

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD APPLICATION FOR THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ANTHROPOLOGY AT WESTERN?

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Each year we get many questions from prospective students about the application process. This document is intended to help you craft a strong application.

### BEFORE YOU APPLY

Information for all prospective graduate students at Western can be found on the [Applicants](#) section of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies website. International applicants should also consult the [International Students](#) pages, as well as the website of the [International and Exchange Student Centre](#).

General information about the graduate programs in anthropology at Western can be found on the [Graduate](#) section of our website. Information on potential supervisors can be found on the [Full Time Faculty](#) page and on the external links associated with individual faculty members.

Before starting your application, please review all [Admission Requirements](#) and make sure to read our [Application Information](#) page.

We strongly recommend that students establish contact with potential thesis supervisors before submitting their application to ensure that they are accepting students for the coming year. Prospective supervisors can also provide useful information about potential research projects, which will help you refine your statement of academic intent.

### APPLICATION TO THE GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ANTHROPOLOGY

When you are ready to start your application, go to [Apply for Admission](#) and select [I WANT TO APPLY](#). It is your responsibility to ensure that all items are completed and submitted by the posted deadlines. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

There are several components to the application. Here are some tips to help you craft a good application:

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## **LETTERS OF REFERENCE**

If you are applying for a master's program you will need two letters of reference; for a doctoral program you will need three. Referees are sent instructions electronically through the online application system.

Who should you ask?

- A professor who knows you and your work well (e.g. someone who has taught you in several classes or supervised your honors or Master's thesis).
- Someone who can write you a strong letter.
- Aim for a diversity of points of view (choose a referee who can speak about your academic excellence and someone else who can speak about your leadership, your professionalism, or your volunteer experience).

How can you help your referees write a strong letter?

- Writing reference letters is not an easy undertaking.
- Help your referees by sending them, ahead of time, (1) a copy of your statement of academic intent, (2) a copy of your resume or CV, (3) your transcripts (and possibly also copies of graded assignments you completed for them), and (4) a clear indication of the letter deadline.
- If there are any specific points that a particular referee could make, you can ask them (diplomatically) to be sure to include them.
- Give your referees plenty of lead time!

## **STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTENT**

This statement is extremely important. It is your opportunity to tell us what you want to do, how you hope to do it, why you are qualified to do it, and how you will fit in our program.

This statement should be customized to each university to which you apply. Thus, you need to do some homework to find out about the university, the department, and the research interests of potential faculty supervisors.

The statement should be a maximum of two pages, single spaced. Vague statements are not effective, but highly specific ones can also be ineffective. The key is to find the right balance. Remember that applications are read by faculty members from all subfields of anthropology. Effective statements are clear and concise, and outline an area of research that fits with your experience and training and with the department's research expertise.

Here are some questions to keep in mind when writing your statement:

- What research topic do you wish to explore?
- Why is this research topic significant anthropologically?
- How do you plan to conduct this research?
- How does this topic relate to your background preparation and previous experiences?
- Who in the department would be an ideal supervisor, and why?

- Have you been in contact with this person and what came out during these exchanges?
- Why is Western an ideal place to conduct your research?
- What will this degree ideally enable you to do?

### **SAMPLE OF WRITTEN WORK**

Select a sample of written work that demonstrates your writing and analytical abilities. You should choose a sample that you think best represents your abilities and best communicates the kind of preparation you have for graduate studies.

Your writing sample should be between 15 and 20 pages long. It is possible to send two shorter papers, but they should be long enough to demonstrate your analytical and writing abilities. Make a clean copy of the paper; don't submit the copy covered with a former professor's comments and grade.

### **UNIVERSITY TRANSCRIPTS**

We require transcripts from all colleges and universities that you have attended. Each transcript must be uploaded into your application.

Note that official (hard copy) transcripts are required only when we have granted conditional acceptance into our program.

The Department of Anthropology at Western requires at least a 78% average across courses taken in the last two full-time years of the undergraduate degree for admission to MA programs, and at least a 78% average in the Master's degree courses for admission to PhD programs. The average for applicants who have taken extra courses, or who have done their degree part-time is calculated on the basis of the last 10 Full Course equivalents (20 session courses). Note that most students accepted into our program have averages above 80%.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS**

At Western, admission consideration is based on academic qualifications along with evidence of English proficiency. If English is not your first language, you must submit proof of English language proficiency before being considered for admission. More information on English language proficiency tests is available in the [Admission Requirements](#) section of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

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### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAM OR APPLICATION TO ANTHROPOLOGY?**

If you need more information about the graduate programs in anthropology at Western or have questions about the application and admission processes, please contact the Graduate Program Assistant:

Christine Wall  
Department of Anthropology  
Social Science Centre, Room 3324  
The University of Western Ontario  
1151 Richmond St. N.  
London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 5C2

Tel: (519) 661-5080

[anthro-grad-office@uwo.ca](mailto:anthro-grad-office@uwo.ca)

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### **NEED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH APPLICATION OR PAYMENT?**

Applicants can contact the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Help Line for technical assistance with the application or with payment:

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
International and Graduate Affairs Building, Suite 1N07  
The University of Western Ontario  
1151 Richmond St. N.  
London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 5C2

Tel: (519) 850-2341

[gradapps@uwo.ca](mailto:gradapps@uwo.ca)

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