

Tips on Applying to the MA Program

Grades

An admission average of 75% based on grades from the last two years of study is the general minimum requirement for consideration. However, the adjudication of applications is competitive and there are only so many spots available in any given year, so there is no grade average that in itself guarantees admission.

Statement of Intent/Interest

The Admissions Committee reads these statements carefully to determine how prepared an applicant is for graduate studies. This statement, which outlines the kind of work you would like to undertake in a Major Research Paper or Thesis, is just as important to the application as high grades and strong letters of reference. Here are a few pointers on writing a successful statement of intent:

- Be specific. An applicant who says that she “enjoys literature and would like to read more” is not going to appear nearly as focussed and self-guided as an applicant who states that she is interested in exploring the significance of walking in Jane Austen’s novel *Mansfield Park*, or what role race has played in American science fiction book awards in the past fifty years.
- Show an awareness of the critical conversation you wish to participate in. Outlines of a particular historical context or theoretical approach that is important to your proposed research are welcome. An applicant who can name and cite critical thinkers and works with whom/which she wishes to engage demonstrates that she has already acquainted herself with some of the relevant critical debates and can knowledgeably imagine herself assuming a part in them. In other words, she shows herself to be an independent learner with an understanding of what research entails.
- Make sure your project is manageable. The MRP is typically 35 pages long, so an applicant who states his intention to discuss eleven different large novels, or to delineate and interconnect every possible reading of *Othello*, has clearly not thought about the necessary limitations.
- You don’t need to know what you’ll find, but you should have definite questions that you want to explore. In fact, clearly articulating those questions is what we’re looking for! They help us decide how focussed your curiosity is, how informed you’ve become, and how prepared you are for graduate work.
- Give some sense of why you want to study at Brock. If possible, connect your proposed research with the research interests of the department – you can find out about those on the department website. (Note: you don’t need to have a supervisor prior to applying. We arrange that in the first term. However, you can express interest in working with a particular scholar, or mention that you have been in contact with one of our department

members to discuss your research ideas.) We are interested to hear why ours is the right program for you and your research.

Writing Sample

Show us writing that reflects your best skills: it's best to send an academic essay from a senior-level English class, or some equivalent.

External Funding

Applicants who are applying or intend to apply for external funding (such as SSHRC or OGS) to support their studies should make this clear in their application, which is strengthened by that assertion.