



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH

MA Creative Writing

Programme Specification

Primary Purpose

Course management and quality assurance.

Secondary Purpose

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

Disclaimer

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification; however, changes may sometimes be required arising from annual monitoring, student feedback, review and update of units and courses. Where this activity leads to significant changes to units and courses, there will be prior consultation of students and others, wherever possible, and the University will take all reasonable steps to minimize disruption to students. It is also possible that the University may not be able to offer a unit or course for reasons outside of its control, for example; the absence of a member of staff or low student registration numbers. Where this is the case, the University will endeavour to inform applicants and students as soon as possible. Where appropriate, the University will facilitate the transfer of affected students to another suitable course.

Copyright

The contents of this document are the copyright of the University of Portsmouth and all rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior consent of the University of Portsmouth.

Contents

Course Details	1
1. Named Awards.....	1
2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable).....	1
3. Awarding Body	1
4. Teaching Institution	1
5. Accrediting Body	1
6. QAA Benchmark Groups	1
7. Document Control Information.....	1
8. Effective Session.....	1
9. Author	1
10. Faculty.....	1
11. Department	1
Curriculum	1
12. Educational Aims.....	1
13. Reference Points.....	2
14. General Learning Outcomes.....	2
15. Learning Outcomes	3
A. Knowledge and Understanding of:.....	3
B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:	3
C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:	3
D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:	3
16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods.....	4
17. Assessment Strategy.....	4
18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements.....	4
19. Employability Statement.....	5
Course Management	5
20. Support for Student Learning.....	5
21. Admissions Criteria.....	5
A. Academic Admissions Criteria	5
B. Disability	5
22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching	6
A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation	6
B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation.....	6
C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback	6
D. Staff Development Priorities.....	6
23. Assessment Regulations	7
24. Role of Externals	7
25. Indicators of Standards and Quality.....	7
A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition.....	7
B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent).....	7
C. Quality Assurance Agency	7
D. Others	7
26. Further Information	7

Course Details

1. Named Awards

MA Creative Writing

2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)

C1881F, C1881P

3. Awarding Body

University of Portsmouth

4. Teaching Institution

University of Portsmouth

5. Accrediting Body

N/A

6. QAA Benchmark Groups

Creative Writing (as set out on English Subject Centre/UK Council for Graduate Education best practice guides) and the National Association of Writing in Education Benchmark statement.

7. Document Control Information

Version 6, September 2017

8. Effective Session

2017/2018

9. Author

Dr Holly Howitt-Dring

10. Faculty

Creative and Cultural Industries

11. Department

Media and Performing Arts

Curriculum

12. Educational Aims

- To develop advanced study in creative writing, by both research-through-practice (creative work) and through the development of critical understanding
- To offer an opportunity to develop genre-specific projects while also studying the conventions of other creative writing genres, and how they inform the world of creative writing practice and knowledge;

- To provide an opportunity for writers graduating from BA courses in creative writing (or similar), to extend their work/technique/knowledge;
- To develop work that takes into account the context of contemporary practice appropriate to the chosen genre, and to make a case for person- and project- specific approaches, styles, structural understanding and modes of communication through creative writing;
- To develop creative writing research skills with a sense of current national and international practice in this field.

13. Reference Points

This programme has been developed taking account of the following reference points:

- English Subject Centre and UK Centre for Graduate Education documents (Best Practice Guides);
- The University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document;
- The research-through-practice, research and scholarship of staff;
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
- Relevant sections of the English, Media, Drama subject benchmark statements adapted for use at postgraduate level;
- University of Portsmouth Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and Quality Assurance policies.

14. General Learning Outcomes

Level 7

Master's degrees/Postgraduate Certificates/Postgraduate Diplomas are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

15. Learning Outcomes

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

- A.1 An advanced understanding of creative writing, both through process based creative activity (the production of creative work) and response based critical understanding (an attached set of critical approaches);
- A.2 Models of how creative writers develop their skills and understanding of their skills;
- A.3 The critical/industrial/commercial and aesthetic context of their work, and the work of others;
- A.4 Writing strategies appropriate to their chosen genre;
- A.5 Responsive understanding – a key component of critical understanding of creative writing (i.e. critical understanding drawn from a response to the writer's own practice/context/culture and the practice/context/culture of others);
- A.6 The local, national and international context of contemporary creative writing.

