

**Proposals for New Programs: Curricular Phase Checklist (ARC)
Master's in Creative Writing**

To be submitted to ARC after the Provost signs off on the feasibility phase

1. Objectives:

Program summary, objectives, and cooperative arrangements (if any)

2. Evaluation and Learning Outcomes Plan:

Program assessment

learning goals/outcomes

direct and indirect measures

assessment process

alignment of program outcomes to all-college goals/outcomes

(undergraduate programs only)

alignment of program outcomes to program courses (Curriculum Map)

3. Relationship of the Program to Institutional Strategic Plan:

Program's relationship to:

College's mission (check those that apply)

Interdisciplinary learning Diversity/Inclusiveness

Experiential learning Sustainability

International understanding Student engagement

Intercultural understanding Community involvement

College's Strategic Plan

School's mission and/or goals

Program's impact on the College's other programs, including the undergraduate curriculum if the proposed program is a graduate program

4. Program Need:

If the program is in the liberal arts/sciences, indicate student demand and opportunities for further education if appropriate; if the program is career-oriented/professional, indicate student demand and labor market need, provide employer surveys, and describe opportunities for employment and advanced/additional study.

Comparison with similar programs in the State and neighboring states

5. Students:

Program's anticipated enrollment from launch to optimal level

6. Program Resources:

Additional resources needed for the first five years

Program budget (graduate program only)

7. Degree Requirements:

Degree requirements

Course titles, descriptions, and credits

Course sequencing

Distinction between required and elective courses

Number of credits for the entire program, including general education (undergraduate program only)

CURRICULUM PHASE APPLICATION FOR RAMAPO COLLEGE M.A. PROGRAM in CREATIVE WRITING

Objectives

The Master of Arts degree in Creative Writing offers advanced study in the genres of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. The program focuses on the mastery of the craft skills essential to Creative Writing genres and the study of innovative and emergent trends in the field of Creative Writing. The highest value is placed on an embrace of the writing process as it relates to individual students' talents, interests, and authorial inclinations. Students are encouraged to explore and develop through coursework in contemporary literature, linguistics, creative writing forms, and traditional workshops. The program is designed for students who plan to pursue careers in creative writing, teaching, editing and publishing, copywriting, journalism, and other media. Advanced degrees in Creative Writing are also valuable in fields traditionally associated with business, particularly advertising and consulting.

Creative Writing at Ramapo has remained relatively stable at a time in which Humanities enrollments have been falling. This is consistent with national trends. U.S. Department of Education studies show that national demand for graduate instruction in Creative Writing has remained flat and a 2017 external study funded by the College¹ found that Ramapo would offer distinct appeal to local students seeking to acquire a Master's Degree in Creative Writing. While ten of the largest programs in the country exist in the region, Ramapo is in a position to offer a distinct appeal for working and middle-class undergraduates who wish to pursue careers in Creative Writing or Professional Writing.

An M.A. in Creative Writing at Ramapo would create a much-needed option for college graduates seeking a non-terminal traditional degree in Creative Writing in northern New Jersey. Comparable programs in the region tend to concentrate on either Creative Writing pedagogy or to be more broadly focused on Professional Writing or Academic Writing. The only traditional Creative Writing M.A. program in New Jersey's public colleges and universities is at Rutgers, meaning there is very limited space for students seeking non-terminal degrees which are usually sought in preparation for applying to highly competitive terminal degree programs in Creative Writing.

This new program would also be a furtherance of the current Concentration in Creative Writing in the form of a 4+1 curricular option. Recent graduates have moved on to M.F.A. programs in Creative Writing both in the region and beyond (the past decade has seen students go on to Columbia, University of Maryland, Carnegie Mellon, Butler, University of Minnesota-Mankato, Arizona State, among others), and many others would have liked to continue their coursework in the field but were unable to because of the highly competitive nature of M.F.A. program admissions² (as of 2017, the average age of

¹ Gray Associate Report, March 2017

² While data on admission rates themselves is elusive, a 2015 survey of Creative Writing programs found that the average number of enrollees admitted per AY was roughly eight. During this same period, graduate

a residential M.F.A. candidate was 27.3 years; for low residency programs, it was 35.4). An M.A. program with a 4+1 would offer a crucial fifth year in which students would have the time to concentrate on developing their writing skills in addition to writing portfolios of work that would be both more publishable and more competitive with the portfolios of older, more experienced M.F.A and Ph.D candidates. The M.A. degree would also qualify our students to teach Creative Writing at the college-level and make them more desirable teachers of Creative Writing at the high school level. Furthermore, students who managed to double major in Education and English and Literary Studies (with a concentration in Creative Writing) would have the option of taking a fifth year and entering the job market with an M.A. already in hand. And unlike the vast majority of Creative Writing Master's Degree programs in this area, this program would give students the option to pursue further traditional graduate studies in Creative Writing while retaining their options to pursue other careers available to possessors of Creative Writing degrees (see section entitled "Career Options and Outlook").

