

# UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO WRITING PROGRAM

## JOB APPLICATION PACKET 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021 AT 12PM CST**

### Contents of this packet

Jobs Available to Graduate Students - Brief Descriptions _____	2
Application Procedure: Due Friday, April 23, 2021 at 12pm CST _____	3
<b>FORMS FOR APPLICATION MATERIALS</b> _____	4
Cover Sheet One: Cover Sheet for Personal Statement _____	4
Cover Sheet Two: Cover Sheet for Writing Sample _____	5
<b>Deadlines and Further Information</b> _____	11
<b>Detailed Descriptions of Writing Program Jobs</b> _____	12
Lector: Academic & Professional Writing _____	12
Writing Intern: Common Core Humanities _____	13
Common Core Writing Tutors _____	14

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 GAI (the Graduate Aid Initiative) **and** those who are **not** covered by GAI. If you are covered by the terms of GAI, please check with your department to see if it has any employment policies specific to GAI students. Some departments have asked their students in GAI funding to follow departmental policies for using GAI points and for accepting jobs outside their departments. Please check with your department to see if it has developed such a policy.

## APPLICATIONS FOR 2021-22 ACADEMIC YEAR JOBS AVAILABLE TO GRADUATE STUDENTS - BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS

**Application Deadline: Friday, April 23, 2021 at 12pm CST**

We offer several teaching positions for graduate students:

1. **Writing Interns in the Humanities Core** are graduate students who assist faculty by providing writing instruction in first-year Humanities Common Core courses. Interns typically work for two or three quarters of an academic year, depending on scheduling and course demand. These appointments are ordinarily renewable. To work as an Intern you must complete a training course given in Spring 2020 or Summer 2020. The training course is available for credit if you wish (HUMA 50000).
2. **Lectors** are graduate students teaching in the Advanced Professional Writing course (a.k.a. Little Red Schoolhouse, ENGL 13000/33000). 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 a training course in Autumn 2020. 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 Humanities Writing Intern, or as a Lector in other courses.
3. **Writing Tutors** are graduate students who work individually with students in the Common Core sequences. The Writing Tutor appointment is for one quarter and it is ordinarily renewable each quarter. Writing Tutors will participate in a training course in Spring or Summer 2020. After completing their training, Writing Tutors may also be eligible to work as Humanities Writing Interns. Tutors do not accrue GAI teaching points.

For more information about the Lector, Writing Intern and Writing Tutor positions, see [writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs](https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs)

### General Qualifications

- A. To teach as a Lector or a Writing Intern, you must in most cases be enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago. Students in the fifth year of Ph.D. study or beyond may be eligible for tuition grants. You need not be in advanced residency to apply and to work in these jobs.
- B. To teach as a Writing Tutor, you must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Chicago.

*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. **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 Friday, February 12<sup>th</sup>.

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. 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:

<https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs/apply>

## **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.

<b>Your first name:</b>	<b>Your last name:</b>	<b>Your email:</b>

<b>Recommender's name and email:</b>

### **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. 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 (about 3/4s of a page, single-spaced) meant for the student writer, Jamie. You're welcome to include bubble comments as part of your feedback to the student. For this comment, use the paper 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.)

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 doc.**

-----

## “The Laughing Girl” and the Evolution of Desire and Innocence

“The Laughing Girl” in Pu Songling’s *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* chronicles the development of a young man’s relationship with a strange girl who cannot stop laughing. The young man, Wang, is sick with love after just observing this girl walk through the street. Weeks later he ventures into the hillside and stops to admire a lush garden. Soon after he sits down, a beautiful voice emanates from within. To Wang’s delight, the voice belongs to girl he saw in the street, Yingning. Pu Songling describes this scene in which Wang first recognizes Yingning with vivid imagery related to lushness and fertility that creates a sense of desire and longing. This imagery is applied to Yingning, characterizing her as innocent and fragile. This initial characterization of Wang as yearning and Yingning as a fragile object of that desire sets the precedent for the couple’s interactions throughout their entire relationship.

Pu Songling begins by describing the setting in which Wang first recognizes the girl. Because the couple’s interaction takes place in a garden, this description is inherently grounded in nature. This setting is precisely described in the first sentence of the passage, which stands out for its long redundant structure. It begins with a list of prepositional phrases such as “[b]efore one of the cottages” and “situated toward the northern end of the hamlet” that give insight into the setting’s physical location while withholding any description of the place itself. Pu Songling’s use of precise directional words such as “northern” creates a contrast between the setting’s unambiguous location and its undisclosed characteristics. These clauses create a sense of longing because they introduce the setting while failing to depict it, leaving a desire for more information.

