SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

MASTERS, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN

ENGLISH LITERATURES

Introduction

This document provides a summary of the main features of the postgraduate taught MA programme in English Literatures. It explains what a student can expect from studying English at Masters level at Keele University, and includes information about what a student will be able to do if s/he takes full advantage of the opportunities provided during the course of this programme.

Names of programmes	- MA
	- Postgraduate Diploma
	- Postgraduate Certificate
	in English Literatures.
Mode of study	Full time and part time
Single or Dual Honours	n/a
Duration	One year full time / two years part time

As part of the HEFCE Wider Information Set (WIS) requirements, we provide a table detailing the External Examiner and their home institution by programme. The table also provides the last examiners report and the school response to that report. The report and response are only available to internal users (with Keele University login and password). http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/reportsandresponses/pg

1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

English is a wide-ranging discipline involving the rigorous and critical study of Anglophone literature. It allows students to develop skills in critical argument, and to engage imaginatively with literary texts both past and present. Students of English become attentive to the socio-political, ethnic, and gender contexts that inform and impact the literature they study, as well as to the ways in which the formal characteristics of literature have developed over time and across diverse cultures within the Anglophone world.

Graduate Attributes

Engagement with this programme will enable you to further develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesizing information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Whilst you will undoubtedly have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to develop further as a well-rounded postgraduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in during and after your studies at Keele.

Please refer to the programme webpages for a statement of how you can achieve the Keele Graduate Attributes through full engagement in the programme and other educational opportunities at Keele.

1.1 English at Keele

English at Keele is founded on the University's core principles of tradition, innovation, and diversity. The historical range of the material covered in its programmes extends from 1500 to the present day, and its scope extends to modules on American literature, Film Studies, and literature in translation, as well as to the theoretical enquiry that has become fundamental to the discipline over the last thirty years. The MA programme utilises the full range of this expertise. It familiarises students with a variety of periods, theoretical perspectives, and literary genres, as well as ensuring that they possess the research skills necessary to successful postgraduate study. It offers students the opportunity to choose from a wide range of elective modules whilst also maintaining a central coherence through a dedicated core module which is based around one of the most urgent theoretical questions of recent years: the nature and value of the canon, and hence of what we read.

1.2 MA English Literatures at Keele

The taught element of the Masters programme, then, comprises core modules in (1) Research Skills in the Humanities; (2) Reflective Practice in the Humanities; (3) Criticism, Analysis and Theory; (4) Canon, Anti-Canon and Context, and (5) one optional module. Following the taught element of the course students pursue a dissertation topic of their own choosing under the supervision and guidance of a relevant member of the teaching team. All modules offered are taught by staff who are research active and experts in their fields with a commitment to lively and innovative teaching methods.

The programme can be studied either full or part-time. As well as the Master of Arts award, Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma routes are also available.

2. Aims of the Programme

The Masters programme aims to enable students to:
- Engage in wide and varied reading among the regional and global varieties of literature and literary criticism.
- Think both critically and creatively about literature in English.
- Assess the form and meaning of literary and filmic texts.
- Develop their understanding of the characteristics of key literary genres (prose fiction, poetry, and drama) and periods (post-1500), and of the principles of canonisation that elevate and marginalise texts and their authors.
- Understand, evaluate, and apply to literary texts a range of critical ideas and theories relevant to textual criticism at Masters level.
- Communicate ideas and arguments with clarity and care in a number of different forms—including essays, oral presentations, reflective diaries—using appropriate language and techniques of presentation.
- Work both constructively and critically, by themselves and as part of a team, to deliver specific projects.
- Reflect productively on their strengths, weaknesses, and methods of learning.
- Develop research skills commensurate with postgraduate study in the field of English Literary Studies.

2.1 What students will learn

What students on the Programme will know, understand and be able to do can be described under three main headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding.

- Subject specific skills.

- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills).

Students who complete the MA in English Literatures will able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of a range of literary texts from different historical periods.

- Describe and evaluate a range of key concepts and theories in literary criticism and apply these in their analysis of a range of texts from different cultural and historical contexts.

- Articulate a clear assessment of differing critical positions, demonstrating skills of judgment and reasoning.

- Construct clear persuasive arguments using advanced literacy and communication skills, and be able to harness these skills in appropriate contexts, and for a range of audiences, through oral presentation and in writing.

- Manage time and resources to deliver assignments on time and to required standards (both individually and as part of a team).

- Use the knowledge and skills they have acquired in complex and unpredictable contexts, and as the basis for more advanced learning or professional training.