A final and further objective of the M.A. in Creative Writing at Ramapo would be the establishment of a Summer Writing program for middle and high school students and adult learners in Northern New Jersey and, ideally, southern New York. This programming would offer tutorials and workshops on campus for interested parties, and it would involve M.A. students, adjunct faculty, and visiting writers in its administration. Apart from generating revenue for the College, this programming would provide M.A. candidates with valuable teaching experience and networking opportunities, create educational opportunities for middle and secondary students in nearby public schools, and forge new connections between Ramapo and the surrounding communities and schools.

The M.A. will require 30 credits which can be completed in one to two years. The Master's program would appeal to a broad range of constituents including:

- Graduates with backgrounds in Creative Writing seeking a Master's Degree to expand their knowledge and practice and becoming qualified to teach at the postsecondary level.
- Graduates from undergraduate institutions with degrees in other disciplines interested in either transitioning to a career in writing or broadening their portfolio of skills for the workplace.
- Educators with backgrounds in English and Creative Writing interested in developing their writing practices and/or pedagogies for work.

programs reported increases in selectivity ranging from 40-60%. More than half of these programs reported an increase in applications from prospective students, with 23% reporting the number of applications increased "substantially." This information draws a general picture that aligns with the conventional wisdom about these programs, which is that an increasing number of applicants and a static acceptance rate has intensified competition for admission.

- Educators with backgrounds outside of English and Creative Writing who see potential in combining Creative Writing practices and pedagogies with other educational fields, particularly those associated with STEAM programs.

Evaluation and Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

PROGRAM GOALS

Upon completion of the M.A. in Creative Writing, students will be able to:

- Write highly accomplished original compositions in fiction, poetry, nonfiction, or some combination of those genres.
- Evaluate and articulate the craft and art of works in the genres of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction.
- Teach Creative Writing in a variety of educational settings, including at colleges and universities.
- Collaborate with others effectively in professional situations.
- Use Creative Writing strategies and techniques in a variety of professional situations.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order to meet the Program Goals, students will:

- Write well and creatively.
- Demonstrate an understanding of literary genres and their subgenres.
- Demonstrate understanding of literary traditions.
- Demonstrate proficiency with Rhetoric or Linguistics as an approach to Creative Writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to produce an accomplished, revised, edited, coherent body of original work.

Assessment will be carried out using a combination of direct and indirect measures similar to those used in the undergraduate program for Creative Writing, which is concentration within English and Literary Studies. Direct measures will include:

Student surveys either in class or through Qualtrics are usually given for indirect assessment in which students are asked how well they felt Ramapo has prepared them to meet the learning outcomes.

In our undergraduate assessment we usually aim for 75% meeting or exceeding expectations in a given learning outcome through both direct and indirect measures; for the M.A. this number will be increased to 90%.

Table 1: Assessment Plan

	Program Outcome #1	Program Outcome #2	Program Outcome #3	Program Outcome #4	Program Outcome #5
COURSES					
Graduate Genre Workshop	X	X	X		
Linguistics and Rhetoric for Creative Writers	X			X	
Contemporary Literature for Creative Writers	X	X	X	X	
Graduate Thesis Workshop	X			X	X
M.F.A. Thesis	X				X

Relationship of the Program to Institutional Strategic Plan

Relationship to College's mission

The Creative Writing M.A. will align with Ramapo College's mission by providing students with a strong foundation for a lifetime of artistic and professional achievement. The format of the program will emphasize academic rigor through a combination of traditional advanced literary study and tried and true creative writing workshop practices. The curriculum will emphasize and explore artistic practices from historical and current literary traditions. Students will engage with faculty in groups and one on one meetings. The program is committed to creating an equitable, diverse, sustainable and inclusive environment, emphasizing student engagement and community outreach. While this outreach would be in part accomplished by the high school programming described in the program objectives, it is also notable that Ramapo has diversified significantly since 2012, when the minority enrollment rate of incoming freshmen was roughly 34%; in 2021, it was above 45%. It is our aim to create regional outreach that will encourage students from diverse backgrounds to explore Creative Writing at Ramapo as high school students, to concentrate on the subject as Ramapo undergraduates, and to work in the

summer program as graduate students to help defray educational and living costs. It will be part of the job of the program administrator to design the summer program, work to market the program to diverse populations in New Jersey and beyond, and to coordinate with area high schools in the interest of increasing equity and diversity.

