

2026 Creative Writing Applicant Guide

How to Apply:

To apply to the creative writing program, applicants will submit a **sample of previously written work and a new work created for this audition**. Writing submissions may be any combination of poetry, fiction, personal essay, and/or an excerpt from a longer work. The sample of previously written material should not exceed 750 words and the new work should not exceed 500 words. The new work must include all of the following elements: **a borrowed object, a conversation, and an emotion that connects the two**.

Writing Submission Requirements:

- Writing submissions must have been written AFTER March 1 of prior year, and former OSAI students may not submit work written during OSAI.
- Ensure there is no identifying information included in your writing submission. (Please leave your name off the document.)
- You may upload each component separately, but submissions must be typed, Times New Roman 12-point font, and saved as either .pdf or .doc. (.pdf is preferred; .doc is acceptable.) All prose submissions must be double-spaced. Label each file as their component name (e.g., New Work).

New Work Guidelines:

The new work created for this audition should be one cohesive piece of writing, no more than 500 words, and must contain all of the following elements: **a borrowed object, a conversation, and an emotion that connects the two**. While these elements do not need to be the central basis for your writing, you must thoughtfully incorporate them into your work. Avoid introducing these three things in a superficial or offhanded way.

Writing Submission Tips:

Focus on quality over quantity; it is better to have a finely crafted two-stanza poem or a one-page short story than to submit 750 words of mediocre writing.

Read the evaluation criteria below to see exactly what the writing evaluators will be looking for in your submission.



Evaluation Criteria:

Inventiveness and Personal Voice – 40%

Is there originality and depth of concept? How well do the language, rhythm, and sound work to make advances in inventiveness and personal voice? Are there apparent advances beyond cliché, conventional formulae of situation, character and idea? Does the writing reflect an engagement with or awareness of literature, culture, or world affairs?

Technical – 40%

Is there well-crafted expression in language (denotative and connotative)? Does the applicant show an ability to use concrete language? Does the applicant avoid overreliance on vague or abstract language? Are departures from conventional sentence structure and spelling functional or simply signs of immaturity?

Potential – 20%

Could the applicant achieve excellence with appropriate training at OSAI? Does the applicant seem to show an artistic ability that may or may not yet be developed?

Read general information about our evaluation process here:

<https://oaiquartz.org/application-selection-process>