2.2 How is the Programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the Programme vary according to the subject matter and aims of the module. They include the following:

- Seminars in groups of up to 15 students, wherein key issues can be discussed in depth. Students are expected to play a full part, and occasionally to lead, these discussions: some seminars may consist largely of student presentations. Many are based on the application of literary and cultural theory to a variety of literary texts, including poems, plays, novels, non-fiction, and films.

- Workshops in research skills where students undertake the discussion.

- Focused group work and collective class discussions.

- Independent study based on directed reading from cultural and critical theory texts, research monographs, academic journals, and the media.

- Web-based learning using the Keele Learning Environment (KLE). The KLE is accessible to all students on and off campus and provides easy access to a wide range of resources and research tools, and as a platform for online discussions and blogs. (The KLE is an online learning environment that provides a range of tools to support students' learning, including access to documents and other resources, quizzes, discussion boards, assignments and announcements)

- In the case of the dissertation module, the opportunity to undertake a piece of advanced, independent research supervised and supported by a member of staff with expertise in the area.

- In addition to these formal activities, students are provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any particular learning needs they may have, with their module and tutorial group leaders on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways. For example:

- Independent learning is vital to the successful study of literature. It provides students with the requisite time and space in which to read and critically reflect by comparing a range of critical responses to texts. Prior independent study is central to effective work in seminars and workshops.

- Seminars and workshops provide opportunities for students to ask questions about the interpretation and analysis of literature, and to present their own ideas to members of staff and other students using an appropriate medium of communication.

- Undertaking an advanced research dissertation with the support of an experienced and active researcher allows students to formulate relevant research questions and devise a feasible strategy for answering them.

2.3 Teaching staff

The permanent English and American literatures teaching staff contributing to the programme comprise an appropriate mix of senior, mid-career and early-career scholars. All full-time members of staff have doctorates (PhDs or the equivalent) in English and/or in American Literature. All staff are active researchers and/or or published creative writers in their respective fields and are widely published in books, research monographs, and leading international journals, as well as in the form of novels and poetry collections. Collectively, they cover a wide range of interests in English, American, Canadian, and postcolonial literatures, as well as in Film Studies and Creative Writing.

All members of staff have extensive experience of teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level in universities in the UK, continental Europe, and North America. Several members of staff have been involved with the English Subject Centre, an organisation that coordinated events and research to allow academics in the field of literary studies to reflect on best practice and in the teaching of literature in English; many of its functions will survive beyond the Centre's formal winding up (loss of funding) in July 2011.

3. What is the structure of the Programme?

3.1 Modular structure

An outline of the structure of the Programme is provided in the table below. Compulsory core modules are shown in **bold**; optional modules are in regular font; their credit values are in parentheses.

The Humanities Master Research Training modules make up 30 credits, comprising Research Skills in the Humanities (15 credits) and Reflective Practice in the Humanities (15 credits). Canon, Anti-Canon, Context is a long, thin module taught across the first two semesters, worth 30 credits in total. In the first semester all students will take the compulsory

Criticism, Analysis, Theory module. In semester 2, students choose one of a number of options, each of which is worth 30 credits. They reflect the variety in cross-period and thematic spread of English as a subject. The dissertation module is worth 60 credits and although it runs mainly in semester 3, students will be encouraged to start thinking about dissertation topics much earlier. Part time students follow the same basic structure across two years, with slight modifications.

Full Time Mode

SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3
Humanities Masters Research Training: Research Skills in the Humanities (15)	**Humanities Masters Research Training: Reflective Practice in the Humanities (15)**	**Dissertation (60)**
Canon, Anti-Canon, Context (30)		
Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies (30)	**Option Module (30)** Postmoderism: Fiction Film and Theory Culture and Context Contemporary British Fiction Shakespearean Stages: Advanced Studies in the Plays of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries Romantic Voices Silence, Strength and Sentiment: Gender and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century American Writing James Joyce's *Ulysses* Canadian Metropolis **30 credits**	

Part Time Mode

SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3
Year 1		
Humanities Masters Research Training: Research Skills in the Humanities (15)	**Humanities Masters Research Training: Reflective Practice in the Humanities (15)**	
Canon, Anti-Canon, Context (30)		
Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies (30)		
Year 2		
Semester 1	**Semesters 2** and **3**	
Option module		
Narrative and Interpretation		
Dickens Collins and Detection and Neo-Victorian Contexts		
Sex, Scandal and Society: Eighteenth-Century Writing and Culture		
Film Noir: The Dark Side of America		
30 credits		
	Dissertation **60 Credits**	

3.2 Learning outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn on the Programme, the modules in which that learning takes place, and the main ways in which students are assessed on their learning.

