

## **GWAR (Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement)**

The Spanish M.A. Program within the Modern Language Studies Department (formerly known as World Languages & Hispanic Literatures), uses two measures to assess the writing and critical thinking skills of its prospective candidates. One is the **Statement of Purpose** the student must submit with his or her application to the graduate program. The other is the combined scores of both the **Verbal and Analytical Writing sections of the GRE General Test**. Albeit that the nature of the discipline entails the use of the target language, Spanish, and that many of our applicants are not born in the US, English-language writing skills do count. For this reason, our M.A. Program places great reliance on the Test of English as a Foreign Language™ (TOEFL) scores for ESL examinees to help determine whether a low score on the Analytical Writing measure is due to lack of familiarity with English or to a lack of ability to produce and analyze logical arguments.

The **Statement of Purpose** is carefully examined by the Selection Committee, whose task is to identify both critical thinking and writing skills within the Narrative. It is also meant to provide the graduate faculty some insight on the candidate's own argument about his or her reasons for applying to an M.A. Program in Spanish.

Although important, the graduate faculty does not place extreme importance on the **Verbal and Analytical Writing sections of the GRE General Test**. In other words, GRE scores alone are never a determining factor for whether a candidate will or will not receive admission into the Program. Rather, such score is always viewed in conjunction with the overall application materials of the candidate. It aids the members of the Selection Committee in gauging the student's ability to: (a) articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, (b) examine claims and accompanying evidence, (c) support ideas with relevant reasons and examples, (d) sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion, and (e) control the elements of standard written English.

The teaching faculty of the M.A. Program in Spanish addresses everything discussed above in both the Spanish and the English languages, as it feels these are essential components for success in any field of graduate work.