Relationship to College's Strategic Plan

1. Advance Innovation as the College's Promise and Obligation to its Students, Community, and the State of New Jersey

Creative Writing at Ramapo is actively engaged with the worlds of literary writing and publishing, thanks to its faculty, its thriving reading series, and its institutional relationships with M.F.A. and Ph.D programs. The M.A. in Creative Writing will build on the current strengths and expand them by preparing students for careers in writing, publishing, and teaching as well as for further academic work.

2. To deliver and promote curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular, and development programs that strive to eliminate stereotypes and negative biases, demonstrate a commitment to diversity and promote self-awareness, an examination of multiple perspectives, and respect for others.

Given the College's proximity to Pennsylvania and New York, the M.A. has the potential to attract a broad range of students from both inside and outside of New Jersey. In particular, offering M.F.A./Ph.D-bound students a non-terminal Master's Degree will appeal to students of all backgrounds as they prepare to enter a highly competitive academic environment; it will also appeal to students who wish to enter the workplace, and overall this should yield diverse classes that that increase diversity at the College.

3. To increase students' academic, personal, social, and civic engagement through enhanced curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programming.

Students in the Master of Arts Program in Creative Writing will have access to the College's reading series, Readings at Ramapo, which will give them opportunities to meet and work with literary writers of national renown. Students will also have opportunities to get involved in literary activities on campus, from taking part in student readings to getting involved with various student organizations and clubs.

4. To strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with alumni, parents, friends, business, professional organizations, as well as community and government agencies.

The M.A. will offer great opportunities to showcase our alumni talent and to bring high profile authors to campus. Recent Ramapo Creative Writing graduates such as poet Carlie Hoffman, Heather Debel, and Ben Reinhardt have all embarked on promising careers, and we hope to bring them back to visit as their profiles ascend. This new graduate degree will expand the connection with alumni and both the local and national Creative Writing communities.

5. Ramapo College's visibility and reputation is advanced through communication and partnerships with external constituents. This program would publicly position the College through advocacy, marketing and public relations as the premier public college in the region.

The M.A. will be a unique offering—particularly once it has implemented its summer program—among New Jersey public colleges and will further the reputation of Ramapo as a leading public liberal arts college in the region.

Program's relationship to School of Humanities and Global Studies's mission

The M.A. in Creative Writing program will serve the mission of the School of Humanities and Global Studies by helping students read and write their way to becoming more literate, intentional, and empowered global citizens. Creative Writing is a naturally interdisciplinary field, constantly requiring its practitioners to look beyond what has been done for new forms of rhetoric, new conceptual or narrative frames, and types of knowledge previously unincorporated into literary traditions.

Program's impact on the College's other programs, including the undergraduate curriculum if the proposed program is a graduate program

Adding the M.A. program would enhance our undergraduate education by bringing more advanced students to campus, bringing undergraduates into the graduate classroom, and creating a more enriching literary environment for all students. Over time, the M.A. program would give the College greater visibility beyond the region.

Program Need

Student Demand

The number of Master's Degrees in Creative Writing granted in the United States each year remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2020. While the National Center for Education Statistics has yet to publish data on Master's Degrees in Creative Writing since the onset of the pandemic, a comparison might be made to the 2008 financial collapse, which precipitated a roughly 30% increase in the number of Master's Degrees awarded by US colleges and universities (an increase which, it should be noted, brought the total of degrees granted per annum to the stable number (about 3,000) we see from 2010 through 2020. Finally, Ramapo is situated in the region that is home to more than 1/5 of the writing jobs in the United States (see "Career Outlook and Description" below).

Career Outlook and Description

Commonplace conceptions of the modern workplace might suggest that degrees in Creative Writing and related fields represent quixotic aspirations, but a quick look at the U.S. Bureau of Labor's statistics will illustrate the distance of such thinking from reality.

