

AMERICAN STUDIES

Admission Requirements

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-admissions/how-to-apply/>). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions Policies (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/>).

Master of Arts (M.A.)

The M.A. degree program in American Studies accepts students from a wide array of disciplines—particularly art, history, English, sociology, and anthropology—but recommends educational preparation related to the interdisciplinary study of American culture. An applicant must hold either (1) a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or (2) a tertiary (postsecondary) degree that is deemed comparable to a four-year bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution. This degree must be from an officially recognized degree-granting institution in the country in which it operates. All applicants must submit:

- a completed Graduate School online application form (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/>) with the application fee
- official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/>) (minimum of 2.75 junior/senior grade-point average on a 4.00 scale)
- two letters of recommendation from individuals who can attest to the student's ability to handle graduate study
- a statement of intent (approximately 500 to 1,000 words outlining their preparation for study, proposed fields of study, and career goals)
- and a sample of written work (seminar paper or equivalent research paper) as evidence of their American research and writing skills.

Students applying for scholarships and assistantships are requested to submit general examination scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) taken within five years previous to the date of application. The GRE is recommended, but not required, for admission. Applications for the M.A. are accepted on a rolling basis. To be considered for scholarships and graduate assistantships for full-time study beginning in the fall, the completed application and current GRE scores must be received by Feb. 15.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Applicants for the Doctor of Philosophy in American Studies must hold a master's degree in American Studies, or a related field emphasizing American cultural scholarship and public heritage work such as:

- History
- English
- Sociology
- Political Science

- Folklore
- Cultural Studies
- Performance Studies
- Ethnic Studies
- Gender Studies
- Communications
- Art History
- Museum and Library Studies
- Education
- Cultural Resource Management

Students are required to submit the following:

- a completed Graduate School online application (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/>) with the application fee;
- official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended (<http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply/new-applicants/requirements-for-graduate-admission/>);
- three letters of reference attesting to both academic and professional capabilities. (At least two of these letters should be from academic sources, such as professors or academic advisers);
- a letter of 500 to 1000 words outlining significant scholarly and applied experience, career goals, commitment to American Studies as a field, and academic objectives;
- a recent personal curriculum vitae;
- a paper from a graduate course taken previously or publication demonstrating research and composition skills.

Students applying for scholarships and assistantships are requested to submit general examination scores of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) taken within five years previous to the date of application. The GRE is recommended, but not required, for admission.

Admission is highly competitive and the best-qualified students will be admitted subject to space availability and compatibility of the student with the program's research mission. Successful applicants with an M.A. typically have a GPA of 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) in their graduate work.

International applicants must hold the equivalent of an American master's degree. They must submit official or attested university records, with certified translations if the records are not in English. Notarized copies are not sufficient.

The language of instruction at Penn State is English. English proficiency test scores (TOEFL/IELTS) may be required for international applicants. See GCAC-305 Admission Requirements for International Students (<https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-300/gcac-305-admission-requirements-international-students/>) for more information.