Ph.D. Admissions

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Our goal is to admit students whose career goals and scholarly interests can be best nurtured by our faculty and academic milieu. Applicants should indicate why they believe our department can provide a strong foundation in their intended area of study (including ways in which the applicant's interests intersect with those of our core faculty) as well as discuss any unique talents or experiences that applicant will bring to enrich our community of scholars.

Applicants to the Ph.D. program should demonstrate familiarity with the academic field of Feminist Studies at the undergraduate level. A strong applicant will have some training in either qualitative and/or quantitative research methodology, and will have fluency in a foreign language, at least through the intermediate level. An applicant who does not meet these criteria should plan on completing foreign language and methodology training early in their graduate student career. The Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies does not accept non-matriculated graduate students into the Ph.D. program, nor do we accept non-matriculated students for enrollment into graduate level courses.

GWSS does not have a stand alone Master's degree program. “The MA degree can be earned ONLY within a PhD program as a thesis or non-thesis degree.”

In addition, applicants must meet basic Graduate School requirements including:
1. A 3.0 undergraduate GPA or higher over the most recent two years of study
2. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution

Meeting these minimum standards does not ensure admission, however. Students who have earned an MA from another institution may apply for our Ph.D. program, but an MA is not required for admission to the Ph.D. program.

GWSS no longer requires the GRE (Graduate Record Examination): The department has determined that GRE scores are far less helpful in evaluating candidates for the Feminist Studies PhD program than writing samples, statements of purpose, and recommendation letters. In recognition of the cost and accessibility of the exam as factors that potentially limit the diversity of our applicant pool, we no longer require GRE scores as part of our application process.

Applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. A Statement of Purpose. Describe your academic background and preparation for advanced study in Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies and the areas of scholarly focus you want to develop through graduate training. This statement should address your motivation for seeking an interdisciplinary doctoral degree in Feminist Studies at the University of Washington; your research interests and questions; and your long-term goals in pursuing a graduate degree. The statement of purpose should be 2-3 double-spaced pages (500-750 words).

2. Writing sample. A sample of your writing helps us discern your capacity to write, develop a line of inquiry, analyze research materials, and communicate ideas. Appropriate samples include seminar or course papers, or an excerpt from an undergraduate or Master’s thesis. If you submit a thesis excerpt, please attach a cover sheet with an abstract of the longer work and a brief explanation of why you have selected this particular section. The writing sample should be original, individual, not co-authored work and should be no more than 25 double-spaced pages including a bibliography. Please do not submit take-home exam essays.

3. Three (3) letters of recommendation are required. One (1) letter may be from a non-academic reference who can address the applicant's academic skills. You will be asked to provide the names and email addresses of your three recommendations as part of the online application process. Your recommenders will then be contacted and asked to fill out the recommendation online. The content of the letter is at your referee's discretion. If you choose to ask your recommenders to provide a hard copy instead, please note that we do not supply or require a specific form for referees to fill out. The content of the letter is at your referee’s discretion. It should be in a signed and sealed envelope and may be sent directly to the department.

4. Transcripts: Upload PDF or Word formatted (jpeg pasted into a word document) versions of transcripts from all institutions you attained a baccalaureate or higher degree as part of the on-line application. If you are currently working toward your baccalaureate degree, you should upload transcripts from the institution that will award the degree. If you are offered admission it will be made contingent upon receiving an official transcript from all institutions in which you received a baccalaureate, or higher, degree. You do not need to request transcripts to be sent to the Graduate School at this time if you have successfully uploaded a digital copy of an official or unofficial copy.

5. Intended Research Focus. Please summarize your intended research focus, as elaborated upon in your statement of purpose, in 40 words or less.
6. Match with Scholarly Interest of Faculty. List the names of up to three core faculty members in the Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies as potential mentors whose expertise and interests most closely match your own proposed research. Please check individual faculty websites for their current availability. Emeritus (retired) faculty do not generally serve as advisors.

Also included on the application is an optional Diversity Statement. Consistent with the University of Washington’s commitment to graduate excellence through diversity and to fostering an inclusive intellectual community, the Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies actively seeks and welcomes students from diverse backgrounds, through the constitution of our faculty, research supported, and courses offered. This optional statement provides a space for you to reflect upon your personal history, family background, and educational, cultural, or economic challenges or opportunities. Please describe the ways these experiences have influenced the development of your scholarly interests and future goals. The diversity statement should be 1-2 double-spaced pages (250-500 words).

Application Procedure: Submit application materials to the Graduate School via the electronic application system - Graduate School Application.

Students are admitted for Fall Quarter only. The application deadline is December 1 for Fall quarter of the following year. The faculty may not review application material that arrives after the December 1 deadline.

Applicants will be notified of the decision of the faculty in late March/early April.

Funding: Incoming students are typically offered a twelve-quarter funding package comprised of a combination of department-based research and teaching assistant-ships and University-wide fellowship funding secured through the department, subject to satisfactory performance which is reviewed annually. Students with disabilities, as confirmed by Disabilities Resource Services, may qualify for additional funding.

Questions about the program? Please consult the Graduate Manual.

Additional information for International Applicants

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