

## Application Instructions and Checklist For the Master of Liberal Arts Entering Class of 2025-2026

Welcome!

This document contains important information regarding the application process for the Master of Liberal Arts Program. Please read the instructions closely.

We are seeking an engaged group of students who look forward to a rigorous program of broad exposure and intellectual growth. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) from an accredited college or university. A minimum GPA of 3.0 from the student's undergraduate institution is expected; however, the admissions committee also considers applicants' postgraduate experiences and their recent accomplishments.

### **GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION**

The application for the MLA Program consists of eight parts:

1. Basic online application data:
  - Biographical and contact information; education and employment history
  - Test Scores
2. Statement of Purpose
3. Curriculum Vitae
4. Intellectual Interest Essay
5. MLA Response Essay
  - Critical writing response and appraisal of an article we send you
6. Transcripts
7. Letters of Recommendation
8. Application Fee
  - The application fee is \$125. Details on paying the fee are given in the online application.

The Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) Program uses Stanford's online graduate application system to collect and process applications.

**You must read and print these instructions before beginning the on-line application.**

Please note that while the MLA Program uses Stanford's online graduate application system, some of the requirements for the MLA Program are different from other degree programs, and some of the information being requested in the online system is not applicable to MLA applicants. It is critical that you follow the instructions in this document.

At any point you may contact our office for assistance. We can be reached at 650-725-0061 or [mlaprogram@stanford.edu](mailto:mlaprogram@stanford.edu).

## **APPLICATION DETAILS**

### **GRE**

The MLA program does NOT require applicants to take the GRE.

### **TOEFL**

TOEFL Scores are required of all applicants whose first language is not English. Tests must have been taken in the last two years. Finding a testing location and scheduling a test can be time consuming, so please plan in advance.

**Exemption:** MLA applicants are exempt from submitting a TOEFL score if they meet one of the following criteria:

- They (will) have a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree in the Humanities from a regionally-accredited college or university in the United States (excluding territories and possessions).
- They (will) have an equivalent degree from a English-language university in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore or the United Kingdom.

Note that the exemption requirement for MLA applicants includes that the degree earned must be in the Humanities, which is more restrictive than is required by other Stanford departments.

### **Statement of Purpose**

- Limit Statement of Purpose to **two pages** in length, double spaced. Include 'Statement of Purpose' in the upper right-hand corner of the document.

The Statement of Purpose should describe succinctly your reasons for applying to the MLA program, what you hope to gain from completing an MLA degree, your preparation for this program, as well as other aspects of your background and interests that may aid the admissions committee in evaluating your aptitude and motivation for graduate study in the liberal arts.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

- Limit CV to **two pages** in length

A summary of your education, professional and volunteer history. Most applicants submit the CV in résumé-format, and this is fine, but do not simply submit your latest job résumé. Be sure to include your accomplishments outside of work – volunteer work, awards, publications, continuing education courses, etc.

### **Intellectual Interest Essay**

- Limit essay to **two pages** in length, double spaced. Include 'Interest Essay' in the upper right-hand corner of the document.

Respond to the following prompt:

- In our adult lives we develop intellectual fascinations with particular subjects, and allow these topics to focus our intellectual attention, to direct our reading, sometimes to dictate our travels. You might, for instance, be interested in Roman engineering, in the stem cell debate, in human

rights in developing countries, in the photography of the American Civil War, in Chinese landscape painting.

*Describe an intellectual interest that you have developed. Tell us how you have gone about investigating this interest.*

### **MLA Response Essay**

To evaluate your writing, we ask you to write an essay in response to an article we will send you. When you complete the Program Selection page of your online application, we receive notice that you have started the application and within 48 hours we will email you the article to respond to, along with specific instructions about what we are looking for, length, etc.

### **Transcripts**

**\*\*Do not mail or email any transcripts to Stanford or the MLA office \*\***

**STEP 1:** Arrange to have one official transcript from each college or university where you were enrolled in a degree program sent **TO YOU**. These should be actual transcripts that include classes, grades, and a degree conferral date (if it has been conferred).

- You will then scan and upload these transcripts on the Academic History page of the online application.

**STEP 2:** Arrange to have an official transcript from each college or university where you have taken classes in programs that were not degree-seeking (i.e. Stanford Continuing Studies, other continuing education programs, courses in the liberal arts or humanities that would be relevant to an MLA application) sent **TO YOU**.

- You will then scan and upload these transcripts on the Additional Information page of the online application.

◆ Tip: check to see if any of your schools offer certified e-transcripts. This can be a quicker, more convenient way to get your transcripts.

*\*If you are admitted to the program you will be required at that time to have official transcripts sent directly to Graduate Admissions. Do not send any to the office during the application process.*

### **Letters of Recommendation**

Three letters of recommendation are required. Ideally, at least one of the three letters should come from people who have taught you and are thus able to comment directly on your intellectual capacity and academic potential. Recommenders must submit their letters online.

