



Subject Benchmark Statement

Creative Writing

April 2024



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About this Statement

This document is a QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Creative Writing that defines what can be expected of a graduate in the subject, in terms of what they might know, do and understand at the end of their studies. Subject Benchmark Statements are an established part of the quality assurance arrangements in UK higher education, but not a regulatory requirement. They are sector-owned reference points, developed and written by academics on behalf of their subject. Subject Benchmark Statements also describe the nature and characteristics of awards in a particular subject or area. Subject Benchmark Statements are published in QAA's capacity as an expert quality body on behalf of the higher education sector. A summary of the Statement is also available on the QAA website.

Key changes from the previous Subject Benchmark Statement include:

- a revised structure of the Statement, which includes the introduction of cross-cutting themes of:
 - equality, diversity and inclusion
 - accessibility and the needs of disabled students
 - education for sustainability development
 - employability, entrepreneurship and enterprise education
- a comprehensive review updating the context and purposes, including course design and content, in order to inform and underpin the revised benchmark standards.

How can I use this document

Subject Benchmark Statements are not intended to prescribe any particular approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Rather, they provide a framework, agreed by the subject community, that forms the basis on which those responsible for curriculum design, approval and update can reflect upon a course and its component modules. This allows for flexibility and innovation in course design while providing a broadly accepted external reference point for that discipline.

They may also be used as a reference point by external examiners in considering whether the design of a course and the threshold standards of achievement are comparable with those of other higher education providers. They also support

professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with the academic standards expected of students.

You may want to read this document if you are:

- involved in the design, delivery and review of courses in Creative Writing
- a prospective student thinking about undertaking a course in Creative Writing
- an employer, to find out about the knowledge and skills generally expected of Creative Writing graduates.

Relationship to legislation

The responsibility for academic standards lies with the higher education provider which awards the degree. Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them by their relevant funding and regulatory bodies. This Statement does not interpret legislation, nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements.

The status of the Statement will differ depending on the educational jurisdictions of the UK. In England, Subject Benchmark Statements are not sector-recognised standards as set out under the Office for Students' [regulatory framework](#). However, they are specified as a key reference point, as appropriate, for academic standards in Wales under the [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#) and in Scotland as part of the [Quality Enhancement Framework](#). Subject Benchmark Statements are part of the current quality arrangements in Northern Ireland. Because the Statement describes outcomes and attributes expected at the threshold standard of achievement in a UK-wide context, many higher education providers will use them as an enhancement tool for course design and approval, and for subsequent monitoring and review, in addition to helping demonstrate the security of academic standards.

Additional sector reference points

Higher education providers are likely to consider other reference points in addition to this Statement in designing, delivering and reviewing courses. These may include requirements set out by PSRBs and industry or employer expectations. QAA has also published [Advice and Guidance](#) to support the [Quality Code for Higher Education](#), which will be helpful when using this Statement - for

example, in [course design](#), [learning and teaching](#), [external expertise](#) and [monitoring and evaluation](#).

Explanations of unfamiliar terms used in this Subject Benchmark Statement can be found in [QAA's Glossary](#). Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Statement where appropriate.

1 Context and purposes of a Creative Writing degree

1.1 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 to civic well-being, **continued social progress** and economic vitality. The study of Creative Writing has grown alongside the expansion of the creative industries which continue to develop at a faster rate than the rest of the UK economy. A Creative Writing degree equips graduates to contribute to six 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.

1.2 **Creative Writing is a highly interdisciplinary subject that supports both individual and group work.** Undergraduate 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. **Creative Writing also addresses the needs of lifelong learners by embedding productive writing routines and approaches.** Through this process, creative writing students learn to adopt an independent, proactive and self-motivated approach to researching, drafting and redrafting their work.

1.3 As well as developing a range of subject-specific skills such as authorship, readership and editing, Creative Writing degrees also support the development of transferable skills. 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, respects and appreciates the individual significance of a wide range of traditions, cultures and practices, including a diverse range of literature, histories, drama, poetics, mythology, story analysis, narrative**

production, folklore, public speaking and the rhetorical arts. Studying these practices enables students to experience new and unfamiliar styles and approaches that will assist them in generating original, creative work, **enrich their frame of reference and contribute to highlighting and revitalising cultural practices**. 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.

1.4 Writing degrees can help students to develop communication skills that are of value across many subjects and professions. Fostering stronger and more imaginative approaches to literacy and oracy are key aims of the subject. Through regular workshops and peer-feedback activities, Creative Writing students learn to express themselves verbally, as well as through written work. Evaluating their writing with the help of peer support and tutor guidance enables students to engage in productive reflection and collaboration, as well as supporting the development of writing communities that may extend beyond the workshop space.

1.5 The growth of the teaching and learning of Creative Writing has led to a flourishing research culture that embraces the traditional production and reception of stories, novels, plays, poetry collections and scripts, while moving beyond this to explore new modes of creative expression and communication in emergent media forms. **Research, which may be funded, includes collaborative partnerships with non-governmental organisations, charities, schools, libraries, museums, scientific researchers, arts organisations, public bodies and businesses, as well as various types of archival research.** Creative Writing is itself a form of research and enquiry and is acknowledged as such by the Research Excellence Framework.

1.6 **input from a diverse range of creatives and storytellers without these specific qualifications or experiences is also highly desirable and impactful for Creative Writing students.** It is common for teachers of Creative Writing to engage in both creative and critical research projects. **Creative Writing is an art and practice, a way of engaging the world and the self, a method of examining language and artistic creation, and a process of acknowledging and analysing different forms of literary creativity from diverse cultures.** Within this context, the subject is a site of creative and critical knowledge-making.

1.7 Students of Creative Writing can expect to develop skills in literacy, verbal and non-verbal communication, narration and storytelling, as well as a more

general curiosity in their approach to creative and cultural production. Graduates demonstrate an advanced set of transferable skills suitable for a range of professional destinations. In addition to gaining skills for the workplace, many students choose to study Creative Writing for its life-enhancing properties - studying Creative Writing can broaden horizons and offer well-being benefits, including increased confidence in self-expression, voice and use of language.

Purposes and characteristics of a Creative Writing degree

Purposes of Creative Writing in higher education

- Providing a creative and intellectually stimulating learning environment for students to produce new writing.
- Supporting students to develop written, verbal and non-verbal, expressive, poetic and storytelling skills.
- Demonstrating the significance of creative writing as an awareness building and advocacy tool and encouraging students to use their own writing as such for causes linked to their personal values.
- Facilitating expression of Creative Writing through established or new media, generating curiosity and stimulating the exploration of different approaches.
- Encouraging students to experiment with, and gain a greater understanding of, a range of different genres, forms and methodologies from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures.
- Fostering students' confidence in their own creative processes, with an emphasis on the principle that process can be as important as product, since both generate.
- Inspiring enthusiasm for the subject and an understanding of its social, cultural, environmental, aesthetic, political and economic importance, both actual and potential.
- Broadening knowledge and awareness of the skills, traditions and disciplines that Creative Writing develops, for example in poetics, mythology, literacy, oracy, drama, folklore and storytelling.
- Building confidence in the process of writing through a critical, technical and creative understanding of the subject/craft/art and of their own creative processes.

