

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Joint Honours Degree programmes in Creative Writing and Drama or English**. For Joint Honours Degree programmes, please also refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2009**.

The aims of all Joint Honours Degree programmes in Creative Writing are:

- to provide a rigorous academic environment in which students can develop their critical and creative engagement with literary and performance writing;
- to complement and support theoretical discussion and textual analysis with practical exploration;
- to engage the students with a historically broad range of different creative forms and familiarise with them with significant debates that they have generated;
- to foster an appreciation of a wide range of creative writing forms from the perspectives of critic and practitioner;
- to encourage the development of critical and creative vocabularies with which to handle new creative work, including the students' own;
- to further the student's ability to engage in a range of cultural and theoretical debates about the processes of cultural production, the nature and value of artistic achievement, the appropriate forms and levels of support;
- to equip the students with a practical level of critical awareness about the 'real-world' industrial conditions for the contemporary creative writer.

Programmes are delivered at three levels, certificate, intermediate, and honours, each of which comprises a year of full-time study during which students will follow courses to the value of four units across their two departments (only two of those being in Creative Writing). The first year of Creative Writing is fixed, while the second and third year involve a high level of student choice. The general structure is pyramidal: in the first year students will take a broadly focused course, intended to introduce them to a wide range of creative forms, not only fiction, poetry and performance writing, but also songwriting, television and screenwriting, stand-up comedy, and others. In the second year students choose two from a range of creative forms, and one of those forms is taken on to an advanced level in the third year. Year three also includes a course designed to engage students more directly with the creative industries in which many writers have to work.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a

specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding

Students on Creative Writing joint programmes will have:

- Reinforced, enhanced and developed their appreciation of and confidence with creative expression, their Creative Writing work building on and complementing the theoretical, critical and historical understanding and knowledge developed in the Drama or English half of their degree.
- Developed a knowledge and appreciation of a historical range of creative forms, styles, and genres, and made their own critical and creative interventions in those forms.
- Demonstrated the ability to describe, debate, and assess their own writing and the writing of others, both of established writers and of their fellow students.
- Gained a critical understanding of the field of cultural production (the structure, finances, policies, institutions) across a range of forms, as it currently exists in Britain, with some comparative work on other cultures.
- Explored a wide range of critical debates about performance, culture, creativity and their origins, their psychological and sociological dynamics, the philosophical puzzles they present, the arguments over their functions, and debates concerning aesthetic form.
- Considered the different uses of texts, exploring where relevant the way that production and performance involves reinterpretation, the different uses of typography, artistic interventions in other texts, how performance might be centrally involved in writing.
- Engaged analytically and experientially with the processes of creative writing; developing ideas; the role of research; the selection of material; the use of intertextuality; ways of transforming and challenging ideas; working through writer's block; how to edit and rewrite; presenting a manuscript; etc. This outline is consistent with the Dance, Drama and Performance benchmarking document (2002) available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/benchmark/phase2/dance.pdf> and the English benchmarking statement (2000) available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/benchmark/english.pdf>.

Skills and other attributes

Students on Creative Writing joint programmes will have:

- Demonstrated the ability to describe, debate, and assess their own writing and the writing of others, both of established writers and of their fellow students.*
- Engaged analytically and experientially with the processes of creative writing; developing ideas; the role of research; the selection of material; the use of intertextuality; ways of transforming and challenging ideas; working through writer's block; how to edit and rewrite; presenting a manuscript; etc..*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is mostly by means of seminars and writing workshops, in which ideas, theoretical readings, set texts, and creative work can be discussed and explored practically. Practical workshops may take a variety of forms, depending on the creative process that we're exploring. Students will learn through a variety of means; first, they will learn through participation in seminars and workshops, and through private study to prepare for these classes and for the written assignments demanded by them. In the

third year, they will be encouraged to do a moderate amount of field work to research the industries in which they have specialised. Most crucially, though, they will learn experientially, through the process of writing, receiving feedback, learning from others, rewriting, and seeing their work performed, installed or published. Student assessment will be principally through the production of creative work of increasing length and complexity across the three years of the degree; each creative submission will be accompanied by an assessment document in which the student will be encouraged to reflect on and critically engage with their work and process, placing it within a theoretical and cultural context. There will also be essays and a research project. There are no formal exams in the Creative Writing half of the degree.

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Details of the programme structure(s)

Joint Honours Degree programmes

Stage one:

Students take:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| CW1010 | Introduction to Creative Writing (1 unit) |
| CW1020 | Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing (1 unit) |

And specified courses in their joint degree subject.

