

University of Chicago Submissions

Freelancer FAQ

Do you pay for stories?

Yes. The magazine pays upon acceptance. Fees start at a few hundred dollars and range upward, depending on the writer's depth of experience, the amount of research required, and the story's length and complexity.

Who receives the magazine, and how often does it appear?

The magazine publishes six times each year—in January, March, May, July, September, and November—and it mails to roughly 130,000 readers. Alumni make up 90 percent of the total; the rest include faculty, senior staff, the parents of current undergraduates, and other friends of the University. Our readers are bright, curious, and critical, and among them are experts on everything. Stories must be written for the *intelligent* layperson.

How can I get a sample copy of the magazine?

The entire magazine, including archives dating to 1994, can be read online at magazine.uchicago.edu. For hard copies, write to uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu or Editor, University of Chicago Magazine, 401 North Michigan Ave, Suite 1000, Chicago, IL 60611.

What makes a good story?

Each story in the magazine must have a connection to the University, whether explicit or indirect. Besides that, our scope is wide. In the feature section, we profile alumni who've gone on to interesting adventures or remarkable achievements, excerpt books by Chicago authors, and print in-depth accounts of research happening on campus. Sometimes we tap University scholars to tackle current political, cultural, or scientific issues. We also chronicle major events on campus and occasionally publish first-person essays by alumni or faculty. Typical feature lengths range between 2,500 and 3,500 words.

Outside the feature well, the magazine is divided into a handful of departments. Three are partly freelance-written: Chicago Journal, which covers campus news; Investigations, which covers faculty research; and Arts & Letters, which covers the work of alumni artists, musicians, and scholars. Each of these sections contains two to four stories (600 to 850 words) that spotlight a particular person, event, or research project.

How do I submit story ideas to the magazine?

The best way to reach us is by e-mail. Send query letters to uchicago-magazine@uchicago.edu. Otherwise you can write to: Editor, University of Chicago Magazine, 401 North Michigan Ave, Suite 1000, Chicago, IL 60611

We consider all queries, but the best ones are both brief and specific. Include salient details of your proposed subject and explain why the story is ideal for this publication. Give us your sense of the story's overall length and flow. Pieces submitted on spec should be no longer than 1,000 words.

Tell us a little about yourself too: describe your previous freelance experience and enclose a copy of your resume along with three to five published clips. We look for writers who not only demonstrate professionalism and rigorous reporting skills but also write with style and flair.

What happens once a story is assigned?

The magazine's four editors each make assignments and work with writers at the outset to fix deadlines, determine the word count, and hammer out central themes. While features may take a month, or several, to write, department stories are usually due three or four weeks after they're assigned.

Once your polished first draft is submitted, magazine staff members edit it collectively, though you'll continue to work through the assigning editor. We ask writers to fact-check their stories before turning them in. Freelancers can expect to take part in two or three (sometimes vigorous) rounds of revision—;answering content questions, reworking copy, and doing additional research—;before a final draft emerges.

How do writers get paid?

All writers sign a standard University independent contractor agreement and fill out a W-9 tax form. We make payments after an assignment has been accepted, and processing takes four to six weeks from receipt of the invoice.