HMRT=Humanities Masters Research Training

CAT=Criticism, Analysis, Theory,

CACC=Canon, Anti-Canon, Context

O=Optional module

D=Dissertation

Subject knowledge and understanding		
Outcome Students will be able to:	**Module**	**Assessment**
Critically assess the relevance and usefulness of primary and secondary sources	HMRT D CACC/CAT/O	Annotated Bibliography Dissertation Essay
Locate resources relevant to literary study in a relevant period or topic focus	HMRT	Annotated Bibliography
Critically evaluate a range of theoretical and critical perspectives affecting literary study	CACC/CAT/O	Essay
Critically consider the ways literary and critical theories have developed over time, within their historical context and in relation to each other, as well as insight into their critical claims and priorities.	CAT/CACC	Essay
Demonstrate advanced analytical ability when using theory in relation to literature	CAT	Essay
To undertake extensive research	D	Dissertation
Plan and construct a substantial independent research project in	HMRT	Project Outline

literary studies	D	Dissertation

Subject specific skills		

Outcome Students will be able to	**Module**	**Assessment**
Demonstrate the ability to make innovative findings and connections in research	D CAT/CACC/O HMRT	Dissertation Essay Reflective Diary
Reflect critically on the place of a specific research topic within wider debates in the humanities	HMRT	Reflective Diary
Engage in a research culture commensurate with postgraduate study	HMRT D	Reflective Diary Dissertation
Evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the field of literary studies	CAT/CACC/O D	Essay Dissertation
Demonstrate autonomy and originality in solving theoretical and practical problems in the field	HMRT	Project Outline
Communicate research process and research findings to diverse audiences using a variety of written, oral and visual means	CAT/CACC/O CACC Dissertation	Essay Oral presentation Dissertation

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)		

Outcome Students will be able to	**Module**	**Assessment**
Work productively to an advanced level in a largely unstructured context exercising initiative and personal responsibility	D CAT/CACC/O	Dissertation Essays
Make decisions and plan activity in response to developing contexts	HMRT D	Reflective Diary Dissertation
Undertake appropriate further	HMRT	Project Outline

training of an academic, professional, or practical nature	D	Dissertation
Design and complete a research project and demonstrate a knowledge of the importance of the research process	D HMRT CAT/CACC/O	Dissertation Project Outline Essays
Demonstrate a knowledge of literature collection and analysis	HMRT	Annotated Bibliography
Reflect critically on their own mode of study and learning, and the development of research topics	HMRT	Reflective Diary
(where applicable) Critically consider the application of context in the teaching of literature.	CACC	Report

3.3 Programme Routes

Students may leave the English Literatures Programme with one of three final awards.

Master of Arts Honours Degree (180 credits). To be awarded a Masters Honours Degree in English Literatures, a student requires a total of at least 180 credits. This will be made up of 120 credits in taught modules, and 60 credits for the dissertation.

Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). To be awarded a Diploma in Higher Education, a student normally requires a total of at least 120 credits. This will be made up of 120 credits for taught modules.

Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits). To be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate a student requires a total of at least 60 credits of taught modules.

4. How is the Programme assessed?

The function of the assessments listed in the table above is to test students' achievement of the learning outcomes of the English Literatures Programme. For example:

- **Essays** test the quality and application of subject knowledge. They allow students to demonstrate their ability to carry out bibliographic research and to communicate their ideas effectively in writing in an appropriate scholarly style using appropriate systems of referencing.

- **Critical Analyses** of other scholars' work test students' ability to identify and summarise the key points of a text and to evaluate the quality of arguments and the evidence used to support them. Critical analyses also assess students' knowledge of research methodologies and their ability to make critical judgements about the appropriateness of different approaches.

- **Annotated Bibliographies** test students' ability to analyse and evaluate critically a range of secondary and source materials with a view towards specific areas of research.

- **Project Outlines** test students' ability to plan, prepare, and structure a viable research project. They also test the students' knowledge of relevant and important areas of research within English literary studies, and to assess the originality and impact of certain areas of research to the field.

- **Reflective Study Diaries** test students' ability to engage self-reflexively with their study and practice within their field. They encourage students to develop a critical engagement with their modes and practices of study, learning and development of research topics.

- **Short research papers** test student's knowledge of different research methodologies. They also enable students to demonstrate their ability to formulate research questions and to answer them using an appropriate strategy.