- Developing observational and analytical modes of thought and creative practice.
- Supporting students in the practice of empathy and self-reflection as part of creative processes, as a listening technique in peer workshops, and in the process of engaging audiences.
- Helping students to engage with the creative economy, to develop employment strategies, and to become skilled at adapting their writing for different and evolving audiences.
- Fostering respectful and inclusive understanding through the experience of creative production, to develop mutual responsibility and community among students and writers.
- Stimulating students' writerly ambitions and supporting them in achieving their personal and professional aspirations regarding their own creative practice.
- Helping students to develop a resilient and participatory approach to the processes of producing, editing and showcasing new creative work.
- Preparing students to enter a range of highly competitive creative industries and environments by, for example, developing and submitting work for print publication, literary competitions, spoken word and dramatic performance, and transmedia adaptation.
- Cultivating an awareness of the economic climate in which their future careers will take place, by offering strategies for sustaining a living as a writer, such as developing a portfolio of occupations and skills, self-marketing, social media activity, career planning, fundraising and exploring complementary professions.

Characteristics of Creative Writing in higher education

1.8 Creative Writing is an artistic and critical discipline in which practitioners may work in many different media, including digital content, live performance, interactive content, screen production, audio recording, print-based publishing, and new and emergent forms of writing. Creative Writing can also be considered as a foundational skill which underlies and enhances a wide range of economic, social and cultural modes of production.

1.9 The focus of Creative Writing is the generation of ideas and the expression of originality through literary, poetic and/or narrative forms. To support this focus, learning in Creative Writing typically involves the development

of skills and techniques which may be linguistic, conceptual, practical, mythological, narratological, dramatic and poetic.

1.10 Originality in Creative Writing indicates writing which reflects the unique cultural, literary, and personal contexts in which each writer works. Writers should feel equipped and free to experiment with writing and draw extensively on their own diverse range of lived experiences. Innovative modes of writing are developed gradually, through a process of combining individual approaches to self-expression with existing ideas, forms and techniques of writing. What emerges is novel work that expresses influences in a way that could only be achieved by the writer in question.

- Creativity lies at the heart of Creative Writing, and students are supported to create distinctive work out of the raw materials provided to them by their personal, cultural and social circumstances.
- Students are encouraged to explore personal modes of expression and, to complement this, to experiment with intertextual influences. Originality can emerge dialogically from playful interactions with other writers, acquaintances, materials, sources and technologies.
- Understanding the creative potential of different forms (such as the underlying structures of narrative, poetics and storytelling) can equip students with the ability to recognise, experiment with and transform a wide range of crafts, practices and modes of expression
- Original writing may be heavily influenced by scholarly traditions of writing and the work of others, but will always exhibit innovation, developing ideas, styles and genres in new ways. Students will be equipped to challenge existing paradigms and examine new ways of thinking
- Originality, thus, emerges through a dialectical exploration of personal style, experience, the environment and history within the context of established and emerging forms of writing.

1.11 The study of Creative Writing develops analytical research skills and reading. Research in Creative Writing will involve both creative practice as research and more traditional methods of research, such as historical, social, cultural, ideological, experiential, reflexive and analytical research.

1.12 Reading includes engagement with traditional and contemporary models of imaginative writing and diverse texts, including the exploration and deconstruction of different forms of texts and narratives such as video games,

audio, podcasts and multimedia. Reading might also encompass writers' essays on practice, literary criticism and critical theory.

1.13 Creative Writing projects can also be creative-critical, with the resulting creative text engaging in a critical or theoretical argument and/or practical exploration of process, method and technique. Individual perspectives are broadened by engagement with texts that are culturally and stylistically diverse, as well as with texts that might deepen the student writer's awareness of their own and others' identities, experiences and idioms. Appropriate theoretical frameworks may be used to help position the student writer's practice, and to further their understanding of a text's relevance to wider cultural thought and debate, giving a deeper insight into the themes of justice, inequality and colonialism.

1.14 Creative Writing provides a strong foundation in literary and media analysis, helping students develop critical skills and deeper understanding of the production of creative media and literary works. This includes editing skills developed through the reading and review of peer writing, or the analysis of live performance such as spoken word.

1.15 Creative Writing supports the development of professional, entrepreneurial, social and advocacy skills. Creative Writing students may be given opportunities to use and apply their writing within different professional settings. Collaborative projects with other writers and cultural producers foster the development of vital skills in teamwork and co-production.

1.16 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, theatre 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.

1.17 Creative Writing appears in a variety of types of degree, which reflect the autonomy, specialisms and traditions within individual degree-awarding bodies.

1.18 When partnered with another subject discipline, Creative Writing can provide fresh practice-based ways of studying that discipline. Since creative

projects are often implicitly or explicitly hybrid in conception and form, Creative Writing is naturally **inter- and multi-disciplinary**.

1.19 Creative Writing students may be assessed for individual or collaborative work; the latter particularly applies if their work forms part of a larger, interdisciplinary project.

1.20 Teaching and learning activities employed by Creative Writing courses will often involve significant opportunities for peer-to-peer feedback. Creative Writing students may be exposed to a range of perspectives when presenting their work. Such collaborative activities can be considered as a key stage in the development of student work. Students should be encouraged to take advantage of these experiences to refine their skills in giving and receiving feedback, in a manner that is both productive and empathetic.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

1.21 Creative Writing courses aim to create learning environments (physical and virtual) and build communities within which all students can encounter diverse, multidisciplinary texts and respond through creative, critical and self-reflexive writing. The community-building experiences and the texts introduced to students in a Creative Writing setting are selected to act in alignment with the principles of equality, diversity and inclusivity as informed by the [Equality Act 2010](#).

1.22 Over the course of their learning experience, Creative Writing students prepare for careers in the creative industries, publishing and other sectors. The goal is to support all students to reach their potential and to overcome any barriers that they might face, ensuring that no one is disadvantaged. This can be achieved by embedding inclusivity **and diversity** into curricula, pedagogies, reading materials and assessments to promote and support the development of broad cultural and critical awareness which aligns with the subject, **and to decolonise both the subject and students' perspectives as future creative writers**. Reading lists and materials may be designed to reflect the diversity of the cohort and/or of the national population.

1.23 Course teams and providers encourage all young people with an interest in Creative Writing to become prospective students by undertaking outreach to a diverse range of students including in schools and colleges in areas with a lower socio-economic status.

1.24 Hiring teams also make efforts to uplift diverse individuals in the Creative Writing sphere and present diverse role models to students by attracting, facilitating and retaining diverse staff in all roles and ensuring a suitable working and study environment for all. For example, course teams should have an understanding of caring responsibilities for staff which considers the timing of meetings and other practical arrangements, they should also have an understanding of or at least exert no bias towards staff wearing ethnic hair and clothing styles.

