Admissions Process FAQ

The UW History Department encourages applicants to the Graduate Program in History to apply also for Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships, if they are eligible. The FLAS is a competitive fellowship intended to support foreign language training and is a means to fund new and continuing UW graduate students. FLAS Fellowships are offered in several modern languages; FLAS recipients receive tuition and a stipend. For information about the FLAS Fellowships, including eligibility requirements, deadlines, and application procedures, go to: http://www.jsis.washington.edu/advise/flas/

The FLAS application process is administered by the UW's Jackson School of International Studies and is entirely separate from History's graduate admissions process. Receipt of a FLAS Fellowship does not guarantee an applicant admission to the History Graduate Program.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of some of the more common questions regarding the application process. Please feel free to contact the History Graduate Office with additional inquiries.

- When are applications due?
- What should I do if one of my letters of recommendation is not submitted in time to arrive by the deadline?
- What are my chances of admission?
- Do you always admit the same number of students in a particular field (US, Asia, Europe, etc.)?
- How important is undergraduate training in history?
- Do you require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?
- What kind of GPA or GRE scores do I need to be competitive?
- Does this mean I should not apply if my scores are lower?
- What do you look for in the writing sample?
- How important is the statement of purpose?
- How important is language training?
- How many offers of admission include offers of funding?
When are applications due?
All applications are due by 5:00pm (PST) on the deadline posted on Graduate Admissions section of the History Department's website. Our online application system is closed to applicants at that time.

What should I do if one of my letters of recommendation is not submitted by the deadline?
The online system for submitting letters of recommendation (only) remains open beyond the application deadline and we accept letters from recommenders for a short period after the application deadline (all of the other components of the graduate application must be submitted by the Department's graduate admissions deadline). File review begins almost immediately after the deadline, so it is important that you request your letters early and follow up with your recommenders as needed. If necessary, we can evaluate your application with two letters, but, obviously that is not necessarily to your benefit.

What are my chances of admission?
In recent years we have received, on average, between 130 and 150 applications (both M.A. and Ph.D.) to our graduate program. We generally admit about 6 new graduate students.

Do you always admit the same number of students in a particular field (US, Asia, Europe, etc.)?
No. We tend to select the strongest applicants regardless of field. In a given year, the applicant pool may be particularly strong in a given field. Competition for admission will be keener in that field, but the number of offers of admission in that field will likely be higher as well.

How important is undergraduate training in history?
Very. The admission committee looks for evidence that an incoming graduate student will adjust rapidly to the demands of graduate study in history. An undergraduate degree in history is a good predictor. Short of that, the committee will look for a degree in an allied field as well as evidence, as revealed by transcripts and the writing sample, of a strong historical component in the curriculum.

What kind of GPA or GRE scores do I need to be competitive?
The median GPA in an incoming class is typically around 3.8. The median GRE verbal score is generally in the 90th percentile or above, and the median analytical score is 5.0-5.5.

Do you require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE)?
Yes, we require the GRE General Examination. Scores from this examination are valid for 5 years from the date of the test.
Does this mean I should not apply if my gpa is lower?
Not at all. The median is the middle, meaning that half of the gpas of admittees were above and half below. Applicants with lower gpas can be competitive, especially if the statement of purpose, writing sample, and letters of recommendation make a compelling case for admission. The Graduate School requires at least a 3.0 gpa (based on the the most recent 60 semester or 90 quarter credits) for applicants for graduate study at the University of Washington.

What do you look for in the writing sample?
We look for evidence of the following: good writing style, an ability to pose interesting historical questions, a sense of how to construct an argument, an understanding of the importance of sources and the ability to use them imaginatively, and a command of the "scholarly apparatus," including notes.

How important is the statement of purpose?
Very. As in the case of the writing sample, we look for style and imagination, but we also look for "closeness of fit." A persuasive statement of purpose leaves the reader with a sense not only for who you are and what you want to do as a historian, but also why it makes sense to pursue your graduate studies at the University of Washington.

How important is language training?
The specific language(s) required for a field is determined by the faculty member who supervises graduate study in that field. An applicant who proposes to work for a degree in Greek, Roman, African, European, Russian, Medieval, Latin American, Middle Eastern, or Asian history is expected to have already begun to acquire a working knowledge of the foreign language(s) essential to research in that field.

How many offers of admission include offers of funding?
All offers of admissions include offers of multi-year funding.