

# Subject Benchmark Statement: Creative Writing

## The Basics

This summary is designed to provide a short and accessible overview of the Subject Benchmark Statement for Creative Writing for students, employers, and academics. It is not intended to replace or alter the Statement, which should be referred to in the design and approval of courses and when any further detail is required.

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the benchmark academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas, and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their course or programme.

Subject Benchmark Statements are presented in four sections. Section 1 outlines the contextual information - providing the operational landscape, and boundaries, of subject discipline. This includes consideration of the ways in which the discipline addresses wider social goals specifically in relation to: equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI); the requirements of disabled students; education for sustainable development (ESD); and enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Section 2 covers distinctive features of the course, including curriculum design, partnership arrangements, flexibility of delivery, progression and ongoing monitoring processes. Section 3 explains any features relevant to teaching, learning and assessment activities for the subject. Section 4 describes the benchmark standards of achievement reached by all graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours in the subject, with some subjects also including achievement at master's level.



## Why study a degree in Creative Writing?

In its focus on imagination, initiative, curiosity and the transformative power of language, Creative Writing, as an academic subject, develops skills, disciplines and cognitive abilities now recognised as fundamental both to civic wellbeing and economic vitality. The study of creative writing has grown alongside the expansion of the creative industries in Britain, which continue to develop at a faster rate than the rest of the UK economy.

A Creative Writing degree equips graduates to contribute to five key creative sectors: publishing; film, television, video and audio; museums, galleries and libraries; music, theatre and performing arts; video game design; and marketing, advertising and verbal design. Creative Writing graduates are also employed in a wide range of activities beyond these industries, including enterprise, education and other areas of the knowledge economy. Creative Writing develops artistic and intellectual confidence, independent thinking and skills based on attention to detail, nuance and effect, and, as such, supports graduates in shaping their contribution as writers, thinkers and makers within an intensely competitive economic environment.

Creative Writing is a highly interdisciplinary subject that supports both individual and group work. Students in Creative Writing are encouraged to develop their own creative practices and methodologies, working collaboratively and closely alongside their peers in workshops, and under the expert guidance of their teachers. They study and experiment in working with a wide variety of genres, forms and modes of creative production.

Students are encouraged to place their work within the context of contemporary and historical practices of creative production. As a subject, Creative Writing draws from a wide range of traditions, cultures and practices, including poetics, mythology, story making, folklore and oracy (speaking and listening skills). Studying these contexts enables students to experience new and unfamiliar styles and approaches that will assist them in generating original, creative work. The process of analysing and interrogating cultural production at the level of craft and composition provides students with the tools to fully explore the cultures they inhabit and in which they function.

Graduates gain broad and transferable skills, finding application for their learning through teaching, editing, community arts work, arts management and administration, journalism and feature-writing, communications and social media, or within other areas of the creative industries such as advertising, film, digital media, podcasting, video production and computer game production. Creative Writing graduates are ideally placed to become the creative entrepreneurs of the future. Many established contemporary writers are Creative Writing graduates.



## What are the main teaching and learning approaches in Creative Writing?

Creative Writing makes use of numerous teaching and learning strategies which recognise the value of different life experiences and help students to understand a range of perspectives. Creative Writing teaching and learning involves direct instruction, peer and staff discussion of student writing and reading, and independent study and research. The subject helps students to understand how to hone their skills through experimentation, risk-taking and failure, as part of the pedagogical process.

Creative Writing can be taught in a variety of environments. These may include lectures, seminars and workshops; in-person, online or hybrid delivery. Learning environments for Creative Writing in other disciplines, such as science, may also take a variety of forms beyond seminar and classroom. These include virtual spaces to support online delivery, indoors and outdoors and on-site locations, physical learning spaces both on and off the campus - including attending performances, and field trips, industry and work placements.

Each course defines its own intended learning outcomes in ways that command credibility and recognise the need to ensure academic standards by means of the professional scrutiny provided by internal peer review and external examiners.



## How are students assessed?

The assessment of Creative Writing courses includes a mix of methods that are accessible to disabled students and students from varying educational and cultural backgrounds.

Where individual students may be disadvantaged by particular assessment methods, adjustments to those assessments are considered in discussion with the student concerned, while ensuring fairness across the full cohort. The procedures used for assessment cover the subject knowledge (breadth and depth), abilities and skills developed through the degree course.

Students undertake both formative and summative forms of assessment. Formative assessment is a central function of the workshop process, which involves tutor feedback and peer assessment, as well as a growing ability to self-critique. Formative assessment may also take the form of written feedback on work in progress. Summative assessment in a Creative Writing course is geared to the intended outcomes of each element or module. The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each aspect of a Creative Writing degree are clearly articulated in course documents available to students.

Many courses culminate in the production of a portfolio, dissertation or research project in which students formulate, plan and execute an independent course of enquiry, expanding on a specialism or core area of interest that they have developed during their studies. This leads to an extended creative output, which may include an accompanying element such as an abstract, critical essay, reflective analysis or report.



## Benchmark Standards

The minimum threshold standards that a student will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Creative Writing are outlined on **pages 22-26** of the Subject Benchmark Statement. The vast majority of students will perform significantly better than the minimum threshold standards. Each higher education provider has its own method of determining what appropriate evidence of this achievement will be and readers should refer to [Annex D in The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). This Annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for a bachelor's degrees with honours - 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

The full statement was developed by subject experts drawn from across the sector. Details of the Advisory Group can be found on **page 28** of the full Statement.

### Read the full Subject Benchmark Statement

The [full Subject Benchmark Statement](#) is available on the QAA website.



Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as a membership organisation on behalf of the higher education sector.

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