1.25 Creative Writing courses also aim to foster supportive learning environments in which all students have a sense of belonging to the subject community. This may be reflected in a diverse student and staff cohort, in a space that promotes opportunities to engage in critical dialogue, exploring, challenging, critiquing, deconstructing and building on established paradigms as well as institutional and external networks.

1.26 Creative writing, as with many forms of creative expression, has historically been used to uphold damaging narratives by perpetuating racist, sexist, homophobic stereotypes and white supremacy. Creative Writing courses should not ignore this facet of its history and should instead educate students on why and how this can be done, the impacts it can have on society, and how to identify these techniques.

1.27 Course developers **should** engage with approaches implemented at institutional level, for example, through Access and Participation Plans (England), Enhancement-led Institutional Review (Scotland), Access to Success Strategy (Northern Ireland) and Strategic Equality Plan (Wales). To further support participation, Creative Writing course leaders may work closely with official student representatives, internal university support mechanisms (such as the Students' Union, and Student Well-being teams) **and external advisory groups for the specific communities course leaders wish to support** to develop more inclusive learning communities and writing pedagogies that support diversity.

1.28 Creative Writing course leaders and developers may also consult with external agencies, incubators, industry bodies, and/or publishers set up to address the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion. External organisations with a remit for diversity can help students to develop inclusive professional networks and strategies for tackling inequalities in the publishing and creative industries.

1.29 The imaginative and student-centred ethos of many Creative Writing courses puts the subject in a good position to develop a range of innovative responses to the themes of equality, diversity and inclusion through direct engagement with the creative content and learning processes. For example, Creative Writing courses have historically encouraged students to critically engage with processes of textual production and consumption. Building on these critical traditions, Creative Writing courses can foster new practices, pedagogies and communities that help students to examine both the creative values and the limitations of classical texts, and their societal contexts. Many Creative Writing courses encourage writers to explore their own influences and create their own reading lists. Likewise, students are often encouraged to experiment with diverse languages and dialects, embracing local, national and transnational voices. Learning strategies such as these can foster inclusivity diversity and equity by enabling students to develop their own pedagogies and define their own canon of forms, styles and voices

1.30 Courses ensure the safety and equal treatment of all students and staff during teaching and assessment both on and off campus. Attitudes towards race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, pregnancy, age and socioeconomic status should all be considered before planning or taking course trips both locally and internationally.

Accessibility

1.31 There are many routes of entry into Creative Writing courses, including A Levels, Scottish Highers, access courses and accreditation of prior learning. Adult returners to education are welcomed in Creative Writing departments.

1.32 Creative Writing is open to all individuals, including students from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, students with a broad spectrum of specific learning disabilities, students with physical impairments, and neurodiverse students. Applications to Creative Writing courses from applicants with specific learning difficulties or neurodivergent conditions are welcome and actively encouraged. In addition, the value and utility of creative writing in the working world is demonstrated and promoted, ensuring that the course is inclusive to students from all economic backgrounds. Prospective undergraduates applying through UCAS can disclose any disability or condition that may require reasonable adjustment to be made to allow them a fair opportunity to complete their course.

1.33 Entry requirements should account for non-standard qualifications and work or other life experiences to ensure prospective students who have taken non-traditional paths to Higher Education and still have the prerequisite knowledge and skills to join the course have equitable chance of doing so.

1.34 Creative Writing courses in the UK may require evidence of a high standard of written English at the point of entry, which could present a barrier for some applicants with learning disabilities (for example, those with dyslexia). However, some Creative Writing courses permit applicants to submit creative writing portfolios or to present their work in person. These alternative types of submissions are a common convention within the sector as they enable assessors to review writing samples against multiple criteria in line with the requirements of the course. For example, applicant writing samples can be judged on technical proficiency and/or reviewed for evidence of expressivity, creativity and voice. Approaches to entry that enable applicants to demonstrate a broad range of written, verbal, and non-verbal skills through a portfolio or presentation may help to widen participation and accessibility.

1.35 Accessibility should be thoroughly embedded into course design and curriculum rather than only tacked on through reasonable adjustments. This benefits all students but particularly makes the course more accessible to students with disabilities, caring or working responsibilities, undiagnosed conditions or short-term impairments and significantly reduces the additional cognitive burden of organising reasonable adjustments while learning and producing work. Additional personalised adjustments should be implemented where a student's circumstances are not accounted for in embedded anticipatory measures.

1.36 Course designers and tutors consider accessibility when developing learning materials and learning platforms; they aim to ensure that:

- a range of accessible materials (including digital, print and audiovisual materials) is available in advance of lessons, to support different learning styles, disabilities and needs
- educators are available and approachable for queries from students who may need extra support
- all education environments are accessible to all students, and are fit for purpose as safe, inclusive learning spaces; to this end, consideration of space for mobility aids, support workers, the visibility of boards and other display equipment and audibility of session leaders and presentation

material is essential; associated enabling technology is also required to capture the live display of material and ensure accurate captions

- learning environments enable access to any resources or technology essential to support individual students; in particular, due consideration is given to students' economic circumstances, for example by ensuring that all students can access digital resources
- physical and digital learning materials, and learning tasks such as readings, activities, assignments and group work, are available in accessible formats, with participation barriers such as digital inequality also considered and mitigated through library provision and other appropriate institutional interventions; reasonable adjustments may include incorporating hybrid or blended approaches to learning and adjusting placements
- organisations providing placements have been screened to ensure they are accessibility and inclusivity compliant, with appropriate insurances in place.

1.37 Collaborative and/or peer-led workshops are a common feature of many Creative Writing courses. During these workshops students read a section of their writing in progress to the group. The tutor then invites other workshop participants to provide feedback on the work in progress. There are some important critiques of pedagogical approaches to workshops which are worth considering when designing inclusive learning experiences. While workshops can provide a valuable learning experience, additional preparation is required to ensure that the experience is accessible to all students, including those with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, and neurodivergent and chronic mental health conditions.

1.38 Learning support plans can be used to establish reasonable adjustments for students who are eligible for dedicated support. A diverse range of assessment strategies can help support students and respond to a variety of learning needs. Some individual needs with respect to inclusivity and/or accessibility may only become apparent during evolving conversations with students over the duration of their learning experience. While it is possible to prepare accessible materials in advance, an adaptable approach may be required

1.39 Course providers should work to ensure that all opportunities for students remain accessible for those with physical disabilities, neurodiversity or mental health conditions, along with those who have experience of socioeconomic

disadvantage. Providers must ensure that site and study visits remain accessible and affordable for all groups and provide assistance where necessary.

Sustainability

1.40 [Education for Sustainable Development](#) is an educational change agenda which aims to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attributes and values required to examine the world critically, and collaborate with others in taking informed decisions which contribute to 'environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity' (UNESCO, 2017). In developing students' ability to communicate, collaborate, create and think critically with a range of perspectives in mind, Creative Writing works towards these goals.

