

Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught For Academic Year 2026/27

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	MA English Literatures
Award type	Taught Masters
Mode of study	Full-time Modular Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	Not applicable
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	<p>UK students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2026/27 is £9,400</p> <p>Part-time fee for 2026/27 is £5,200*</p> <p>International students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2026/27 is £17,100</p>

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

2. Overview 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.

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 the Renaissance to the present day, and its scope extends to modules on American literature and Film Studies, as well as to the theoretical inquiry that has

become fundamental to the discipline over the last forty 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 range of optional modules whilst also maintaining a central coherence through two dedicated core modules, one of 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. Through an optional module, it also offers students the chance to pursue a Work Placement of their choosing, which may include working with a museum or archive, or any other institution where their English skills may be utilised.

MA English Literatures at Keele

The taught element of the Masters programme, then, comprises core modules in (1) Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts; (2) Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts; (3) Criticism, Analysis, Theory (4) Canon, Anti-Canon, Context, and (5) two optional modules. Following the taught element of the course students pursue a project 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.

3. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are 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 literatures 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.

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

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

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- 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 judgement 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.

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- Manage time and resources to deliver assignments by set deadlines 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.
- Communicate effectively with diverse audiences, both verbally and through written work.
- Synthesise large amounts of complex information to produce solutions to identified problems.

Keele Graduate attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social, environmental and ethical responsibility**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level 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, short stories, 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 project module, the opportunity to undertake a piece of advanced, independent research supervised and supported by a member of staff with relevant expertise.
- 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 seminar group leaders on a one-to-one basis.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Academic Mentors or module lecturers 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 project (for example, a 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.

6. 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 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 (from Renaissance to the present day), 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.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams; however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. Programme Structure

The full-time MA in English Literature consists of 180 credits taught across 3 semesters.

The Humanities Research methods modules make up 30 credits, comprising Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (15 credits) and Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (15 credits). In the first semester all students will take the compulsory Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies module (30 credits) and in the second Canon, Anti-Canon, Context (30 credits). In semesters 1 and 2, students choose one optional specialist subjects (15 credits) from two shell modules called Advanced Topics in English 1 and 2, whose content varies from year to year based on staff availability. Alternatively, they can choose the Work Placement module, which is 30 credits across semesters 1 and 2. The project 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.

NB: Full-time students are asked as part of one of their compulsory modules to develop a dissertation plan, which will then form the basis of the allocation of their dissertation supervisor at the end of semester 1. Part-time students are not required to identify a dissertation supervisor until semester 1 of their second year. Also, part-time students don't have semester 3 teaching in their first year.

Structure diagrams

Full-Time Mode

SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3
Humanities Masters Research Training: Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (GRT-40030) (15)	Humanities Masters Research Training: Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (GRT-40032) (15)	Project (60)
Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies (ENG-40007) (30)	Canon, Anti-Canon and Context (ENG-40032) (30)	
Optional: Advanced Topics in English 1 (ENG-40083) (15)	Optional: Advanced Topics in English 2 (ENG-40085) (15)	
Optional: Work Placement (ENG-40057) (30)		

Part-time programme (two years)

YEAR 1		
SEMESTER 1	SEMESTER 2	SEMESTER 3
Humanities Masters Research Training: Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (GRT-40030) (15)	Humanities Masters Research Training: Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts (GRT-40032) (15)	
Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies (ENG-40007) (30)	Optional: Advanced Topics in English 2 (ENG-40085) (15)	
YEAR 2		
Optional: Advanced Topics in English 1 (ENG-40083) (15)	Canon, Anti-Canon, Context (ENG-40032) (30)	Project (ENG-40043) (60)
Optional: Work Placement (ENG-40057) (30)		

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 7	150	30	30

Module Lists

Level 7

Optional modules are indicative and may change based on staff availability.

