Clarion West

Six-Week Workshop Submission Guidelines

Eligibility

- **Age**: Must be 18 or over by April 2027.
- **Education requirement**: None. We've had several students with no college education and several with PhDs.
- **English**: Must be able to read stories in English and write in English (or translate your writing into English).
- **Time commitment**: Must be able to take the majority of the six weeks off work/school/other obligations to focus on writing, reading, critiquing, and classes.

Application materials

You will need to complete the application form, which gives us an idea of who you are as a writer, what you are looking to get out of this program, and basic logistical information.

Writing sample: We also ask for a sample of your writing. This should be a piece that is unpublished and has not been edited by a professional editor. Be sure to submit an anonymized sample in a single document. More details are included below.

Wordcount: Maximum wordcount is 7,500 words or less. You may submit one to two short stories, a single longer story, or a novel excerpt and brief synopsis (we recommend you keep your synopsis to 2–3 pages; the length of the synopsis counts toward the word limit). Do not send us more than 7,500 words.

Format: Please follow proper manuscript format (modern manuscript format is fine!). Please use a 12-point font. We prefer Courier or Courier New, but will accept Times fonts. Your manuscript should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Set your margins flush left and do not justify the text.

We prefer PDF documents, but also accept .doc, .docx, and .rtf files. Please be sure to anonymize your sample, including the title of the document. (If you have contacted our team and plan to submit an application through alternative means, you should still follow the instructions above to format your document before printing it out.)

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File names: We want your writing samples to be anonymous, so please make sure your name is not in the title. You may use the title of your story and the year. Example: GalaxyQuest2025. Please do not use your name.

How many files should I prepare? One file for your writing sample(s). If you are sending two stories or an excerpt and a synopsis, they should both be included in the same document.

What if I send the wrong file? You can update your application if it's been less than 3 days since submission. Otherwise, let us know ASAP. We may have already forwarded your work to our readers, but it still may be possible to catch it before they read it. Unfortunately, if they've read it, it's too late. None of our readers have time to read revisions.

Contact information: Your contact information must include your phone number, email address, and mailing address. (For international folks, there will be options to provide phone numbers we can contact via apps like WhatsApp or Signal.) We do not call applicants without first reaching out by email.

What kind of writing sample should I submit? Must it be speculative? Must it be short fiction?

You should submit your best fiction writing. Period. It's to your advantage to submit a complete short story so our readers can see that you can end a story as well as begin one. We like to see speculative work, but you may submit realist fiction if you're new to the speculative side of things! Excerpts from longer work may be used as long as you include a synopsis (and yes, the synopsis does count toward the 7,500-word limit).

- A single short story is welcome if that is your best work! Please send no more than two stories that you consider to be your best work. If you submit two short stories, the total word count of both should be 7,500 words or fewer.
- A single longer story or a novel excerpt + synopsis should be no longer than 7,500 words.
- If you send a novel excerpt, the first chapter plus a novel synopsis* is best.
- Do not send a previously published story. If your work has been accepted but has not yet been edited and will not be published before April 2027, that is acceptable.



- Please only send short stories or novel segments. Do not send poetry, screenplays, plays, or comic scripts.
- Please do not send picture book scripts or stories for children.
- Fan fiction is discouraged.

Synopsis for novel excerpts: A description of what happens in the novel, from the start through to the end, whether or not you've actually written the whole novel yet. This shows us the shape of the whole story. The synopsis should be less than 2,000 words — and it is counted toward the 7,500-word limit for the writing sample.

Plagiarism and generative AI: We want your own, original work. See our full policy as part of our Integrity & Ethics Policy here.

Clarion West has a zero tolerance policy for plagiarized submissions. If a portion or the entirety of a submitted work is found to have been plagiarized, the application will be rejected outright with no refund of fees.

Short answer questions: You'll be asked to provide short answer (250 words or less) to the following questions:

- Why do you want to attend Clarion West now? What are your goals for the workshop?
- Tell us where you feel you are in your career/writing practice, and your experience critiquing or being critiqued by others (if you have any).
- What genres do you write? Are there any you'd like to explore writing in at the workshop?
- Tell us briefly about your writing process from ideation to execution. Are you a plotter or a pantser? Do you collect fragments of stories on sticky notes?
- This is an intimate workshop setting, where cohesive group dynamics and chemistry are essential to a positive experience for all. What skills, life experiences, or perspectives do you bring into these types of spaces as a reader, classmate, or critical thinker? How have you have contributed to a tight-knit community in the past?
- If desired, please describe any challenges or issues you've experienced in previous workshop settings, or that you foresee in this workshop setting.
- Why do you write, and what does "success" as a writer look like to you?
- Is there anything else you'd like your instructors and/or peers to know about you?

- After reading the Integrity & Ethics Policy, please use this space to share anything you'd like us to know that hasn't already been covered, particularly as it relates to your interactions with generative AI. This might include how you use translation tools, your work history, or other potential conflicts of interest. Disclosure in this section does not eliminate you from the application process. Rather, it's a way for us to understand the make-up of a potential class and create a cohort that will be able to form long-term connections with one another.

Do letters of recommendation help me get in? No. We do not require or accept letters of recommendation. Please do not send any additional materials other than the requested materials.

Additional information: Feel free to add an explanatory note for your scholarship needs. However, please don't send us copies of official papers — just explain your situation.

Application Fees: Our application fee structure uses sliding scale rates that follow our financial aid policy and allow applicants to choose the rate that best meets their needs for the duration of the application cycle:

$15 Helping Hands discount
$35 Supporting rate
$60 Sustaining rate

You may also follow the directions on the form to ask for an application fee waiver.

Contact us if you need help: Don't wait until the deadline, please contact us early at workshop@clarionwest.org.