1.41 Creative Writing courses can link creative practice to sustainability and environmental issues by exploring the relationship between the human and non-human across different creative genres, and between different modes and methods of story-making and writing. As a discipline, the creative, speculative and imaginative aspects of Creative Writing engage directly with critical thinking; with self-awareness through reflective practices; and with anticipatory thinking: three of UNESCO's [Key Competencies for Sustainable Development](#) (2017).

1.42 Imaginative writing encourages students to explore place, planet, climate, community, habitat, and the life of other species. Creative Writing students may engage with the natural environment through the study or practice of nature writing, environmental poetry, environmental journalism, or plays, scripts and fiction on environmental themes, although this list is by no means prescriptive or exhaustive. Creative Writing cultivates qualities of attention and empathy, close observation of detail and imaginative evocation, which help students adopt an active and participatory relationship with the world.

1.43 Research for Creative Writing may form a sense of community, environmental or ethical responsibility by encouraging students to examine subjects that might include their local areas, landscapes they know, environmental movements, climate justice, environmental science and natural history. Students should feel equipped to use their writing to challenge traditional narratives and paradigms and embrace diverse understanding about climate justice. Creative writers can also be encouraged to consider how elements of their story (such as the needs of characters, or the dynamics of the place within which the story is set) model wider ecological systems and contexts.

1.44 Learning about recent developments in publishing nature writing, prizes for environmental writing, and dedicated environmental publications helps students to relate questions of sustainability to their own learning and practice as writers. Creative Writing students might enquire into the idea of 'nature' and 'the more than human', and the ways in which different kinds of writing about the natural world affect and inform the human relationship to other forms of life.

1.45 Creative Writing also encourages students to research and explore cultures outside their own. This exploration allows students to begin to understand the different experiences, perceptions, histories and values different individuals and communities have, how these influence their later experience and insights, and the vast diversity of human individuals and cultures. When courses include education around the Sustainable Development Goals students can apply this knowledge to understanding how local and global advancements in sustainable development can benefit all human societies equitably.

1.46 Course teams should embed sustainable practices and technologies into Creative Writing teaching and learning to both facilitate educators in teaching and demonstrating as well as encourage students to integrate sustainability into their practice as a creative writer from the outset of their careers. This may include reducing energy and resource consumption, including methods of learning through peer to peer teaching, educating students on the sustainability of physical vs e-books and other electronic methods of storing writing, highlighting the importance of accurately and respectfully representing minority groups, and raising awareness of the barriers certain individuals and groups may face in accessing creative writing as both readers and writers.

1.47 Sustainable development addresses social and economic concerns as well as the environment, and the interdisciplinary scope of Creative Writing can foster students' understanding of global interdependencies and alternative perspectives. The emphasis on creativity, imagination and communication in Creative Writing means students are well placed to conceive sustainable futures, and to cultivate poetics, ritual, language and story as a medium of possibility, exploration, change and transformation, **challenging current norms and understanding, societal priorities and imagined futures.** By working with and in response to historical and contemporary texts and other forms of cultural production, Creative Writing attends to issues of change and continuity, encouraging a critical, creative and reflexive attitude in relation to the past, present and future. The subject therefore equips students to respond flexibly, not only to current issues of sustainability, but also to those not yet identified or yet to emerge.

Enterprise and entrepreneurship education

1.48 [Enterprise and entrepreneurship education](#) supports behaviours, attributes and competencies that are likely to have a significant impact on the individual student in terms of successful careers. It prepares students for changing environments and provides enhanced impact through activities that build links between academic institutions and external organisations.

1.49 Beyond employment, entrepreneurship education provides competencies to help students lead a rewarding, self-determined professional life, well placed to add social, cultural, **environmental** and economic value to society through their careers.

1.50 Creative Writing enables students to develop the specific skills, capabilities and knowledge needed to adapt and flourish in different professional environments and contexts. These include:

- excellent communication skills, including editing, curatorial and publishing skills
- precise knowledge of how to deploy written register tone
- skills in composing and deconstructing stories
- **creative and critical awareness, with a focus on the interpersonal skills needed for ethical economic development, professional challenges, community inclusivity, and health and well-being for writers and others in society**
- confidence to explore and innovate new forms of publishing and knowledge creation, including through digital, hybrid and immersive platforms
- confidence to respond to a professional brief and/or to set briefs for other people
- **experimentation, innovation and interdisciplinary approaches, along with a sense of curiosity and the ability to spot and develop new and emerging opportunities**
- creative-critical thinking and analysis, including imaginative approaches to problem-solving
- understanding the ethics of creating, publishing, reading and performing work
- **recognising the role of diverse voices and opinions in creative opportunities**; the ability to tell a story from different perspectives and points of view

- communication, workshopping, feedback and collaborative problem solving
- self-management skills of active learning and resilience
- decision making, facilitation and inclusive leadership skills
- an ability to adapt to and respond creatively to technological, ecological and environmental societal challenges
- an ability to explore a challenge, problem or situation from different points of view and perspectives
- insights into issues of great complexity, deploying interdisciplinary methodologies, innovative thinking and approaches
- commissioning writing from others and writing to commission.

2 Distinctive features of the Creative Writing degree

2.1 The design of Creative Writing courses is characterised by:

- a focus on cultivating and strengthening independent creative agency, research, and collaborative skills
- attention to the breadth of evolving story, poetic and narrative forms, themes and literary contexts in the practice of writing, performance and publishing
- diverse and rigorous approaches, based on a commitment to tradition and inventiveness
- an exploration of the relationship between creative and critical practices
- experimentation with different modes of expression, including the written word, verbal and non-verbal communication and digital media
- responsiveness to practitioner needs and interests, guided, where appropriate, by interdisciplinarity and industry
- engagement with a variety of different audiences and readers
- an openness to possibility and risk, mitigated by ethical considerations, frameworks and safeguarding duties
- supporting students to develop the context and place of their writing in a rapidly changing world
- disciplinary practices, such as peer review, that develop innovation and adaptability.

2.2 Through study of the subject, Creative Writing students will:

- be practised in the expressive, imaginative and affective resources of language and story, including structure and form
- understand text, narrative and language as artistic materials, including historical traditions and new possibilities for usage
- recognise a range of audience responses to and interpretations of their work
- develop critical insights, capabilities and capacities
- have responsibility for their own work, from conception through to development, editing and final redrafting
- be practised in, and appreciate the significance of, editing work over successive drafts, both independently and in discussion with tutors and fellow students through peer review

- appreciate a wide range of creative and cultural contexts for the production and consumption of writing.

Progression

2.3 Over the course of a degree with honours (FHEQ Level 6; FQHEIS Level 10) a Creative Writing student will progress from one level of study to the next, in line with the regulations and processes for each institution. However, it is expected that each level would see the attainment of knowledge, expertise and experience that builds towards the final achievement of meeting the threshold-level subject-specific and generic skills listed in this Statement. This will usually include successful completion and the award of credit for the full range of learning and assessment, including any practical components.

