

Department of Anthropology

Applicant FAQ

If you don't find an answer to your question here, try our [Applicant Handbook](#) and/or the [Rackham](#) website. If you still don't find answers to your questions, email the Graduate Admissions Coordinator, Jessica Greenwald, at greenjes@umich.edu with specific questions.

Q: How do I learn more about your program?

A: Please visit the "Prospective Students" page of our website. Because all application information is now available online, we no longer print and mail information on our program.

Q: Do I need a Master's degree to enter your program?

A: No, a student can apply to our program with either a Master's or a Bachelor's degree. Those with Master's are reviewed in the same applicant pool as those with a Bachelor's degree.

Q: If I currently have a Master's degree, can I apply it towards your program?

A: Maybe – you will need to speak to the department's Graduate Chair once you are admitted to see if your Master's degree can be declared relevant towards our program. However, you should be aware that possessing a relevant Master's will most likely **not** reduce your time to PhD in our program.

Q: About how long does it take to earn a PhD in your program?

A: It varies across subfields, but approximately 6 – 8 years.

Q: What can I do to improve my chances of admittance?

A: Begin by reading the Applicant Handbook (on our [website](#)). The best thing you can do is plan in advance to present a complete and good quality application. This means doing a little research on the web or in the library to find out who the faculty are and to think about how their interests line up with yours. Also, prepare for the GRE and/or TOEFL tests and leave yourself enough time for a re-test if you feel you have not done your very best. In this same vein, start well in advance contacting current and previous institutions about submitting grade transcripts. We cannot consider your application without them. Think about who you will ask to write letters of recommendation for you. Try to get least two of the letters from academic sources, e.g., a current or former professor. Finally, use the resources available on our website (especially the [Applicant Checklist](#) and [Applicant Handbook](#)) to keep track of the supplemental materials required to complete your application.

In submitting your application, a clear, concise **Academic Statement** outlining your professional, intellectual, and research interests and career goals and how they connect to the professional and intellectual commitments of anthropology is **crucial**. Take time in preparing this statement and try to include some assessment of how your interests connect to the interests of faculty. (This is different from the personal statement, which is also required.)

Q: What are your minimum GRE score or GPA requirements?

A: There are no GRE or GPA requirements or cut-offs. From our [Applicant Handbook](#):

GRE: Successful applicants normally have a verbal and quantitative score of 1300 and an analytical writing score of 5.0 and above on the GRE GRE scores can only be judged in conjunction with the student's Academic and Personal Statements, letters of recommendation, academic record, experience and background.

GPA: An applicant for admission to the Department of Anthropology is expected to have at least a grade average of B+ (3.3 on a 4.0 scale) in his/her undergraduate course work and some preparation in anthropology. Although it is important, the grade record is not an exclusive criterion for admission, and factors in the applicant's academic record are taken into consideration (e.g., a trend toward better grades or graduation from a school known for its rigorous grading practices).

It is impossible to judge whether your chances of admission will be better or worse based solely on your GRE score or GPA (or even on both). The faculty take into consideration all elements of an application when making admission decisions.

Q: What is your application deadline?

A: All application materials should arrive by **January 2nd, 2010**

Q: What supplemental materials are required with an application and where do I send them?

A: Please refer to our [Applicant Checklist](#) for a list of items, and please be sure to send ALL materials directly to the department at:

Graduate Admissions Coordinator
Department of Anthropology
University of Michigan
101 West Hall
1085 South University Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1107

Q: Your [Applicant Handbook](#) and [Applicant Checklist](#) instruct applicants to send two transcripts to the Department, but Rackham asks for one copy to be sent to them and one to the Department. Which way is correct?

A: Please send two copies directly to the Department if you are a domestic student. We will forward a copy onto Rackham if necessary. If you are an international student, send one copy to the Department and one copy to Rackham, along with an official translation if necessary.

Q: Do transcripts need to be sent to you directly by the issuing school, or can I send transcripts to you myself?

A: We will accept transcripts sent from the school or from the applicant, so long as they are in a sealed envelope that bears the official seal or letterhead of the institution. You can also upload scanned unofficial copies of your transcripts with your online application. Just be sure that you submit scans of both the **front and back of your transcripts** (we cannot evaluate your transcripts without the grading key). We can use these unofficial transcripts for admission purposes, however, if admitted you will then be required to submit the originals sent directly to the department from your previous institution(s). **Note:** screen shots of your grades from an online student account are **NOT** acceptable even as unofficial transcripts. We must have scans of the original official transcripts from your institution.

Q: When I submit my application online, do I need to do anything extra to make sure it gets to the Department / Rackham?