Part time students must take:

Stage one (a):

Any combination totalling two whole units from the above

Stage one (b):

The remaining complement from the above totalling two whole units

Stage two:

Students take **two** from this list:

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|--------|----------------------|
| DT2310 | Playwriting (1 unit) |
| CW2020 | Fiction (1 unit) |
| CW2030 | Poetry (1 unit) |

And 2 units chosen from a list of specified courses in their joint degree subject

Part time students must take:

Stage two (a):

Any combination totalling two whole units from the above

Stage two (b):

The remaining complement from the above totalling two whole units

Stage three:

Students take either :

- | | |
|--------|---|
| CW3101 | Contextualising Practice (1 unit) or |
| CW3102 | Reading as a Writer (1 unit) |

And **one** of the following:

- | | |
|--------|-------------------------|
| CW3010 | Playwriting 2 (1 units) |
| CW3020 | Fiction 2 (1 units) |
| CW3030 | Poetry 2 (1 units) |

(Each has a corresponding prerequisite in the second year, so if, say, students are taking Fiction 2, they must have studied Fiction in Year 2.)

They also take 2 units chosen from a list of specified courses in their joint degree subject

Part time students must take:

Stage three (a):

Any combination totalling two whole units from the above

Stage three (b):

The remaining complement from the above totalling two whole units

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Progression and award requirements

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass courses to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%. However, in the case of the Creative Writing first year, both units are compulsory, that is, they must be passed in order to progress into the second year; both courses are integral to the proper study of the subject at subsequent levels and it would not be appropriate to allow a student to progress who had failed their 'Introduction to Creative Writing' or indeed had not managed to pass in 'Why Write? The History and Theory of Creative Writing'.

In addition, with effect from September 2010, all first year students on single, joint or combined honours programmes offered by the Department of English are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Merit are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: *Conditions for progression to the next stage*) but fail to pass the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

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Student support and guidance

- Personal Advisors: All students are allocated a personal tutor who will meet with them regularly (once a term) through the programme. The tutor's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. All students are also able to make appointments with members of staff during their office hours the times of which are clearly indicated on their doors and available from the departmental office.
- All staff available and accessible through dedicated office hours system.
- Detailed student handbook and course resources.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and Computer Centre.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service Liaison Officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.
- There will be representatives for each year on the English Department Student-Staff Committee.

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Admission requirements

The standard conditional offer for the Creative Writing programme is available on the [Course Catalogue](#) web page. However, the Departments also have considerable flexibility in their admissions and offers policy and strongly encourage applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

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Further learning and career opportunities

Royal Holloway has already established several postgraduate qualifications that centrally involve creative writing. There has been a playwriting option (now pathway) in the Drama Department's MA in Theatre for over fifteen years. Media Arts has a very successful and professionally-recognised MA in Feature Film Screenwriting, and the English department offers an equally successful MA in Creative Writing. The Drama Department supervises a number of doctoral students whose PhD submissions include a substantial portfolio of creative work, and the English Department is now also offering opportunities for Creative Writing qualifications at this level.

Graduates from English programmes have successfully progressed into a wide range of professions which include: Broadcast Researcher, Newspaper Reporter, Live TV Subtitled, Publishing Assistant, Publishing Rights Assistant, Press Officer, Advertising for Financial Times, Advertising Operations Co-ordinator for Yahoo UK & Ireland, Marketing Trainee for Unilever, Marketing Assistant for Publishing Company, Fundraiser for English National Opera, HR Administrator, Recruitment Consultant, Bookseller, Assistant Manager of a Clothing Company, Local Council Housing Management, Council Education Welfare Assistant, Officer Cadet, Trainee Chartered Accountant, Auditor, Trainee Mortgage Broker, Management Consultant for IBM, Web Writer, Service Analyst for IBM, Assistant Librarian at Surrey Institute of Art, Vice President RHUL Student Union, Researcher for Chartered Institute of Building.

Other graduates have continued with further studies including vocational courses such as PGCE's for teaching, journalism courses, training at Drama School, Law conversion courses and Postgraduate Studies, mainly Masters in English but also in other subjects including Film and Philosophy. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

More generally, to learn how to generate and shape an artistic work is a valuable life skill, with uses and applications far beyond the immediate tasks of writing poems, plays, scripts and novels. The essential tasks for anyone creating their own work—considering questions of character, voice, clarity, audience, style and cultural context—are themselves crucial skills of value to any kind of writing, from journalism and website creation to advertising copywriting and academic publishing. The degree offers an advanced course in cultural understanding and appreciation, getting students to learn how to articulate and debate the process of cultural production and find a language in order to express and assess artistic achievement.

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research. All staff in the English Department are highly regarded scholars, writers and critics and the quality of our research was recognised in the most recent Research Assessment Exercise, where ninety percent of our research was found to be of international quality. We also host the national English Subject centre, which drives innovation and improvement in teaching and learning across English studies. The Department of Drama and Theatre was ranked joint 9th in the top 10 universities in the country in terms of proportion of 3* and 4* research, with 75% of its research profile of 3* and 4* standard.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in Creative Writing are not subject to accreditation by

a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statements in Drama and English can be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Joint Honours Degree programmes with Creative Writing as an equal element

BA Drama and Creative Writing (WW48)

BA English and Creative Writing (QW38)

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