2.4 Each successive level of study of a three-year (full-time) Creative Writing degree will seek to build on teaching and learning activities and present a clear educational narrative for students. Typically, the first year of study will introduce students to the requirements of studying Creative Writing, for example: effective workshop practice, undertaking critical reflection, synthesizing a wide range of reading and other forms of cultural production.

2.5 In the second year of study, students may be expected to build on this foundation by engaging directly with wider forms of creative research, scholarship and practice such as attempting more advanced or diverse creative projects **in terms of modes of expression, themes and cultures**, by developing more sophisticated skills as a reader and critic of their own work and the work of others, and by exposure to non-standard or experimental forms and creative practices.

2.6 In the final year of study, students are encouraged to develop a more individual relationship with their creative practice through teaching and learning approaches such as a substantial, coherent and critically informed major project, targeted modules exploring more specialised themes, and an emphasis on connecting pedagogic activity to employability or professional practice to facilitate stronger graduate outcomes and positive employment destinations.

2.7 Undergraduates studying Creative Writing courses as part of a combined or joint degree with other subjects will achieve core elements of the specific and generic skills outlined in this Statement and will add others according to the topics covered in the other subject(s) of their degree. Additionally, they may explore the

overlap between different disciplines, creating further opportunities for interdisciplinary study.

2.8 In a standard undergraduate honours degree course in Creative Writing, students may exit earlier and be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education, a Diploma of Higher Education, or other awards depending upon the levels of study completed to a satisfactory standard. For providers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the standard duration of a full-time undergraduate course is three years. Scottish bachelor's degrees with honours are typically designed to include four years of study, which relates to the structure of Scottish primary and secondary education. Students following part-time routes accumulate academic credit in proportion to the intensity of their study, and their total study time and credit value would be the equivalent of the three or four-year degree

2.9 Upon graduation from an undergraduate degree, it would be expected that a student who had achieved a second-class degree or higher would be capable of, and equipped for, undertaking postgraduate study in Creative Writing or a related discipline. Entry requirements to postgraduate courses are, however, determined by individual providers and may require specified levels of achievement at undergraduate level

2.10 Creative Writing can be studied as an integrated master's degree (FHEQ Level 7; FQHEIS Level 11). Typically, integrated master's degrees comprise a four-year full-time course or a part-time course of not less than five and not more than eight academic years.

Flexibility

2.11 Higher education providers structure the courses they offer to support students' learning and attainment, steered by the research expertise of staff. Depending on the educational mission of the provider, this may include opportunities to engage in learning on campus, online, and/or through hybrid learning, arranged in appropriate terms, by semester, year-long, block or other formats. These may be offered in full and/or part-time modes of study and credit may be accumulated through the completion of micro-credentials or short accredited learning.

2.12 Providers should embed flexibility into their course such as pathways to switch between full and part-time education, the provision of online/hybrid learning to ensure courses are accessible to students who experience a change in circumstances (e.g. acquired or worsening health issues, increased caring

responsibilities, financial issues). Courses which are not flexible, and accommodating should support students to transfer to other providers who facilitate such measures if/when necessary.

Partnerships

2.13 Students are an institution's core partners in learning. Public participation is crucial in the co-creation and co-production of knowledge; in the case of Creative Writing, cultural and creative industries, regionally and internationally, are key partners for many subject degrees. Strategic partnerships across departments, and with presses working from universities, also provide important internal opportunities. Work placements or work-related projects may be provided in any role which draws on the skills of a Creative Writing degree.

2.14 External partners can include a range of stakeholders and institutions such as potential employers directly and indirectly related to creative writing professions, charities, local community services, schools and education facilities, and other higher education institutions.

2.15 Degree courses frequently offer work placement modules, semesters and sandwich years. These may take place in partnership with organisations and contribute to the subject degree by providing students with opportunities to:

- have work published or performed
- work in cultural, creative and literary industries
- work as an arts professional
- work in education
- undertake advanced research
- work in writing services, including editing, writing workshops and arts projects
- work in content writing, content editing and copy editing.

2.16 Course teams ensure that all partners share their commitments to accessibility, equality, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability to ensure all students working with these partners have equitable opportunities to understand and experience working sustainably in creative industries.

Monitoring and review

2.17 Degree-awarding bodies, and their collaborative partnerships, routinely collect and analyse information and undertake periodic course reviews according

to their own needs, and considering the student voice forms part of this. They draw on a range of external reference points, including this Statement, to ensure that their provision aligns with sector norms **and needs for current practice and sustainable development within the sector**. Monitoring and evaluation are a periodic assessment of a course, conducted internally or by external independent evaluators. Evaluation uses information from both current and historic monitoring to develop an understanding of student achievement **and satisfaction** or inform future course planning.

2.18 Evaluation of student feedback and student voice alongside other measures of the student experience should be integrated at every stage of evaluation to ensure the curriculum remains current, engaging and accessible. The student voice can be listened to through departmental representatives, module evaluation and external student surveys such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and SDG and sustainability curriculum mapping. Historic data may also enable trend analysis to measure progress and identify emerging issues. Students and graduates, as well as employers and leading researchers and communities, should be actively involved in designing and delivering actions to develop and enhance courses of study

2.19 Monitoring and reviews should include procedures to gather and assess feedback from minority and underrepresented communities to ensure their voices are not ignored within this process and that any discrepancies between their treatment or experience and that of majority communities are identified and can be addressed.

2.20 Externality is an essential component of the quality assurance system in the UK. Externality makes use of external expertise and reference points in all areas of course design, approval, monitoring and review. Periodic review processes and other forms of professional dialogue bring external expert perspectives to bear on any proposed changes and ensure threshold standards are achieved and content is appropriate for the subject

2.21 The external examination system currently in use across the UK higher education sector also helps to ensure consistency in the way academic standards are secured by degree-awarding bodies. Typically, external examiners are asked to comment on the types, principles and purposes of assessments being offered to students. They consider the types of modules on offer to students, the outcomes of a cohort, and how these compare to similar provision offered within other UK higher education providers. External examiners are asked to produce a report

each year and make recommendations for changes to modules and assessments (where appropriate). Subject Benchmark Statements, such as this one, can play an important role in supporting external examiners in advising on whether threshold standards are being met in a specific subject area.

3 Content, structure and delivery

Content

3.1 Creative Writing courses vary in design and structure, are characterised by a diversity of practices, processes and critical approaches, and may be taught in combination with numerous other subjects. Central to Creative Writing courses is the making of texts, which take a variety of literary, poetic, narrative and multimodal forms

3.2 Creative Writing is intrinsically interdisciplinary. It can be studied as a single honours degree, or in major-minor combinations with related subject areas in combined honours degrees. Creative Writing is often studied as a major subject alongside humanities subjects such as English, Theatre Studies, Psychology, American Studies, Film Studies, Translation Studies, Philosophy and Digital Humanities. Creative Writing is also frequently combined with arts and practice-based subjects such as Drama, Game Design, Journalism, Illustration, Graphic Design, Media Production Filmmaking and Screenwriting

3.3 Creative Writing can also be studied (often as a minor option) alongside subjects outside of the arts and humanities, for example, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, Business Studies, and Social Sciences. Here, Creative Writing can contribute to the development of a range of transferable academic skills such as ideation, innovation, professional writing and persuasive prose

3.4 The interdisciplinary nature of Creative Writing makes it difficult to prescribe generic course content. However, the following outline provides a high-level description of a typical structure for Creative Writing course delivery.