B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:

- B.1 Apply a range of critical understanding to projects involving creative practice;
- B.2 Analyse and explain own practice and the practice/end products of others;
- B.3 Draw on a variety of sources to create a sense of the best possible approach to the writer's own practice;
- B.4 Respond to and reflect on personal practice and the practice of others;
- B.5 Organise material and evaluate the significance of particular creative works and critical approaches;
- B.6 Make critical judgements that take into account market forces and/or aesthetic aims as their primary criteria.

C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:

- C.1 Demonstrate that individual practice meets the expectations of the course team (particularly specific genre specialists) and, where applicable, industry standards in the field;
- C.2 Demonstrate adherence to a range of critically informed creative values;
- C.3 Provide coherent and constructive responses to their own work and the work of others;
- C.4 Determine local, national and international standards, and be aware of contemporary practice and criticism;
- C.5 Demonstrate knowledge of research practice in the field, and its relationship to the development of advanced understanding of creative practice.

D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:

- D.1 Demonstrate a range of critical understanding of projects involving creative practice, thus also of creative practice as a method of investigating the world;
- D.2 Knowledge of their own practice and the practice/end products of others
- D.3 Draw appropriate sources to create a sense of the best possible approach to their own practice;
- D.4 Respond to and reflect on personal practice and the practice of others;
- D.5 Organise material and evaluate the significance of particular creative works and critical approaches;
- D.6 The ability to work in groups;
- D.7 The ability to pursue arts research-through-practice and locate it critically;
- D.8 The ability to work with an advisor (in form of supervisor who can offer editorial suggestions and/or marketing suggestions and/or research specific suggestions – all of which fit with professional practice in this field);
- D.9 The ability to give and take constructive criticism;
- D.10 The ability to realistically assess styles, attitudes and forms in creative writing in relation to their aesthetic and/or market relevance.

16. Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The team benefits from a diversity of strengths, with each lecturer having a good general knowledge of creative writing along with their specific genre expertise. This allows the MA to best use diversity within Creative Writing study, highlighting such specific study of prose fiction, poetry, playwriting and screenplays and also creative non-fiction as areas in which students can be supported by the team-teaching approach. This team-based teaching also allows experimentation for those students yet to decide on a singular focus, or those who may wish to take a multi-genre approach. That is: each genre reflects back upon others. This approach, likewise, is invaluable for those who wish to go on to teach Creative Writing. Specialisation is supported by at least some critical and creative understanding of a wider range of creative writing genre – this is where this course excels.

These will be developed through a range of teaching methods (i.e. interactive workshopping, critical readings and discussion, editorial input at workshops, presentations of work and readings), there is an opportunity to develop subject specific knowledge in an ‘interactive’ way. The relationship between creative practice and critical understanding is fundamental in this field, particularly at M-Level and beyond, and this is incorporated into our teaching and learning strategies here. Supervision by team members/course leaders is notable in linking to professional practises within HE creative writing as well as within the creative industries (publishing/media/performance industries). In keeping with this, course members will be encouraged to participate in the ‘extra-curricula’ activities on campus relating to creative writing (i.e. writers’ readings, their own readings, performance/publication of their work where applicable).

Transferable and key skills incorporated into the Teaching and Learning Strategy also go beyond subject specific skills.

17. Assessment Strategy

Coursework forms the basis of the ideal of providing ‘actual practice opportunities’ as core in the programme.

Assessments will include a portfolio of creative and critical work, background essays, proposals and drafts, and presentations. While locating knowledge and understanding in a wider context, students will be required to demonstrate relevance to their own projects and the context of them within the contemporary creative writing world.

