

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This revised document describes the **Master of Arts and Postgraduate Diploma in English Literature**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2013**.

The aims of the programme:

- to promote the study of literary texts and topics more closely and comprehensively than is possible at undergraduate level;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which students can acquire understanding and appropriate skills relating to a range of literary fields at an advanced level;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure which allows work to be done across period boundaries thereby encouraging intellectual synergies to develop;
- to provide an advanced introduction to the theoretical issues animating critical debates in literary studies;
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study;
- to foster an independent learning ability;
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work.

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). On successful completion of the course a student should have an understanding of the area of the MA at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to a PhD course in the same or a closely related field.

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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 programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- an advanced grounding in the theory and practice of literary studies across period boundaries;
- the evaluation of relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the fields involved in the degree;
- the articulation and deployment of knowledge and understanding of texts, concepts and theories relating to the selected fields;

- independent literary research at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;
- confidence in deploying the appropriate critical and technological skills as required in the selected fields of study;
- the acquisition of knowledge of advanced scholarship in the chosen areas of the discipline to a level appropriate for an MA degree.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the selected fields;
- the ability to analyze and critically interpret text and data;*
- to further develop skills in information handling and retrieval;*
- the ability to conduct literary research independently at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;*
- the ability to further develop skills of reflection on reading and learning;*
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories;
- the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;*
- the ability to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts and original critical ideas;*
- to enhance interpersonal skills, involving recognizing and respecting the viewpoints, and interacting constructively with other people;*
- to enhance time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;*
- in addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthen our postgraduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; flexibility, adaptability and creativity.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching is mainly by two-hour seminars during the Autumn and Spring Terms. Seminars are cooperative ventures, which require students to share and debate issues that they have considered in advance, or that are raised in the course of discussions by the tutor or by fellow students. They provide students with the means to focus in depth on the material being studied, by combining close textual analysis with broader discussion of the historical and theoretical problems posed by the texts. Preparation will be assigned by the tutor, and will include regular class presentations. These will require students to research issues and present conclusions, or raise questions for further discussion, in an organised fashion, and to defend or develop arguments in response to points made in the seminar. 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 MA programme lasts 52 weeks (104 weeks for part-time students) beginning in September. Students choose two whole course units from the courses offered on the four available MA programmes, complete the research methodologies course, and write a dissertation. The course choices may be taken as two whole course units or the equivalent of two whole course units. In other words, a student may decide to take a whole course unit (for example, 'Shakespeare: The Works') which runs over twenty weeks and two terms, or two half unit courses, such as 'Victorian London' and 'Postmodern Literature' which normally run over ten weeks or one term. Equally the choice of the second course could be one whole unit or its equivalent, two half units.

Students are not permitted to select more than one whole course unit, or two half course units, from within the same MA programme.

Note: It is important to keep in mind when making course choices that there should be a balance of workload between the two terms. For example, if taking one whole unit and two half units as the MA course load, the student should be careful not to choose half units that will take place in the same term.

Another restriction on course choices is the practical one of the class timetable, but hopefully there is enough range over the four MA programmes for this not to be too much of a problem.

- a. Course choice 1 consisting of one unit (35%) or two half units (17.5% each, totalling 35%)
- b. Course choice 2 consisting of one unit (35%) or two half units (17.5% each, totalling 35%)
- c. Dissertation (30%)
- d. Methods and Materials of Research (required but unweighted)

Part-time students take one whole unit assessed course, or its equivalent of two half unit courses, and the 'Methods and Materials of Research' course in their first year. In the second year they would take their second whole unit assessed course, or its equivalent of two half unit courses, plus the dissertation.

For the Diploma in Postgraduate Study, students complete the two whole unit courses (or their equivalent in half units) and the 'Methods and Materials of Research' course. These can be taken over one or two years. (It is possible to upgrade to an MA by additionally completing the dissertation). The skills training in 'Methods and Materials of Research' is relevant to all parts of the programme and also facilitates the process of upgrading to an MA by virtue of completing the dissertation.

The topic of the **dissertation** is proposed by the student after discussion with one or more of the course tutors and must be approved by the Programme Director.

Courses available for MA in English Literature from across the four MA programmes are as follows:

Please note that the list of available optional courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

1. MA Modernism and Contemporary Literature

Half units

Term 1

EN5331 Modernism, Modernity and History

EN5314 Contemporary Literature

Term 2

EN5315 Modernist Special Topics

EN5316 Contemporary Special Topics

2. Shakespeare

Full units

Terms 1 and 2

EN5731 The Works: Plays & Poetry

EN5732 King Lear: Critical Debate & Creative Response

3. Victorian Literature, Art and Culture

Half units

Term 1

EN5831 Victorian London

EN5830 Aestheticism and Decadence in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture

Term 2

EN5837 The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Theories, Contexts, Readers

EN5838 The Pre-Raphaelite Revolution

4. Medieval Studies

Full units

EN5637 Medieval Narratives

Half units

EN5632 The Visual and the Verbal

EN5634 Arthurian Literature

Progression and award requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework. To pass the programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment, 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 **Masters** degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The **Masters** degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element 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 element 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 element 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 25% of the final assessment.

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 element 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 element 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 element of the programme. 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

- The Programme Director meets with the students on a regular basis to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- Course coordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.
- All staff available and accessible through an office-hour system.
- Detailed MA Programme Handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries.
- Dedicated departmental computing facilities and study room in Egham.
- Dedicated College Graduate School.
- 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.
- Membership of the Institute of English Studies; access to further research training seminars and courses.

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Admission requirements

Admission is normally based on at least an Upper Second in Single Honours English or in a related degree. An equivalent level of achievement is expected in applications from overseas candidates. Non-standard applicants and applicants from disciplines other than English will be considered on their merits, but they should bear in mind that an ability to follow the course demands some familiarity with the practices of literary study. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. 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

Graduates from English MA programmes have successfully progressed into a wide range of professions which include journalism, publishing and the media, advertising and marketing, the creative industry, the public sector, and teaching. For other graduates, completing an MA is the precursor to embarking on research, ultimately leading to a PhD. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers 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 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. The English Subject Centre was housed in the English Department at Royal Holloway for the duration of its 10 year existence; in 2011 the national subject centres were drawn together under the HEA (Higher Education Authority) in York, and we continue to maintain strong links with the staff and activities of this new body.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Masters lead to awards of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in English are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner code is given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in English Literature

MA in English Literature (2245)

Postgraduate Diploma in English Literature

PG Diploma in English Literature (2264)

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