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NOTE: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detail on the specific learning outcomes, indicative content and the teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found (1) in the MA Course Guide on Moodle.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be checked within independent review processes undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Awarding Institution / Body: Birmingham City University

Teaching Institution:

Interim Awards and Final Award:

Programme Title: MA in Creative Writing

Main fields of Study: Creative Writing

Modes of Study: Full-time (1 year) or Part-time (2 years)

English

Language of Study:

UCAS Code:

JACS Code:

Programme philosophy and aims

The MA in Creative Writing at Birmingham City University is a one-year full-time or two year, part-time, course aimed at emerging writers.

The MA in Creative Writing follows the NAWE Creative Writing Benchmark Statement guidelines for the Nature and Scope of Creative Writing Research, Research Methodologies, Research Degrees in Creative Writing and Measuring Creative Writing Research. The NAWE Benchmark document states that 'Creative Writing is the study of writing ... and its contexts through creative production and reflection on process', and this MA course follows the benchmark definition of Creative Writing research as 'practice-led research'. Varieties of critical

research are also undertaken in the Reading into Writing module. The course will offer the creative writer the opportunity to 'undertake this research through the act of creating; ... they will invest knowledge and understanding into this practice, and ... they will develop their knowledge and understanding through their practice'.

The course is supported by the Institute of Creative and Critical Writing, a unique organisation based within the School of English, devoted to cultivating the creative imagination, the life of ideas, and the literary arts. At the heart of the Institute is an invited Fellowship, made up of writers and scholars, who will play an active role on the MA in Creative Writing.

The course is founded upon the philosophy that writers can benefit from the same kind of training enjoyed by actors, musicians, and visual artists. The MA in Creative Writing includes six Masterclasses each year run by an established author – usually a Fellow of the Institute or a member of staff. These Masterclasses, are based on the Conservatoire model of music tuition and involve an expert public close-reading of a volunteered student text. The pedagogic understanding is that all aspiring writing professionals will face the same challenges and potential technical solutions. Points of interest and improvement in any one text will be relevant to all the student writers. Fellows of the Institute of Creative and Critical Writing and other guest speakers will also make regular visits to the course to give presentations on the craft of writing and the changing markets within the publishing industry.

To be admitted to the MA in Creative Writing students must submit a sample of writing with their application forms, and arrange for two references to be sent in support of their application. If their work is of a suitable standard, they will be interviewed by MA tutors, normally including the Programme Director. Each year, introductory workshops will be held during the week preceding the start of formal seminar teaching.

There are two compulsory elements of the MA course: Reading into Writing and the Final Project. In addition, students must take any three out of five option modules from Fiction, Creative Non-fiction, Screenwriting, Scripting and Staging, and 21st-Century Poetry. Normally, students will have undertaken one option module before taking Reading into Writing. The Final Project involves an extended piece of work in a chosen form, to be presented in a way relevant to a publisher, agent or producer. The Final Project also involves exploration of complementary professional development skills.

On the MA in Creative Writing students will receive taught modules run by university staff, Institute of Creative and Critical Writing Masterclasses, and visits by Fellows of the Institute. Students will be expected to engage fully with the range of events and activities on offer. Every year, students will put together an anthology of work, launched and showcased at the Summer Show in June. It is expected that students will take a full and active part in this aspect of their professional development.

Explain the overall approach adopted by the programme and how it leads to the aims shown below

The MA in Creative Writing programme aims to provide learners with:

- Improved writing skills in one or more of the option modules (Fiction, Screenwriting, Creative Non-fiction, Scripting and Staging, and 21st-Century Poetry). The Final Project allows these skills to be developed and demonstrated in a significant piece of sustained writing.
- A critical awareness of the place of their own writing and the writing of others within contemporary forms, and the context and demands of those forms within the writing industry.
- Advanced strategies for the research, planning and production of a consistent body of creative work.
- An ability to learn from leading established practitioners.
- An ability to express an understanding of the creative process, their own and others, through critical appreciation of work by peers and established writers.
- The ability through advanced creative practice and reflective criticism to understand how reading impacts on creative writing.
- An understanding of how writers make a living.
- A good idea of achievable career aspirations and evidence of informed planning to reach defined goals.

Intended learning outcomes and the means by which they are achieved and demonstrated:

Learning Outcomes¹

1. Knowledge and critical understanding of key forms, in relation to students own creative practice and the creative practice of peers and leading practitioners.
2. Control over structure, levels and functions of the English Language; appreciation of imaginative power, knowledge of relevant and precise critical terminology.

¹ Guidance on the specification of learning outcomes is available from the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching.

3. Ability to generate ideas and solutions independently and/or collaboratively; to employ convergent or divergent thinking in the process of observation and making; to select/test appropriate media; to manage interaction between intention, process and outcome.

4 Awareness of professional context for creative writing and possible career opportunities.

Learning teaching, and assessment methods used

Knowledge is gained from seminar presentations, seminar and tutorial discussion, masterclasses, and workshops. Masterclasses (close public readings of submitted texts) will be given by established writers, usually Fellows of the Institute of Creative and Critical Writing. Students will examine the work of others, both published/produced and otherwise, and use this to inform their own writing. Workshops will involve peer-to-peer feedback on student work. One-to-one consultation and advice with tutors will also take place, and Moodle will be used to support teaching. Feedback from tutors will be given in written format, and in consultation sessions.

Formative assessment is provided for each module as indicated in the teaching and learning methods. Summative assessment is entirely by coursework. This includes creative writing of script or prose, and essays about the creative process (general as well as particular), influences etc. Modules provide a range of assessment types: analytical, discursive, creative.

Programme structure and requirements, levels, modules, credits and awards

The structure of the course, the modules, levels and credit values, [including ECTS credit values](#), and the awards which can be gained are shown in the diagram below.

Module name	Credits
Reading into Writing	30
Fiction*	30
Creative Non-fiction*	30
Screenwriting*	30
C21st Poetry*	30
Scripting and Staging*	30
Final Project	60
* Students choose three out of five	
Total	180

Awards

The PG Cert (60 credits) will consist of either two option modules or Reading into Writing plus one option module

The PG Dip (120 credits) will consist of three option modules plus Reading into Writing

The MA (180 credits) will consist of three option modules, Reading into Writing, and the Final Project

Support for Learning including Personal Development Planning (PDP)

Students are encouraged to identify and, with guidance, to reflect on their own learning needs and are offered the following support as appropriate to meet those needs:

Course materials and Moodle resources support the module teaching, Masterclasses and seminars with Fellows of the Institute of Creative and Critical Writing. Tutors are also available to answer queries via email, surface mail or telephone. Informal feedback and discussion of creative work takes place throughout the course, with peer feedback – both live and virtual - a particularly important element. Written feedback will be given on all assignments. The student handbook provides information on general and practical matters relating to course management. Students also have borrowing facilities at the University's Kenrick Library.