Current BLS projections estimate a 9% job growth for the category of “writers and authors” through 2030, which is roughly average for all occupations.³ By far the leading industries employing writers are advertising, public relations, publishing, consulting, and information services⁴. Altogether, about 22.5% of all employed writers (excluding self-employed writers) working in the United States work in the states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania⁵, with annual mean wages falling between \$57,000 and \$124,000 per year and an overall annual mean wage of \$81,100.⁶ The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce data project comparatively modest growth in the areas conventionally associated with a Creative Writing degree, such as editing or teaching in primary/secondary and postsecondary institutions; this is also true of the other industries listed above as the leading employers of writers; nonetheless they predict growth across the board, at annual rates ranging from .5% to 1.7%, through 2030.

Of course, many writers who pursue graduate degrees in Creative Writing are primarily motivated to produce conventional literary artifacts such as essays, short stories and novels, poems, plays, and other creative compositions. In May 2021, 68% of writers were self-employed. This number includes writers who freelance in consulting and advertising, writers who are otherwise employed as other kinds of professionals (including all creative writers who also work in universities and schools), and the more stereotypical writer whose image is immediately conjured by the term “self-employed writer,” i.e. the writer who scraps together a living producing freelance articles and writing for Substack.

The BLS lists the following industries as the leading employers in this field:

Industry	Employment (1)	Percent of industry employment	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage (2)
<u>Advertising, Public Relations, and Related Services</u>	7,650	1.76	\$ 38.59	\$ 80,270
<u>Newspaper, Periodical, Book, and Directory Publishers</u>	4,040	1.63	\$ 31.34	\$ 65,190
<u>Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services</u>	3,420	0.22	\$ 37.00	\$ 76,950
<u>Other Information Services</u>	3,280	0.91	\$ 34.58	\$ 71,920
<u>Computer Systems Design and Related Services</u>	2,210	0.10	\$ 32.36	\$ 67,310

³ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm>

⁴ See “State and Area Data” at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/writers-and-authors.htm>

⁵ I calculated this number using the Occupational Employment and Wages Query System to retrieve employment data for New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania at <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/geoOcc/Multiple%20occupations%20for%20one%20geographical%20area>.

⁶ <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes273043.htm#st>

Industries with the highest concentration of employment in Writers and Authors:

Industry	Employment (1)	Percent of industry employment	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage (2)
<u>Advertising, Public Relations, and Related Services</u>	7,650	1.76	\$ 38.59	\$ 80,270
<u>Newspaper, Periodical, Book, and Directory Publishers</u>	4,040	1.63	\$ 31.34	\$ 65,190
<u>Other Information Services</u>	3,280	0.91	\$ 34.58	\$ 71,920
<u>Grantmaking and Giving Services</u>	900	0.65	\$ 37.09	\$ 77,150
<u>Sound Recording Industries</u>	90	0.53	\$ 25.13	\$ 52,270

As our education systems scramble to prepare students for writing in an increasingly complex information culture, we anticipate the demand will continue to increase for qualified, innovative professors and teachers. The M.A. is a non-terminal degree that can open the door to an MFA or PhD program, but it also functions as a terminal degree for primary and secondary school teachers. Ramapo's M.A. would allow our students to pursue careers in a wide range of educational situations.

Entry level positions

Writer/Content Creator (Technical, Business, Publishing)
 Copywriter, Advertising
 Analyst, Consulting
 Grant Writer
 Assistant Editor, Publishing
 Education: Primary, Secondary, Post-Secondary

Comparison with similar programs in New Jersey and neighboring states

Master's programs in Creative Writing are not uncommon in the mid-Atlantic, but competition for admittance is often intense (see footnote 1 on pp. 1-2). An M.A. at Ramapo would provide another option for students seeking to study at this level. Additionally, most Creative Writing Master's programs in New Jersey and its neighboring states are M.F.A. programs. This distinction is important because many students have historically pursued M.A. degrees in Creative Writing in preparation for pursuing an M.F.A., which is the field's traditional terminal degree (though the number of Ph.D programs is also growing). These types of degree programs exhibit a number of differences in kind, but what they all share is a commitment to providing students with an environment in which they can improve their writing in pursuit of achieving distinction in the areas of perspective, style, genre, and form. The M.A. in Creative Writing at Ramapo would give aspiring writers another opportunity to hone their craft in preparation for their

career, and for students in North and Central Jersey, it would provide an option to start pursuing those professional dreams in high school. Finally, the M.A. at Ramapo would offer summer programming in Creative Writing for primary and secondary students, giving M.A. candidates an opportunity to teach Creative Writing to younger students, develop their Creative Writing pedagogies, and gain valuable experience in community outreach.

