

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts in Creative Writing**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2017**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to give a sound basis for the study and practice of literary composition, and the development of creative and artistic sophistication;
- to provide students with knowledge, understanding, intellectual, and discipline-specific skills;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which students are able to practice the art of literary composition, to acquire advanced familiarity and fluency in using literary techniques for the writing of poetry or fiction, and to acquire understanding and appropriate skills relating to distinctive practice-based research and research specialisms;
- to produce graduates with a range of personal skills relevant to the literary world and the world beyond HE, who are able to engage in lifelong learning and to contribute to the literary, artistic and wider community;
- to be suited both to those wishing to complete their university-level studies with a Master's degree and to those for whom a Master's programme is intended to lead to a higher degree.

The Master's programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part-time study (260 weeks). It is characterised by advanced training in the key areas of literary composition, by strong progression and by opportunities for specialisation to professional level or for transfer to higher research degrees (MPhil or PhD).

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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 and practice of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- the comprehensive understanding and advanced use of literary techniques as a support for creative work;
- the ability to consider the value and worth of literary compositions from the perspective of the writer;
- the ability to consider literary compositions in a professional context;
- the ability to achieve an advanced level of quality in literary composition;
- the development of an individual writing voice;
- the ability to combine technical mastery with personal creative concerns;
- the enhancement of skills in communicating individual creative intentions;
- the ability to demonstrate clarity in compositional thinking;
- the ability to reflect critically on their own practice;
- a critical awareness of current issues in their area of professional practice;
- the original application of the understanding of techniques and knowledge in their own creative practice.

Skills and other attributes

- planning, designing and writing advanced and sophisticated literary compositions;
- employing a variety of literary devices and developing a distinct and viable individual voice as a writer through original composition;
- familiarity with an appropriate body of modern and contemporary literary works;
- insight into the processes and methodologies of professional writers and the writing industry;
- the ability to reflect critically on their own work and articulate its relation to contemporary practice;
- assessing the merits of various techniques of literary composition;
- analyzing and problem-solving in the process of literary composition;
- artistic decision-making;
- critically judging literary works;
- developing sustained literary structures;
- taking responsibility for their own learning and creative work, and developing habits of reflection on that work;
- self-direction and originality in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;*
- In addition, this programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work and that strengthen our graduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the literary, artistic and wider community. These include: personal motivation; creativity and originality; the ability to work autonomously and with writers and those in allied disciplines e.g. publishers, editors; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual, artistic and creative integrity; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is mostly by means of workshops; seminars; seminars and work with professional writers, publishers, and agents; one-to-one tutorials; guided independent writing and guided independent study. These help to develop the student as a writer and his/her knowledge, understanding and to acquire and develop practical and discipline-specific skills. As students progress through the programme, they develop a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of these aspects, through their application and interpretation in particular compositional contexts. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. **Credits are indicated in brackets, and indicate proportional weighting towards the MA classification grade.**

For the award of an MA students must take one of the following courses; the choice of this course will dictate what other courses are available to the student.

EN5118 Fiction Workshop (40 credits)
EN5112 Poetry Workshop (40 credits)
EN5501 The Practice of Life Writing (40 credits)
EN5120 Prose and Poetry Workshop (40 credits)
EN5905 Poetic Practice (40 credits)

Students who take EN5118 or EN5112 will also be required to take EN5114 Supplementary Discourses (20 credits) and one of the following courses: EN5115 Editing (20 credits) or EN5116 Reading as a Writer (20 credits). Students who take EN5501 will also be required to take EN5502 Biography: Cultural Contexts (20 credits) and EN5503 Autobiography: Cultural Contexts (20 credits).

Student who take EN5120 will also be required to take EN5119 Reading as a Writer PEW (20 credits) and GG5500 Cultural Geographies (20 credits).

Students who take EN5905 will also normally be required to take EN5114 Supplementary Discourses (20 credits) and EN5116 Reading as a Writer (20 credits). GG Cultural Geographies (20 credits) may be substituted for either EN5114 Supplementary Discourses (20 credits) or EN5116 Reading as a Writer (20 credits), subject to availability.

All students are then able to consider and develop the techniques and skills they have acquired in these courses by incorporating them and extending them significantly into their own personal creative concerns in the following courses, which are taught by individual tutorials in the Summer Term:

EN5113 Creative Writing Project (60 credits)
EN5117 Dissertation (Creative Writing) (40 credits)

Part time programme structure

The programme can be taken part-time over two to five years beginning in September of year one. Students who take courses over more than two years should discuss with the department the order in which to take mandatory and optional courses. The dissertation/ project is normally taken and completed in the final year of study.

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Progression and award requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

Please note that if you hold a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

To pass the **Master's** programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which constitute up to a maximum of 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The Master's degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Master's degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% *and* has either chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in courses which do not constitute more than 40 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate. The Postgraduate Certificate with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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Student support and guidance

- Students will be allocated a Supervisor and a Personal Tutor, each acting according to the College Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Students. The Director of the MA in Creative Writing, the Director of Graduate Studies and the Head of Department also provide further points of contact for students wishing to discuss academic or personal issues;
- All staff are available and accessible through a dedicated office-hours system;
- The modular structure, teaching methods and assessment procedures (in the last case, with work submitted and marked during the year) should permit the early identification of students with problems and/or in danger of failing the programme. Failure to attend classes, to submit coursework or to attend supervisions counts as a disciplinary offence to be dealt with by normal College procedures. There is no provision for students who fail the degree to be awarded an intermediate qualification, although a certificate of attendance and a transcript of grades awarded will be made available in such cases;

- Student feedback is obtained on a regular basis by informal discussion and by formal questionnaires. Such feedback and the minutes of the Postgraduate Student-Staff Committee provide support for the annual monitoring of the degree;
- Detailed student handbook and course resources;
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in the College library, Senate House library and the College computer centre;
- College Careers Service and Departmental Employability Lead officer;
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and students with additional learning needs also have access to Disability and Dyslexia Services (DDS).

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Admission requirements

For details of admissions requirements please refer to the [Course Finder](#).

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Further learning and career opportunities

Some students taking the MA in Creative Writing will want to proceed to Practice-Based PhDs. These are now available at Royal Holloway (and elsewhere). The experience of the Creative Writing Project, the Dissertation and the options in Supplementary Discourses and Reading as a Writer will be excellent preparation for undertaking a PhD. Some students will be using the PhD for career development purposes as teachers of Creative Writing. Some will already have considerable experience as teachers of creative writing and will be using the MA to enhance their employability. Some will be seeking to develop a career in this area as a consequence of taking the MA. For both groups the workshop experience, the Dissertation and the options in Supplementary Discourses and Reading as a Writer will be particularly valuable. Some students will be seeking careers in various aspects of the publishing and literary industries. The options in Supplementary Discourses and Editing and Publishing will be particularly useful. Other students will be using the MA primarily to develop their writing practice for careers as novelists, short story writers and poets. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers & Employability Service](#).

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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 Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 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 and 3* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31st overall in the UK for 4* and 3* research and 33rd based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

The Department of English is ranked 14th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 31st for 3* and 4* research.

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List of programmes

The programme is taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and by visiting lecturers and leads to an award of the University of London. The banner code is given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in Creative Writing

MA Creative Writing (1073)

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