A: No. When you submit your online application it will be available to both Rackham and the Department automatically.

Q: Your Applicant Handbook says you encourage students to not submit letters of recommendation from online services like Interfolio. Why?

A: We find that these letters are written in vague and general terms in order to satisfy a large audience. Our admissions committee is looking for reference letters that speak in specific terms of the student's strengths in academia, Anthropology, potential graduate work, and to all of your other various talents. We have found that letters from services, such as Interfolio, do not make the student stand out as individually created letters of recommendation do, thus hindering your chances at admission.

Q: My recommenders have lost the email from Embark instructing them on how to submit the letter online. Can you resend them the information?

A: No, we cannot. Only you, the applicant, can log back into your online application account and resend the information to your recommenders. If that does not work then you need to contact Embark directly, as only they are able to troubleshoot their system.

Q: Can I submit my supplemental materials along with my online application?

A: Yes, we accept Academic and Personal Statements that are uploaded to your Embark online application. If you upload your Statements with your online application, you do not need to send a printed copy by mail.

Q: On the “**Description of Interests**” page of the application, what information are you looking for under “Topical Interest” and “Area Interest”?

A: For “Topical Interest” we’re looking for a listing of the topics you are interested in (i.e. gender, ethnicity, kinship, etc.), and for “Area Interest” we’d like information on the geographic area you are interested in (i.e. Latin America, the Middle East, Nepal, etc.) – general and/or specifics. You don’t need to write an essay here – just “bullet point” some of your main interests.

Q: What do I do with the Affidavit of Financial Support?

A: Only international applicants must fill out the Affidavit of Financial Support. International applicants may send in the Affidavit of Financial Support to Rackham after they have received their admission decision, and Rackham must receive the Affidavit of Financial Support before they will allow the applicant to matriculate.

Q: Will I receive confirmation when my application is complete?

A: We do not send confirmation from the Department when your application is complete, but we will notify you once if any required supplemental materials are missing from your application. You should receive a confirmation from the Embark online application system when your actual application is submitted successfully.

Q: When will I hear results about my fee waiver request?

A: The Department doesn’t handle fee waivers. Please contact [Rackham](#).

Q: Since your office is closed from 12/25/09 through 1/3/10 are my application materials considered late if you don’t receive them by 12/24/09?

A: No. We will return to the office on 1/4/10. At that point we will begin to open all of the mail received during the time our office was closed. If your application materials are included in that mail, they are not considered late. Be aware that the online application system will automatically close down after the deadline and will not accept any applications after the January 2, 2010 deadline.

Q: What happens if my application materials are late? Will you accept supplemental materials that arrive after the application deadline?

A: Again, please be aware that the online application system will automatically close down after the deadline and will not accept any applications after January 2, 2010. For supplemental materials, we would **really** prefer that you get everything in before the January 2, 2010 deadline – this is the only way to fully ensure that your application is complete for faculty review. However, we will accept supplemental materials after the deadline. Be aware that application files must go out for faculty review shortly after the application deadline. Once they have been sent out for faculty review incomplete files will be reviewed as-is.

Q: When should I expect to hear a decision on my application?

A: By mid to late February.

Q: I'm planning to visit – how can I arrange a meeting with faculty?

A: You should email faculty directly to let them know when you will be visiting and to inquire if they are available to meet with you. Faculty email addresses are available [here](#).

Q: What kind of funding do you offer?

A: Funding in our department is **extremely** limited. We strongly recommend that all applicants seek outside funding – for instance, through fellowships and grants. For ideas on where to find funding, you can browse our [Support Handbook](#) located on the website.

Q: Do I need to fill out separate forms/paperwork to be considered for department funding?

A: No, funding decisions are made along with admissions decisions and your application and supplemental materials are sufficient – except for FLAS funding. If you want to be considered for FLAS funding, you must submit a [FLAS Intent Form](#) along with your supplemental materials. (The FLAS Intent Form is available on the “Prospective Students” section of our website, under “Application Forms”.)

Q: What is your policy on deferring admission?

A: We allow admitted applicants to defer admission for one year by notifying the department's Admissions Coordinator. You will then need to submit your matriculation decision by the following April, at the latest. If you have been offered funding and choose to defer, you will not necessarily receive funding the following year. (The funding offer does not defer along with your admission offer.) If you are not offered funding and choose to defer, you will be reconsidered for funding with other admitted applicants the following year.

Q: How many total applications do you receive? How many do you admit?

A: Last year, for the Fall 2009 application cycle, we received 241 applications and 34 were offered admission.