Similar Programs in New Jersey and the Surrounding Area

William Paterson University – M.A. in Writing

<https://www.wpunj.edu/cohss/departments/english/graduate-programs/maprogram.html>

Kean University – M.A. in English Writing Studies

<https://www.kean.edu/academics/programs/english-writing-studies-ma#:~:text=At%20Kean%2C%20our%2030%2Dcredit,to%20follow%20their%20own%20passions>

Rowan – M.A. in Writing

<https://global.rowan.edu/programs/ma-in-writing.html>

Fairleigh Dickinson University – M.A. in English and Creative Writing for Educators

<https://www.fdu.edu/program/ma-creative-writing-and-literature-for-educators/>

Southern New Hampshire University – M.A. in English and Creative Writing

<https://degrees.snhu.edu/programs/ma-in-english-and-creative-writing>

Most writing-focused M.A. programs in New Jersey take a broad scope by incorporating writing studies beyond Creative Writing or else concentrating on teaching Creative Writing pedagogy. Ramapo's M.A. in Creative Writing will be distinct in its commitment to preparing students to study creative compositions both at the level of the single work and the level of the collection.

Students

Program's anticipated enrollment from launch to optimal level

Expected enrollment at launch -10

Optimal enrollment – 15-20, including undergraduates enrolled in the 4+1 model

Program Resources

In order to succeed while conforming to standard budgetary constraints, the program will require one new staff or faculty member to function as a Program Administrator whose responsibilities can be divided between occasionally teaching and the more crucial

administrative tasks of scheduling classes, interviewing and recommending candidates for adjunct positions, marketing and networking, assessing the program's effectiveness, and developing the summer program. This person would organize Readings at Ramapo and summer high school workshops and could also assist with running CRW. Grant writing /donor relations would potentially be part of duties. This individual would need to possess a terminal degree in Creative Writing (M.F.A. or Ph.D), have at least one year's experience with administering or directing a program in Creative Writing, and should have some experience with the administration of a university writing center. This position could be an NTPP hire or Professional Staff.

Program budget (graduate program only) - See attached

Degree Requirements

RAMAPO COLLEGE M.A. PROGRAM in CREATIVE WRITING CURRICULUM

30 credits

Advanced Fiction/Nonfiction/Poetry Workshop/Advanced Screenwriting (500-Level, 6 Credits) (New)

This is a traditional Creative Writing workshop at the graduate level. Individual sections are dedicated to fiction, nonfiction, or poetry.

Topics in Creative Writing (500-Level, 6 Credits) (New)

A "Topics Course" in creative writing allows a student to pursue their own writing within a focused study of a particular theme, content or genre area.

Linguistics and Rhetoric for Creative Writers (500-Level, 3 Credits) (New)

This course provides a study of linguistic and critical approaches to understanding Creative Writing.

Contemporary Literature for Creative Writers (600-Level, 3 Credits) (New)

A literature course devoted to the study of current and recent trends in creative writing, organized by genre and/or topic.

Master's Thesis Workshop (600-Level, 6 Credits) (New)

Students will use a workshop model to refine creative theses which will take the forms of novels, memoirs, or collections of fiction, poetry, or essays.

M.A. Thesis (700-Level, 6 Credits) (New)

Development and production of a final Master's thesis.

Creative Writing B.A./M.A. Five Year Plan

Year One

Fall	Spring	Summer I	Summer II
INTD 101	SIAH		
CRWT 102	GE-HP		
GE-GA	GE-SS		
ENLS 203	ENLS-Early Literature		

Year Two

Fall	Spring	Summer I
GE-QR	GE-SR	
DC1	DC2	
ENLS 280	ENLS 282/283/284	
ENLS-Global Persp.	ENLS Elective	

Year Three

Fall	Spring	Summer I
ENLS-Diverse Persp.	ENLS Elective.	
ENLS Elective	Advanced CW Workshop	
ENLS 282/283/28	DC4	
DC3	Elective	

Year Four

Fall	Spring	Summer I
Advanced CW Wkshp	ENLS 381	Linguistics/Rhet for Creative Writers/Topics in CW

DC5	ENLS 414	
Elective	DC6	
Topics in CW	Elective	

Year Five

Fall	Spring	Summer I
M.A. Thesis Wkshp	M.A. Thesis Wkshop	
Linguistics/Rhet for Creative Writers/Topics in CW	Contemporary Literature	
Master's Thesis	Master's Thesis	