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies	ENG-40007	30	Semester 1
Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts	GRT-40030	15	Semester 1
Canon, Anti-Canon, Contexts	ENG-40032	30	Semester 2
Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts	GRT-40032	15	Semester 2
Project	ENG-40034	60	Semester 3

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Advanced Topic in English 1	ENG-40083	15	Semester 1
Work Placement for Humanities Postgraduates	ENG-40057	30	Semester 1-2
Advanced Topic in English 2	ENG-40085	15	Semester 2

Level 7 Module Rules

Continuing Keele University students will not be permitted to study enhanced versions of modules that they have already studied at undergraduate level.

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Critically assess the relevance and usefulness of primary and secondary sources	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 Advanced Topic in English 1 - ENG-40083 Advanced Topic in English 2 - ENG-40085 Core and optional modules
Locate resources relevant to literary study in a relevant period or topic focus	Project - ENG-40034 Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40030 All level 7 modules
Critically evaluate a range of theoretical and critical perspectives affecting literary study	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 Advanced Topic in English 1 - ENG-40083 Advanced Topic in English 2 - ENG-40085 Core and optional modules
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.	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 ENG-40007; ENG-40032
Demonstrate advanced analytical ability when using theory in relation to literature	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40032 ENG-40007
To undertake extensive research	Project - ENG-40034 ENG-40034
Plan and construct a substantial independent research project in literary studies	Project - ENG-40034 ENG-40034;

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Demonstrate the ability to make innovative findings and connections in research	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 Project - ENG-40034 Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40030 Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40032 Optional module
Reflect critically on the place of a specific research topic within wider debates in the humanities	Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40032 Compulsory module
Engage in a research culture commensurate with postgraduate study	All level 7 modules
Evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the field of literary studies	Criticism, Analysis, Theory in Literary Studies - ENG-40007 Advanced Topic in English 1 - ENG-40083 Advanced Topic in English 2 - ENG-40085 Core and optional modules
Demonstrate autonomy and originality in solving theoretical and practical problems in the field	Project - ENG-40034 Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40030 Reflective Practice in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40032 All level 7 modules
Communicate research process and research findings to diverse audiences using a variety of written, oral and visual means	All level 7 modules

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Work productively to an advanced level in a largely unstructured context exercising initiative and personal responsibility	Project - ENG-40034 eng-40034
Make decisions and plan activity in response to developing contexts	All level 7 modules
Undertake appropriate further training of an academic, professional, or practical nature	Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40030 GRT-40030
Design and complete a research project and demonstrate a knowledge of the importance of the research process	Project - ENG-40034 ENG-40034
Demonstrate a knowledge of literature collection and analysis	Research Methods in the Humanities, Media, and Creative Arts - GRT-40030 GRT-40030
Reflect critically on their own mode of study and learning, and the development of research topics	All level 7 modules

8. Final and intermediate awards

Master's Degree	180 credits	You will require 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	You will require a total of at least 120 credits of taught modules.
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credits	You will require a total of at least 60 credits of taught modules.

9. Programme Assessment

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as students progress through the programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular, and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things students did not understand and improve their performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on this programme:

- **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 essays** 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 your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

10. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. Typical admission requirements for the programme

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

13. Support for students on the programme

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

- All students are assigned an Academic Mentor who is their first point of contact for any queries or concerns they have about their studies and can advise in a pastoral capacity. Likewise, the Programme Director is also available to answer questions or queries about course progression.
- Module and seminar 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.
- Careers support is available via the university's Careers and Employability team who run one-to-one consultations, generic and bespoke sessions.

14. Learning Resources

The English Literature 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, History, Sociology, 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.

15. Additional Costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

16. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), 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 programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

17. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

b. QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: English (2019) https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-english.pdf?sfvrsn=47e2cb81_4

c. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 19 May 2026

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2025/26	JAMES PEACOCK	12 June 2025	
1	2024/25	JAMES PEACOCK	10 June 2024	ENG-40014, ENG-40031, FIL-40016 & AMS-40040 removed
1	2023/24	NICHOLAS BENTLEY	17 April 2023	
1	2022/23	NICHOLAS BENTLEY	16 June 2022	
1	2021/22	RACHEL ADCOCK	28 April 2022	
1	2020/21	RACHEL ADCOCK	26 April 2021	