low negotiating costs and well defined property rights, the Cape Cod Commission does not need to intervene in the transactions of the landowner and the service provider. The two parties will achieve social efficiency through private transactions. That is, if the service provider values the construction project more than the landowner values his view and the natural landscape, the service provider will pay the landowner for the property right to the land. In this way, the service provider will retain the value of the project and the landowner will be as well off as he would have been had the structure never been built. Conversely, if the landowner values his land without the structure more than the service provider values the new facility, the facility will not be built.

If the Cape Cod Commission intervenes and creates guidelines for the construction of new wireless facilities, both parties (the provider and the landowner) will suffer new costs. The Commission may underestimate or overestimate the amount that the service providers should pay landowners for property rights. Further, they may specify a maximum building height that is either too high or too low. This could result in too many new construction projects that destroy the natural landscape more than is necessary. On the contrary, it could lead to too few facilities that cannot serve the growing market for

wireless services. Either way, the total social benefits will be lower than they would have been had the parties been allowed to negotiate privately.

DEADLINES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The Spring 2024 application **deadline** is **Friday, April 12th at 2:00pm CST.**

Once we receive your application, it will be assigned a number, and will be identified to the application readers only by that number. The writing sample and paper comment will be rated without any knowledge of who you are. Each application will be read by two people within the Writing Program.

[For more information about our open teaching opportunities, please click here.](#)

or contact us at **writing-program@uchicago.edu**.

Interested in hearing more about these teaching opportunities?

Have questions about the application?

Eager for details about the pedagogical training and support that new hires receive?

We welcome you to stop by our Open Houses!

We will be hosting them on Monday, April 1st at 3:30pm and Tuesday, April 9th at 4:00pm in Stuart Hall 330. Stuart Hall 330 is accessible via the 3rd floor of Harper Memorial Library, east of the Harper Café.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF WRITING PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Lector: Academic & Professional Writing

(A.K.A. THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE OR "LRS")

Position Description.

The Little Red Schoolhouse is a course in advanced writing for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. At the undergraduate level, it addresses the needs of third and fourth-year students who are preparing for advanced writing challenges, including writing a B.A. thesis, applying to graduate school, and applying to professional school. The course meets twice weekly (T/Th, 2:00-3:20pm). Each week students attend one lecture given by the LRS faculty, and one Lector-run writing seminar with no more than 7 students. The seminar discussions focus on students' weekly writing assignments. Lector responsibilities include preparing for and leading the seminar discussions, reading and commenting on all weekly papers, and recommending both paper and course grades. Lectors may also hold occasional office hours and meet with students to discuss individual problems.

Commitment:

1. Attending one lecture each week
2. Preparing for and leading one writing seminar each week
3. Submitting written comments for 7 papers each week

Training. Lectors are required to attend a quarter-long training course in Summer or Autumn Quarter. This course may be taken for credit (ENGL 50300). In addition, during their first quarters of work, Lectors are required to attend the weekly lectures with their students.

Compensation. In 2023-24, graduate student Lectors earn a base salary of \$3,000 per quarter, provided they are permitted by their departments to work as Lectors. We ask all graduate students to check with their departments to determine whether Lector positions will count toward their Pedagogical Teaching Plan, and/or whether they are eligible to teach with the Writing Program outside of their Pedagogical Teaching Plan (if applicable).

In 2023-24, Lectors who have recently graduated from their program earn a base salary of \$3,500 per quarter.

Further Opportunities. Once you have worked as a Lector and received satisfactory evaluations from the Writing Program and from your students, you may continue working as a Lector at either the undergraduate or graduate level. You may also work as a Writing Tutor. You will not need to reapply to the Writing Program to obtain these positions.

Special Qualifications. The least important qualification is prior experience or an extensive background in teaching English. We have found that the most important qualifications are an analytical mind and the ability to work with undergraduates in a friendly and courteous way. About two-thirds of the Lectors selected regularly come from outside the Humanities Division.

Term of Appointment: Autumn 2024, Winter 2025 and/or Spring 2025; possible positions for Summer 2025. Lectors are appointed quarterly, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.

College Core Writing Tutors

Position Description.

Writing Tutors provide writing support on a one-on-one basis to writers in the Common Core sequences. They're not copyeditors or proofreaders; instead, Writing Tutors work with writers on individual papers in order to help improve writers' overall skills in academic argumentation and structure.

Writing Tutors can:

- Help writers brainstorm on how to get started on a paper or how to best approach a paper assignment or prompt, particularly in terms of how to construct an argument.
- Read a full or partial draft of a paper and comment on its overall argumentation (use of textual evidence, logical flow of argument, persuasive placement of points, etc.).
- Read a full or partial draft of a paper and comment on its organization, both globally and at the paragraph level.
- Make suggestions for how to revise a paper for greater coherence, clarity, and persuasiveness of argument.

Writing Tutors can work one to three 4-hour shifts per week in the Arley D. Cathey North Reading Room. Shifts are offered in the afternoons and evenings, Sundays through Fridays from Week 3 through Finals Week. Tutoring may also occur over Zoom.

Commitment:

1. Teach writing on a one-on-one basis to College Core students during a 4-hour shift each week for 9 weeks.

Training. Writing Tutors are required to attend a training course in Summer 2024. This course may be taken for credit (ENGL 50300). Writing Tutors also attend brief staff meetings 1-2 times each quarter.

Compensation. The beginning salary for Writing Tutors is \$17.00 per hour. Writing Tutors receive a \$0.50 per hour raise for each quarter they continue to work, up to \$23.00 per hour. The Writing Tutor position is not eligible for tuition remission, and does not count toward students' Pedagogical Teaching Plans.

Term of Appointment. Autumn 2024 and/or Winter 2025, with more limited availability in Spring 2025. Writing Tutors are appointed quarterly, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.