3.5 At **Level 4**, content and structure are typically designed to deliver foundational knowledge and to develop confidence and skills. It may be organised as follows.

- Students are provided with an introduction to the habits of writing, to support the development of an emerging awareness of their own practice and craft techniques. **As this is the time to explore as wide a variety of writing styles as possible, courses should begin introducing writing practices and styles reflective of diverse cultures, as well as the typical Western writing styles, respecting and exploring their traditional purposes**

and cultural significance. Students experiment with style, form, medium and genre, generating creative work through processes of critical reading, editing and revision.

- Students may be introduced to the principal forms of prose, poetry, story, narrative and drama. This may include an introduction to the technical requirements of the form and/or genre in which they are writing, as well as artistic and deliberate deviations from them, in addition to theoretical, generic and practice-based concepts and terminology.
- **Students are often provided with opportunities to explore the role of reader and audience in bringing texts and performances to life as imaginative experiences.** They reflect on their own creative processes and outputs to develop an understanding of what inspires and informs their writing.
- They explore the rules, conventions and possibilities of written and spoken language in numerous forms, genres and media, and are encouraged to read and respond to both published material and works in progress. Opportunities may be provided to engage with the historical and cultural facets of language use and literature, including evolving digital and media technologies. **Students should also be given the opportunity to challenge current paradigms and critically engage with literature**
- **Students are encouraged to communicate with diverse audiences, cultivating openness and a commitment to inclusivity.** They explore the importance of developing different approaches to creative production depending on the mode of delivery (for example page, performance, digital media). **They may be introduced to a range of current publishing and performance contexts, opportunities and audiences in the wider world, and the historical, ideological and cultural development of such contexts. There may be opportunities to learn about the application of Creative Writing skills within a variety of contexts and careers**

3.6 At **Level 5**, the content, structure and mode of delivery for a Creative Writing course are typically designed to further advance students' skills. Students take more advanced modules that deepen their ability to conceive, create and evolve original creative writing. They explore a wider diversity of contemporary creative writing in many forms and genres, contextualised by historical texts and responses to them. They often begin to specialise in a particular form or genre of Creative Writing.

- Course content expands on craft techniques, such as the use of story, tone, register and structure and continues to delve into the writing and creative practices and techniques used in cultures whose work has traditionally been marginalised or left out of the creative writing spaces. Students are supported to develop a reflective approach to the critical and evaluative process of Creative Writing practice. Level 5 modules enhance students' ability to further explore and deploy the conventions and possibilities of written and spoken language in a range of forms and genres. Furthermore, students take modules that develop further skills in the constructive reception and delivery of feedback on their own and their peers' work.
- Students are encouraged to independently explore the relationship of reading to their own practice. Reading includes craft (including form, technique, expression and style), and critical and theoretical texts. Interdisciplinary reading helps students to develop individual creative approaches. 'Reading' can also involve engaging with other media for writing, for example film, audio, podcasts, games (role-playing and video), and illustrated media (comic books and graphic novels).
- Students may take contextual or theoretical modules, to help them to place their writing within a given historical, cultural, environmental, economic, colonial or generic framework. They are supported to develop a critical awareness of the context in which writing is produced and how individual practice relates to that of predecessors and contemporaries, peers and established practitioners.
- Students further develop an understanding of writing as a narrative and creative form of expression and communication. They are supported to develop an ability to engage effectively with themes of diversity, including different voices and groups of writers, to improve their own and others' work.
- Students may further engage with content that supports them to transfer Creative Writing and narrative skills to a range of contexts and careers.
- The content and structure at Level 5 typically support the advancement of skills in the craft of writing and prepare students to produce an extended piece of independent work at Level 6.

3.7 At **Level 6**, the content, structure and delivery of Creative Writing supports students to evolve further towards greater independence, research and specialisation, including opportunities for placement modules and employer input. This may be organised as follows.

- Students take advanced modules that support them to apply the skills learned in the early years of the programme towards more substantial work. They are encouraged to develop their own style and flair, and usually produce an extended piece of work or project to demonstrate their creative practice and research skills.
- They are encouraged to sustain and develop critical connections between Creative Writing and interdisciplinary approaches to creative practice. This might involve opportunities to produce writing that explores and uses the rich diversity of languages and dialects, representing regional, international and media-specific varieties and voices. Or it may involve writing that explores co-production skills via editing, workshopping, collaborative, creative and other practices, leading to material production and engagement with existing and emerging communities of practice in the classroom and beyond.
- Students are introduced to content that is intended to expand their critical awareness of the context in which writing is produced and how individual practice relates to that of predecessors and contemporaries, peers and established practitioners. This may include modules that provide an opportunity to explore research practices associated with creative production, involving site-specific visits, archival research, interviews and collaboration.
- Students engage with content that encourages the exploration and use of the rich diversity of languages and dialects, representing regional, global, generic and media-specific varieties and voices. This may include language usage in terms of voice, idiom, idiolect, simile, metaphor and other stylistic, expressive and rhetorical devices, as appropriate to form.
- For the final project, there may be an opportunity to respond creatively or critically to a live brief or task. The extended project may build upon creative processes, research practices and approaches to creative production that students have developed and refined in previous years.

3.8 The course content is designed to build a community of practice and to foster a sense of belonging to the subject community, within the classroom and beyond. This scaffolding examines creative processes, and what inspires and informs them, and supports students in the development of individual and collective voices, practices and styles.

3.9 The content of Creative Writing course is subject to variation and change as technologies, cultures of production and creative industries evolve. Creative

Writing courses are increasingly introducing content that explores and engages with digital media, multi-platform, and multimodal forms of writing, including video games, graphic novels, and experimentations with the limitations and possibilities of **and issues surrounding** artificial intelligence (AI).

Teaching and learning

3.10 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. Creative Writing, like all creative practice, helps students to understand how to hone their skills through experimentation, risk-taking and failure, as part of the pedagogical process. These pedagogies can be adapted to meet a variety of learning objectives, for example to stimulate writing and creating, prompt dialogue and debate, and encourage collaboration.

3.11 Creative Writing courses are directly informed, and their currency maintained, by the research, publications, scholarly activity and professional practice of staff. **Creative practitioners, alongside industry professionals, make valuable contributions as part-time and visiting tutors, expanding students' understanding of the broad range of career opportunities and transferability of their knowledge and skills**

3.12 Student preparation for classes may include engagement with preparatory creative exercises and prompts, including signposted relevant resources and creative strategies. Student preparation may also include the creation and submission of pieces for feedback in class or online sessions.