The fourth clause of the first sentence resolves this conflict by introducing the garden as a fertile, plentiful setting. It contains “a stand of weeping willows” and an orchard “flourishing” with “peach and apricot”. The repeated soft “w” followed by a vowel sound in the alliterative phrase “weeping willow” creates a calm mood. This calmness is evident in the fact that “delicate fronds of bamboo” exist peacefully in the garden. By describing the bamboo as delicate, Pu Songling suggests the garden is a calm place, conducive to growing fragile life. Moreover, the semantics of the phrase “weeping willow” evoke an image of luxuriant greenness, while lush diction such as “flourishing” connotes a sense of ripeness and plenty. These connotations are applied to the peach and apricot and generate the image of bursting

fruit, which characterizes the fruits as symbols of fertility. Thus, the setting in which Wang first recognizes Yingming is inextricably sexual; however, all Wang can do is yearn as he does not reside “inside the cottage garden’s walls”.

Despite his desire, Wang deliberately isolates himself from the garden and instead chooses to sit on a “smooth boulder” to admire the “private garden” without entering. The tactile description “smooth” implies a sense of undisturbed stillness and suggests Wang will be comfortable while he sits to admire the isolated orchard and all its contents. In effect, this image contributes to the scene’s calm mood. Meanwhile, the notion of a private garden generates a sense of intimacy. The garden is a private, isolated place; however, Wang clearly does not feel welcome, so he is excluded from this intimacy. It is only after Pu Songling creates this calm, intimate mood within the orchard that he presents the auditory imagery of “a girl’s voice from within.”

The voice is Yingning’s, and Pu Songling moves on to characterize this girl by referring to images already mentioned when describing the garden, suggesting Yingning is intrinsically a part of the intimate, private place Wang is observing. Her voice is described as “delicate”, “tender”, and “vibrant with feeling”. The word delicate refers back to the “delicate fronds of bamboo” in the orchard. This description suggests the garden is a place conducive to growing delicate life and implies Yingming, herself is a fragile creature that grew out of the garden. Moreover, the fact that Pu Songling chose to describe Yingning’s voice with gentle diction such as “delicate” and “tender” suggests he is characterizing her as fragile and innocent, like the greenery in the garden. The vibrancy in her voice conveys a sense of energy and youth, characteristic of a bird song, like the one heard before she appeared. By attributing so many of the garden’s description to Yingning and positioning her in the intimate private garden, Pu Songling extends Wang’s feeling of desire to Yingning herself.

As she moves to leave the garden, however, she holds “a sprig of apricot-blossom in her hand.” The fact that Yingning holds these symbols of ripeness and fertility as she approaches Wang indicates a loss of the innocence she possesses as a part of the garden. As she leaves the sanctuary that nurtures fragility and innocence, she attains symbols of sexual maturity. Simultaneously, she approaches the person who is teeming with desire, suggesting the beginning of a relationship.

This entire description of Yingning and the garden is presented using passive voice. Pu Songling specifically writes that the orchard “could be seen” from Wang’s position outside the garden. This use of the passive voice in presenting the garden creates a detached tone with which the narrator describes the setting. The fact that this passage is written in the third person also contributes to the detached tone; however, the imagery clearly comes from Wang’s point of view. Thus, the use of the passive voice implies Wang is not an active part of the garden he is observing. In fact, Wang does not even act in the scene until the third sentence when he “sat down for a moment’s rest on a smooth boulder outside the house”. Even in the transition from passive to active voice Wang remains a passive observer. This scenario implies a sense of longing because Wang is physically and emotionally separated from a list of things that are described positively. Pu Songling’s description of the garden connotes life, intimacy, and fertility, all things Wang seeks in pursuing Yingning. Moreover, Yingning is described as meronym of the garden, so everything he lacks by being isolated from the garden, he cannot attain in Yingning. Wang is clearly an outsider in this scenario because he does not penetrate the intimate private garden.

This scene is central too the story as a whole because it sets the precedent for Wang and Yingning’s relationship. This relationship grows out of Wang’s desire for Yingning because of her innocence and fragility, stereotypical characteristics of femininity exemplified by her characteristic laughing and her love of flowers. Even her maid’s name is “Petal”. Yingning maintains this character for the majority of her relationship with Wang. For example, when Wang suggests his desire to sleep with Yingming, she naively repeats this to her mother, to Wang’s embarrassment. Later in their relationship, after the two have married, Yingning accidentally seduces a neighbor, resulting in an embarrassing court case. Her innocence causes legal troubles and embarrasses her family so much that Yingning decides to stop laughing forever, a shocking character change that contradicts every description of Yingning Pu Songling has presented thus far.

Yingning’s strange identity explains this drastic character change. Although she maintains stereotypically feminine characteristics for most of the story, she is the daughter of a fox-spirit. In other stories such as “Biting a Ghost” and “The Painted Skin”, otherworldly beings such as foxes are portrayed as malicious and gruesome. Even Sang Xiao in “Lotus Fragrance” admits fox spirits “cast spells on men, they make them fall ill, even die” (215). With these

preconceptions in mind, it is only very timidly that a weeping Yingning finally reveals to her husband her true identity. While all previous description has portrayed Yingning as innocent and fragile, it eventually becomes clear her true identity connotes none of those qualities; however Songling withholds this information until the end of the story. Thus, Yingning's sudden transition away from her originally, girlish personality is shocking. The only indication of this secret is the image of Yingning leaving the garden with the peach and apricot blossom, suggesting a loss of innocence. While Yingning maintains her innocence and fragility for most of her and Wang's relationship, this image foreshadows the moment when she must reveal her true identity. With this new knowledge, Yingning's incessant laughter can be viewed as a response too the connotations of being a fox-spirit's daughter, and when it proves to be disadvantageous to her and her family's reputation, she must reveal her true self.