Tips for letters of recommendation:

- Three letters are required to submit the application
- Letters can be from anyone, but you want letters that are most helpful to your application; usually academic letters are the most beneficial.
- Be sure that your recommender understands the MLA program, what it offers, and why you are applying.
- Of particular importance is your recommender's ability to comment on your writing skills and analytical thinking.

Some options for obtaining letters:

#### Academic letters

- Reach out to faculty from your undergrad or graduate schools; remind them who you are; send them a paper you wrote for them. Don't be afraid to try this even if you graduated many years ago.
- Take Stanford Continuing Studies Courses, or courses at a school near you. MLA lists recommended CSP courses on our website.
- Take the course for a letter grade.
- Choose a course where there will be a writing requirement.

#### Non-academic letters

- You could ask colleagues, supervisors, a mentor, fellow board members, fellow volunteers, friends, etc.
- Be sure they can write something specific and informative about your potential for graduate study.

### **ONLINE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Be sure to refer to these instructions for the MLA Program as you proceed. You do not need to complete the online application in one session—you may save your entries and come back to it.

**All application materials must be completed online by January 28, 2025** at 11:59pm PT. We do not evaluate applications until after January 28, so there is no advantage to submitting very early. Give yourself time and go over your responses before doing the final submit. Good luck, and we look forward to reviewing your application!

**To begin:** go to <http://gradadmissions.stanford.edu>

- In the top menu, under the arrow for How to Apply, select Apply Now
- Click the red Apply Now Button
- Click on Create Account and set up your account. You will be required to verify your account, then log in. Click Start New Application.

**To go back into your application after you have started:** go to the Graduate Admissions page listed above, and from How To Apply, select Apply Now. Enter your user ID and password.

### **FOLLOWING THE ONLINE APPLICATION—question-by-question instructions**

All fields should be filled in as requested except where noted below:

**Personal Background:** Complete as required.

**Program Selection:** Select Master of Liberal Arts (MLA); Select Entry Term: Autumn 2025-2026.

**Academic History:** Complete as required and upload transcript(s). You should only list schools where you were enrolled in a degree program. If you have taken classes in programs that were not degree-seeking (i.e. Stanford Continuing Studies, other continuing education programs, courses in the liberal arts or humanities that would be relevant to an MLA application, please upload those transcripts in the Additional Information section).

**Test Scores:** Complete if required. The TOEFL is required for applicants whose first language is not English. Note that if you listed that you will receive a degree from an English-language university, the online application will indicate that the TOEFL is not required. The MLA requirements for this exception are different. Please refer to the information on page 2 of this document. If the MLA program requires your TOEFL score, you can still enter it even when the online application indicates it is not required. Tests must have been taken in the last two years.

- Use the Add Test link to add a required TOEFL score.

### Experience

- Be sure to complete the Work Experience section. If you are retired, enter that in the Organization Name field, select the type of industry you worked in previously, and enter your former job title.
- Upload your Curriculum Vitae [here](#). See page 2 of these instructions for details.

**Recommendations:** Review registration instructions provided on application page, and review the Letters of Recommendation information on page 3 of this document before proceeding.

- In the email your recommenders receive, a due date is not specified. It is your responsibility to inform them that their recommendation must be uploaded by January 28, 2025, and ensure that it is submitted by the deadline.
- You can send email reminders to your recommenders by clicking on their name.

### Statements

- Upload your Statement of Purpose [here](#). Limit to two pages. See page 2 of these instructions for details.
- Respond to the Enriching the Learning Community prompt.

### Program Supplemental

- **Upload your Intellectual Interest essay:** Please read the Intellectual Interest Essay information on page 2 of this document before proceeding.
- **Upload your MLA Response Essay:** Refer to the instructions sent to you with the written piece.

### Additional Information

- Complete as required.
- This is where you will upload your transcripts from schools where you were *not* in a degree-seeking program. See instructions from page 3 of this document.
  - **\*\*Do not upload anything other than transcripts in this section\*\***

**Signature**

- Complete as required.

**Review and Submit**

- This page lists any required fields that still need to be completed. You can also preview your completed application.
- When everything is complete, click the Finalize and Pay button.

**Submitting Your Application**

To consider your application, you must, by 11:59pm, **January 28, 2025** have clicked the Finalize button on the application site and paid the fee, and your recommenders must have submitted their letters. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

**Checking the status of your application**

You will be able to check the status of your online application and the status of any recommendations submitted on your account on the Graduate Admissions site.

**Confirmation**

Once the MLA office has received your complete submitted application, and the required three letters of recommendation, you will receive a confirmation email. The email will include information on when you can expect an admissions decision.