3.13 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 disciplines 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, **all of which should be accessible to all students**. Site-specific pedagogy may be embedded in the programme or module.

3.14 Within the context of the learning environments, scheduled activities may include seminars, workshops in small groups, lectures, tutorials and personal

supervision, structured online activity, and a variety of sessions outside the classroom. Where online activities form part of learning and teaching, there will usually be a mixture of synchronous engagement and access to digital, printed and prerecorded learning materials.

3.15 The demonstration and practice of skills and aptitudes in action is as central to learning in Creative Writing as the exhibition of subject knowledge; collaboration, community building and creativity are fostered through small-group teaching.

3.16 Collaborative and individual independent study of materials are both fundamental to learning and teaching in Creative Writing. Students deepen their engagement through reflection on the materials and their own writing, on their own responses and on alternative perspectives encountered in class discussion and independent study. Learning materials can be structured around specific individual tasks or delivered through tutor or student-led discussion, editing or writing activities.

3.17 Presentation is a key part of Creative Writing. Students share their work in a variety of performative or text-based modes to receive peer and staff feedback. Writing rooms and workshops are commonly used learning forums. These collaborative sessions facilitate student-led discussion and groupwork, providing opportunities for students to co-author work and present their writing to an audience of peers. To promote an accessible and participatory learning environment for all students, the following steps can be taken.

- **Before and during workshops, tutors help students to develop a sense of ownership, responsibility and agency.** For example, workshop behaviour and etiquette can be defined and agreed on at the beginning of a module. This may include guidelines on how students and tutors will communicate and respond to each other to ensure mutual trust and respect.
- Tutors can provide students with a range of options for sharing their work. For example, students may have the choice to present their work in verbal, non-verbal, written, or prerecorded formats.
- A variety of formats for providing feedback may also be supported. This may include options for written rather than verbal feedback, synchronous and/or asynchronous feedback and the use of online or physical spaces.
- Smaller-sized workshops can help to promote a learning environment that is more supportive and accessible. Where this is not possible, tutors can

temporarily split large groups into smaller feedback groups for the purposes of the workshop.

- Students remain in control of the materials that they wish to share or keep private.
- Learning support plans can be utilised by staff to understand bespoke needs, in both workshops and one-to-one tutorials.

3.18 Creative Writing students often directly and/or indirectly tackle themes of diversity, inclusion, equality, disability and accessibility through their writing and learning experience. These themes are explicitly approached through memoir and life writing and/or are implicitly addressed through fictional content. The freedom to tell your own story in your own voice, drawing from first-hand experiences, can be empowering. But this can also be a challenging process, and students may need extra support and guidance when writing about difficult themes that they have encountered in their own life. Some students may wish to avoid writing about their own experiences, especially where this process is particularly uncomfortable and/or triggering. Creative Writing courses can, therefore, support accessibility and inclusivity by:

- creating safe spaces for students who wish to share and encounter a range of perspectives on diversity, colonialism, inequality, environmental change, inclusion, equality and accessibility; to approach these subjects with sensitivity, tutors often develop techniques to manage occasions in which highly personal topics unexpectedly arise
- helping students to remain in control of when and how they write about personal topics relating to themes of equality and/or inequality
- adjusting teaching materials and methods to meet any specific accessibility needs that are disclosed by students.

3.19 Teaching and learning often highlights the importance of writers exploring, discovering and building on their own creative interests. In line with this ethos, students who elect to write about personal subjects in response to the themes of diversity, inclusion, accessibility and equality often receive tailored support based on their specific creative, cultural and social concerns. Likewise, students who want to become specialists in other topical areas that interest them, such as genre-based approaches to writing, environmental writing, creative entrepreneurship and/or digital writing, may receive bespoke support to participate in their chosen areas of expertise. Tutors can review and adapt creative processes, methods and materials throughout the course of the learning

experience, both in response to the students' arising individual needs and their emerging creative areas of interest.

3.20 AI offers the field of Creative Writing as many opportunities as it does challenges. Generative AI and other new technologies are analysed in terms of their impact on creative industries and processes and are also used as tools for developing creative material in a range of forms. Transparency, openness and critical reflection in the use of these technologies enable judgements to be made on their appropriate use in both creative practice and analysis. It is important to recognise the advances that have been made in establishing Creative Writing as a theorised discipline that engages with contemporary debates about language, originality and AI. Some genres and modes of writing (for example, speculative fiction and games writing) may enable students to creatively comment on and participate in debates about AI.

3.21 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 through their teaching and learning experience. This leads to an extended creative output, which may include an accompanying element such as an abstract, critical essay, reflective analysis or report. The capstone project helps to prepare students for postgraduate study and/or routes to publication, production or performance.

Assessment

3.22 Learning in Creative Writing is supported by both formative and summative forms of assessment. Assessments should be made accessible for all students. **Where an assessment cannot be made fully accessible but cannot be removed from the course, alternative** assessments should be offered to meet all students' accessibility needs. Policies around extensions, late submissions and extenuating circumstances should be made clear to all students.

Formative assessment

3.23 Ongoing 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.

3.24 Formative assessment may also take the form of written feedback on work in progress. Creative Writing is characterised by its high level of feedback

through workshops and individual attention, in both written and verbal forms. There is a recognition that regular formative/ongoing assessment and feedback is a key part of the learning process. Students are encouraged to become readers and editors of their own and others' work. They are encouraged to learn skills in providing, inviting and receiving feedback.

Summative assessment

3.25 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.

3.26 Forms of submission may include:

- a novel extract, novella, or portfolio of stories or flash fiction
- a memoir or portfolio of life writing or creative non-fiction
- a portfolio of poetry
- a film script or portfolio of short film scripts
- a play, libretto or portfolio of dramatic writing
- verbal presentation or performance (live or recorded)
- manifesto, statement of artistic intent, ars poetica
- social and online media formats, for example blog post, podcast, vlog or YouTube video
- narrative for a game or graphic novel
- zine or graphic short story
- an outline or plan for a professional writing project
- a work which engages directly, critical and/or creatively, with evolving AI technology
- a critical commentary on, or preface to, the creative work
- creative content, influences and process
- a critical reflective commentary or edited extracts from a learning journal, reflecting on influences, context and editing choices
- a hybrid creative critical piece or a lyrical, literary or personal essay
- a formal essay
- a multimedia project, produced alone or in collaboration with others
- a research portfolio, including items such as location notes or interviews
- a professional submission package as defined by a literary agent, producer, publisher or scout

- a professional submission package in response to a brief set by a business, charity or social enterprise
- a pitch of creative work or exercise in professional preparation such as a mock interview or funding application
- individual and group presentations, either formal or informal
- a collaborative project requiring the recognition and deployment of abilities such as effective team management, time management, self-management, team working, technical skills - project management and planning. Such projects might include making a film, publishing a magazine, setting up a website organising an event, carrying out a substantial research project, or working on a cultural industries brief.