- **Oral presentations, either by individual students or in groups,** assess students' subject knowledge and understanding. Where applicable, they also test their ability to work effectively as members of a team, to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development.

- **Dissertations** test students' ability to carry out independent research and communicate findings in an extended piece of written work following recognised academic standards of presentation.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess students' achievement of learning outcomes. Students are also assessed formatively to enable them to monitor their own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Formative assessment is not formally marked. Feedback, including guidance on how students can improve the quality of their work, is also provided on all summative assessments and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

5. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

Students are accepted onto the Programme on the basis of an honours degree at second class (normally a 2.1), or higher (or international equivalent). Applicants with other qualifications and appropriate experience are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students registered at overseas Institutions which are ERASMUS partners or have existing exchange agreements with Keele and who wish to take parts of this Programme as an exchange student will be required to satisfy the criteria for qualification for such an exchange agreed by their home institution in consultation with CIED.

Students for whom English is a second language will be required to satisfy the criteria outlined in the first paragraph of this section, however we will also require English language proficiency of at least 7.0 in IELTS test scores (or equivalent).

6. How are students supported on the Programme?

6.1 Faculty resources

Support for student learning on the Programme is provided in the following ways:

- Module and tutorial group leaders are responsible for providing support for learning on the modules and in the tutorial groups for which they are responsible. They also give individual feedback on in-course assessments.

- Additional help with University level study skills is available from the Learning Support Officer in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

- All members of teaching staff on the English Literatures MA Programme are available to see students during advertised weekly office hours and at other times by appointment.

6.2 Other learning resources

The English Literatures Programme is taught in modern teaching rooms across the University, almost all of which are equipped with computers, internet access, and electronic whiteboards or projection equipment. Rooms may be arranged either in traditional lecture format or more informally to allow students to work together in small groups.

The learning resources available to students on the Programme include:

- The extensive collection of materials relevant to postgraduate study of English Literature and related disciplines held in the University Library. Built up over 20 years of delivering English, Sociology, Geography, Music and Visual Arts at this level, these materials include books, journals, and videos. Much of this

material is also accessible online to Keele students from anywhere in the world with a University username and password.

- The Keele Learning Environment (KLE) which provides easy access to a wide range of learning resources including lecture notes, electronic materials available in a repository maintained by the University Library, and other resources – video, audio and text-based – accessible from external providers via the internet.

7. Quality management and enhancement

The Programme Director of English is responsible for the overall direction of learning and teaching on the English Literatures Postgraduate Programme, supported by the Humanities Research Institute Postgraduate Board, and the Graduate School. The Programme's Board consists of student representatives plus all members of staff teaching on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in English.

The quality and standards of learning in English at both undergraduate and postgraduate level are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review, and enhancement.

- The Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Committee of the School of Humanities is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.

- Individual modules on the English Programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year as part of the University' Curriculum Annual Review and Development (CARD) process.

- The Programme is run in accordance with the standards set out in the University's Academic Quality and Standards Manual (AQSM) and is subject to annual audits of its compliance with the Manual by the University's Assurance and Academic Audit Office.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on the English Literatures Programme takes place in several ways:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programmes Board as part of the Curriculum Annual Review and Development (CARD) process.

- Findings related to the English principal Programme from the annual National Student Survey (NSS), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at Programme and School level.

- Feedback received from representatives of students on the English Literary Studies Programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the English Programme's Staff/Student Liaison Committee.

In addition to this, the quality and standards of learning are regularly discussed and monitored by the English Programmes Board and by the Postgraduate Learning & Teaching Committee.

Senior members of academic staff from other universities are appointed by the University's Senate to act as external examiners on the English Literatures Programme. External examiners appointed to the programme will work in line with the University's published guidelines for external examiners.

8. The principles of programme design

The English Literatures MA Programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents

Programme Specification Template: Undergraduate, Keele University, 2009.

Guidelines for preparing programme specifications, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006.

The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006.

Subject Benchmark Statement: Communication, media, film and cultural studies, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2008.

Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007-2010, Keele University, 2007.

Keele Assessment Strategy, Keele University, 2008.

Educational Aims for Undergraduate Courses, Keele University, 2005.

Employability Skills Guidelines for Undergraduate Programmes, Keele University, 2007.

School of Sociology and Criminology Programme Specification: Masters Programme in Urban Futures and Sustainable Communities, Keele University, 2009.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Learning and Teaching Strategy 2007-2010, Keele University, 2007.

This programme specification was written in November 2010, and redrafted in July 2011, November and December 2011 by Prof. David Amigoni and Dr. Nick Seager.