

Frequently Asked Questions

Can you give me a general overview of the NEC MFA program in Creative Writing?

The MFA program at New England College, founded in 2002, is one of the oldest and most highly esteemed low-residency programs in the country. We boast a small and selective program which allows us to sustain a close-knit, supportive community. Students are individually mentored by accomplished, award-winning faculty members who are among the most compelling writers in their genres and who are known for their excellence in teaching, as well as having the opportunity to engage with Visiting Writers who are some of the most well-known writers in the country. Diversity is a priority for the program as we support our LGBTQ+ and BIPOC community members (approximately 46% of our student writers), and we welcome students who start our program immediately upon completion of a bachelor's degree as well as those who are already established writers, have completed other graduate programs, or are already teaching at the college level. Our program delivers a rigorous, individualized experience with five dynamic degree tracks: Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Writing for Stage and Screen, and Dual Genre. Residencies take place each term on our stunning 220-acre New Hampshire campus, and we offer various funding awards including teaching assistantships.

What does the low residency model entail?

The low-residency MFA allows students to maintain their lives while also earning an MFA, being part of a writing group, and producing a vast amount of focused creative work—and of course continuing to hone their craft. The model involves a six–10-day residency at the start of each semester—held in July and January—where the MFA community gathers on campus to engage in workshops, lectures, evening readings, meals, and social hours—as a way to connect and write, read, and contemplate together. During the residency period, students are assigned their faculty mentor for the term and work with that mentor one-on-one to create a study plan for the semester. The remainder of the semester's work happens remotely, through five packets due approximately once a month to mentors. These packets include creative and critical work, with the mentor providing response to the work within 10 days. The final semester is a semester for compiling the final thesis, a book-length collection of polished creative work showcasing the progress made over the course of the degree.

What are the dates and accommodations for the residencies? Residencies occur twice a year, at the start of each semester, with a six-day residency in January and a ten-day residency in July. Students are housed on campus and all meals are provided. We are able to provide dietary and disability accommodation should it be required.

What is the program's duration?

The MFA in Creative Writing is a two-year program. For students working in the Dual Genre track, an additional semester is required.

What are the application requirements?

Personal Essay: 1–4 pages Applicants should address their preparation for graduate work as writers and scholars, the vision and goals they have for themselves and their work as writers looking to undertake a graduate degree program, and any other information pertinent to their application process.

Writing Sample: 10–15 pages in poetry, 20–25 pages in prose and Writing for Stage and Screen Applicants should submit a sample of creative work in the genre for which they are applying. Dual genre

applicants should submit a sample that contains both genres of interest, with a shorter sampling of their secondary genre focus included. Prose should be double-spaced; poetry may be single-spaced.

Two Letters of Recommendation Letters of recommendation should address an applicant's potential for rigorous creative and critical work at the graduate level.

Official Transcripts Applicants must submit proof that they have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution. Rare exceptions may be made for individuals who can show a high level of professional achievement.

How much is the application fee?

There is no fee to apply.

Who should I ask to provide letters of recommendation?

A letter of recommendation for the NEC MFA program should be submitted by an individual who can attest to the applicant's ability to be successful in a graduate creative writing program. This may be former writing instructors or colleagues, but it may also be someone who is not directly connected to the field of writing but who can attest to an applicant's talents and abilities.

What does Dual Genre study in the NEC MFA program look like?

Students who choose to work in more than one genre will choose the Dual Genre track and add a fifth semester onto their course of study. Students work in their primary genre for three semesters and their secondary genre for two semesters. We also encourage cross-genre work and fluidity in genre definition.

How do I apply as a Dual Genre student?

A Dual Genre applicant should complete the application as provided, with the exception of the writing sample, which should include an additional 5–15-page sample in the secondary genre of focus so that the quality of work in both genres may be considered.

What travel information can you provide for my visit to campus?

Flying: Students should seek to fly into the Manchester-Boston Regional airport (MHT) when possible, and a New England College shuttle is available to transport students to campus on residency travel dates. Those traveling from Boston after arriving at Logan or via Amtrak can ride the Concord Coach bus. Main Street Taxi has provided reliable service from Concord to campus in the past.

Driving: Students who are driving to campus should set their GPS for 98 Bridge Street in Henniker, New Hampshire. Parking is available in the Simon Center parking lot upon arrival.

What happens if I can only attend the residency each January or each July?

The program can accommodate students who are only able to complete semester work in either the fall or spring semester. These students attend residency once a year and complete the work in the semester that follows, and then do not register for classes in the following semester. This course of study does lengthen the overall amount of time spent as a student enrolled in the program.

What is the cost of the program?

Tuition for the 2023–2024 academic year is \$585 per credit hour. MFA students generally take 32 credits per year for the two-year degree program. An additional residency fee of \$1,350 is charged per semester.

Is funding available and how do I apply?

We recommend that students fill out a FAFSA form as part of their application, and this form can be completed and submitted prior to acceptance. We also have teaching assistantships and scholarships available, which provide full and partial funding. The teaching assistantship application form can be found under funding information on the program's webpage. Full teaching assistantships provide full funding for tuition and residency fees for the program. Full teaching assistants teach four seven-week online courses each year. Courses may be first-year writing courses or introductory creative writing courses. Partial Teaching Assistantships consist of one–three courses per year either online or as online assistants to in-person first-year writing courses held on campus. There are also tutoring assistantships available, though these are primarily in-person positions. Scholarships are available and awarded based on need and merit; there is no application process.

Who can I contact with further questions?

Further details can be provided by contacting the Graduate Admissions office at 603.428.2252 or graduateadmission@nec.edu or the program's director, Jennifer Militello, at jmilitello@nec.edu.