A familiarity with current research and research-through-practice in the field will be assessed via background essays, drafts and proposals and linked to units in grounding individual projects within the context of practice/criticism. This is essential to ensuring this is an M-level course in creative writing, with a national and international context. The assessments focus on the students ability adhere in the industry standards in the field and on their adherence to critically informed creative values. The MA as a whole therefore assesses the student’s ability to demonstrate their knowledge of research practice and to respond on a variety of levels to both their own, and others’, work.

Creative and critical work, background essays, proposals and drafts flag up the developmental nature of drafting and critically assessing work (the writer’s own and that of others) as the writer moves toward completion of their M-level work.

18. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

See [Unit Web Search](#)¹ for full details on the course structure and units

- This is a 1-year full-time or 2-year part-time postgraduate programme leading to the award of MA Creative Writing. The course offers a total of 180 credits for the award comprising units of 30 and 60 credits. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of learning.
- Standard University rules apply - The regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.

¹ www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch

- Students who have been assigned at least 60 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) Creative Writing. Students who have been assigned at least 120 credits at Level 7 are eligible to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) Creative Writing.

19. Employability Statement

Students will leave with a set of transferable skills such as being able to work in groups, to give effective presentations, to write academically and to meet deadlines, as well as being able to write creatively to set criteria. Students will also benefit from specific creative writing skills gained in class and from extra-curricular sessions, such as 'open mic' nights and guest lectures from those in creative industries, which engender skills such as reading aloud to an audience, and writing cover letters and sample synopses for agents and publishers, and these skills could lead to employment or publication after graduation.

Students will also complete a major project in the form of their own novel, screenplay or poem and learn about the market and current debates within differing genres in the process.

Course Management

20. Support for Student Learning

- The Course is managed by a Course Leader
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing and counselling
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK)
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC)
- Excellent library facilities
- CCI Creative Skills Centre and CCI Academic Skills Centre
- CCI Creative Careers Centre
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations
- Feedback is provided for all assessments
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards

21. Admissions Criteria

A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- A minimum of a second-class honours degree in a related subject. Equivalent qualifications and/or notable experience as a creative writer will also be considered. An online portfolio of work may be required as part of the selection process.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of English language ability with a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 (normally with not less than 6.0 in any one component) or equivalent.
- Prior (formal and/or experiential) learning may be assessed and accredited.

B. Disability

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

22. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching

A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports
- Periodic Programme Review
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees
- National Student Survey
- National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
- Staff Performance and Development Review
- Peer Review and Development Framework
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee

B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course
- Head of Department
- Associate Dean (Academic)
- Associate Dean (Students)
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners

C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback

- Student Representation on Board of Studies
- Student Staff Consultative Committees
- Unit and Course Level student feedback questionnaires
- University participates in external student surveys, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB)

D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes
- New academic staff required to undertake appropriate University of Portsmouth learning and teaching programmes
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- Support staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages

23. Assessment Regulations

The current University of Portsmouth academic regulations will apply to this programme (see [Assessment and Regulations²](#)).

The Level 7 Dissertation has an exemption from the University's Policy for Maximum Assessment Loads in order to align the assessment with others in a comparative field. The dissertation is 30,000 words with a 3,000 word reflective essay.

24. Role of Externals

Subject External Examiners who will:

- Oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards
- Review unit assessment strategy
- Sample assessment artefacts
- Present report to Unit Assessment Boards

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- Oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards
- Scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment
- Ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom

25. Indicators of Standards and Quality

A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition

None.

B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)

The MA Creative Writing course participated in a successful Periodic Programme Review on 1st May 2012.

C. Quality Assurance Agency

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015³](#)*).

D. Others

None.

26. Further Information

Further information may be found in:

- Student Handbook
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document
- University of Portsmouth Prospectus
- [University of Portsmouth⁴](#) and [School of Media and Performing Arts⁵](#) websites

² www.port.ac.uk/departments/services/academicregistry/qualitymanagementdivision/assessmentandregulations/

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf

⁴ www.port.ac.uk/

⁵ www.port.ac.uk/school-of-media-and-performing-arts/