Thus, the scene in which Wang and Yingning first recognize each other is central to the couple's relationship because it introduces this tension between constraint and disinhibition. In the case of the garden scene, description is withheld to create a sense of longing, and when the garden and Yingning are finally portrayed as lush and fertile, Wang is prevented from interacting with what he desires. Similarly, throughout the whole story, Yingning must exercise constraint to maintain her girlish personality and keep her identity a secret until she has no choice but to reveal her true self. In effect, the feelings of desire and longing that arise from this tension in the garden scene prove to be thematically central to the entire story.

## DEADLINES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

The Winter 2021 application **deadline** is **Friday, April 23, 2021 at 12pm 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 positions** and the **application process**, see [writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs](https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs)

or **contact us at [writing-program@uchicago.edu](mailto:writing-program@uchicago.edu)**.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF WRITING PROGRAM JOBS

### Lector: Academic & Professional Writing

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

#### Job 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 **Autumn quarter**. In the past, this course has met on Monday afternoons from 3-5:50 PM. 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 2019-20, Lectors earned a base salary of \$3,000 per quarter. Some advanced graduate students may be eligible for a higher salary as determined by their Dean of Students. Lectors in the fifth year of Ph.D. study and beyond may be eligible for tuition remission in the quarters they work (check with your Division). For each section of LRS a Lector teaches, that Lector accrues 1 teaching point.

**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 Intern in the Humanities Common Core. 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:** Winter and/or Spring 2021; possible positions for Summer 2021. Lectors are appointed quarterly, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.

## Writing Intern: Humanities Core

**Job Description.** The chief responsibility of the Humanities Writing Intern is to provide a writing component in a Humanities Common Core section of approximately **17-19 students**. Graduate students from all divisions and programs are eligible to apply. The Writing Intern assists the University faculty member who teaches the section. The duties of Writing Interns will vary, but generally they read the course texts and attend class, read and comment on student papers, and teach writing in small seminar groups. Writing Interns will often have the opportunity to lead one or two discussions of texts in the main class.

Interns divide their class into seminar groups of no more than 7 students, and meet with each of these seminar groups three times. Each seminar meeting lasts an 80 minutes.

### Commitment:

1. Attending and reading for two class discussions per week
2. Preparing for and leading 9 small group seminars over the quarter
3. Writing paper comments on half of the student papers (split with instructor).

**Training.** Interns must complete a quarter-long training seminar in **Spring or Summer quarter of 2020**. The seminar will require approximately 3 hours per week of class time and 2 hours per week of preparation. The training may be taken for course credit (HUMA 50000).

**Compensation.** In AY 2019-20, Writing Interns received a base salary of \$3,000 per section per quarter. Some advanced graduate students may be eligible for a higher salary as determined by their Dean of Students. Interns in the fifth year of Ph.D. study and beyond may be eligible for tuition remission in the quarters they work (check with your division). For each section of the Core an Intern teaches, that Intern accrues 1 teaching point.

**Further Opportunities.** Once you have worked as an Intern and received satisfactory evaluations from the Writing Program and from your students, you are eligible for re-appointment as an Intern in future quarters. You need not reapply to the Writing Program to be re-appointed as a Writing Intern, and you may take quarters off and return as your availability dictates.

**Special Qualifications.** You do not necessarily need specialized knowledge of the scholarly work done on the texts in a particular Humanities Core Course. Such knowledge helps, of course, but we have found that the most important qualifications are an analytical mind, the ability to read challenging texts carefully, and the ability to work with undergraduates in a friendly and courteous way.

**Term of Appointment.** Typically Autumn and/or Winter quarter, with more limited availability in Spring. Interns are appointed quarterly, and reappointment is contingent on satisfactory performance.

## College Core Writing Tutors

**Job 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.

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 2 through Week 11 (Finals). Tutoring may also occur over Zoom if circumstances require us to do so.

### Commitment:

1. Teach writing on a one-on-one basis to College Core students during a 4-hour shift each week for 10 weeks.

**Training.** In Spring or Summer 2020, Writing Tutors attend the training course provided for Writing Interns (HUMA 50000). Writing Tutors also attend brief staff meetings 1-2 times each quarter.

**Compensation.** The beginning salary for Tutors is \$17.00 per hour. Tutors receive a \$0.50 per hour raise for each quarter they continue to work. The Writing Tutor position is not eligible for tuition remission, and it does not accrue teaching points.

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