3.27 In some contexts, students may devise their own assignments and assessment criteria in consultation with their tutor.

Assessment criteria

3.28 Assessment criteria are as clear, itemised and transparent as possible, visible to students always, and addressed directly in feedback. Creative Writing students are often concerned that assessment criteria appear inflexible or subjective, and care is taken to demonstrate that a tutor's evaluation is based on agreed principles and reference points. In peer reviews and in self-evaluations, students use the same criteria, becoming familiar with and gaining confidence in the process. Briefs and rubrics are clear about the intended learning outcomes of each assignment and draw on the assessment criteria relevant to those outcomes.

3.29 Depending on the nature of the assessment, criteria might typically be designed to evaluate:

- originality
- imagination
- ambition
- technical mastery
- use of language
- use of form
- maturity of style
- distinctiveness of voice
- awareness of context and genre
- audience engagement
- research presentation

- response to a brief
- engagement with feedback
- evidence of self-evaluation and critical reflective skills
- engagement with literary or genre sources and examples.

3.30 Specific criteria may be appropriate, such as pedagogical theory in teaching, and the observance of genre conventions or criteria specified in external briefs. Care is taken to specify these with as much precision as possible.

3.31 Some courses explicitly assess workshop facilitation or contribution or understanding of workshop process.

3.32 As language-generative AI technology evolves, creative writing as a discipline will need to consider how criteria like originality are assessed, and assessment methods may need to expand to include processes such as oral examination and on-site examination.

Postgraduate programmes

3.33 Master's level Creative Writing degrees share the aims of honours degree courses with the added expectation that graduates are prepared for a professional career as arts professionals, including, but not limited to, publication, or for progression to doctoral level study.

4 Benchmark standards

4.1 This Subject Benchmark Statement sets out the minimum, typical and excellent standards that students will have demonstrated when they are awarded an honours degree in Creative Writing. Demonstrating these standards over time will show that students have achieved the range of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of graduates in Creative Writing.

4.2 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 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 bachelor's degrees with honours: 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd.

Threshold level

Subject knowledge, understanding and skills

4.3 Creative Writing graduates who attain the threshold standard demonstrate:

- the ability to generate creative work and develop it through editing and revision
- the ability to reflect upon their own creative processes and outputs
- engagement with their creative interests and influences
- an emerging awareness of a variety of craft and narrative techniques
- an awareness of the rules, conventions and possibilities of written and spoken language in a range of forms, genres and media
- the ability to read and respond to published work and work in progress
- an awareness of the historical and cultural dimensions of language use and literature, including story skills and evolving technologies
- the ability to communicate to diverse audiences, using a range of narrative forms, digital technologies and media
- an awareness of the skills required for effective work in groups, including an openness and commitment to inclusivity
- an awareness of the applications of Creative Writing skills to a variety of contexts, careers and entrepreneurial settings

- an awareness of the contribution that Creative Writing can make to sustainability and environmental issues, along with other major issues facing human society
- an understanding of forms of prose, poetry, story and drama
- the ability to explore and engage with a range of genres, which may include memoir, life writing, short fiction, crime, fantasy, literary, children and young adults, and many more.

Typical level

Subject knowledge, understanding and skills

4.4 Creative Writing graduates who attain the typical standard demonstrate:

- the ability to conceptualise, generate and develop original Creative Writing skills using a wide range of editorial, presentational, narrative and craft techniques
- a reflective approach to the process of composition that encompasses critical evaluation of Creative Writing practice
- the ability to actively explore relationships between reading and their own practice
- the ability to effectively compose a story, poem or piece of prose
- the ability to utilise the conventions and possibilities of written and spoken language in a range of forms, genres and emerging media
- a creative and discriminating engagement with the expressive, poetic, narratological and/or imaginative capabilities of written and spoken language
- an independent and disciplined commitment to their own writing
- an understanding of the connection of reading to their own practice
- the ability to read and respond critically, creatively and practically to published work and to work in progress from a range of writing styles, modes of expression and cultural or historical contexts
- an understanding of the historical and socio-cultural dimensions of language use, including traditional modes of textual production, divergent forms of story and emerging digital and media technologies
- the ability to contextualise their own writing within given historical, cultural or generic frameworks
- an understanding of writing as a narrative form of expression and communication, engaging diverse audiences and purposes

- the ability to communicate with diverse audiences, using a wide range of narrative forms, story skills and media
- the ability to imaginatively explore place, planet, climate, habitat, sustainability, the life of other species and/or variety in human cultures, along with historic and current social and environmental issues facing human society including inequality, inequity and discrimination
- the ability to engage effectively with different voices and diverse groups of writers to improve their own and others' work whether narratively, grammatically, contextually or otherwise
- skills in the constructive reception and delivery of feedback on their own and their peers' work
- co-authoring skills and techniques to realise a collaborative vision
- an awareness of research skills and methodologies appropriate to Creative Writing, and the ability to plan and carry out independent research
- an understanding of the strategic transferability of Creative Writing and story skills to a variety of contexts, careers and entrepreneurial settings.

Excellent level

Subject knowledge, understanding and skills

4.5 Creative Writing graduates who attain the excellent standard demonstrate the qualities listed above, creatively integrated and combined with independent enterprise and flair to produce work that is ambitious, markedly original in its relation to existing work in its field and searching in its enquiry. Where an industry presentation standard exists, the writing should meet or exceed this. Creative Writing graduates achieving the excellent level demonstrate some of the following:

- the ability to produce original writing that offers transformative approaches to genre
- fluency in a wide range of narrative forms, story skills and media
- innovation in the use of language, regardless of the topic or form
- writing which presents original approaches and responses in meaningful and potentially impactful ways to societal inclusion, diversity, accessibility and equality
- writing which presents a transformative awareness of how changes can be made to support sustainability and/or explores new possibilities for

the relationship between humans, non-humans and their ecological habitats

- writing which articulates new spaces for creative and entrepreneurial expression
- writing which has critical impact and self-awareness and is highly self-reflective, in ways which sustain and develop critical connections between Creative Writing and interdisciplinary approaches to creative practice
- writing that explores and uses the rich diversity of languages and dialects, representing regional, global and media-specific varieties and voices
- writing that demonstrates advanced co-production skills via editing, workshopping, collaborative, creative and/or engagement with communities of practice beyond the classroom.

Generic skills

4.6 On graduating with an honours degree in Creative Writing, students should be able to:

- initiate and take responsibility for their own work
- present information to a professional standard, appropriate to context
- self-manage and show a distinct ability to work independently, set goals, manage workloads and meet deadlines
- anticipate and accommodate change, and negotiate contexts of ambiguity, uncertainty and unfamiliarity
- identify strengths and needs in reflecting on personal development
- select and employ communication and information technologies; source, navigate, select, retrieve, evaluate, manipulate and manage information from a variety of sources
- produce or narrate a factual story using transparent and/or persuasive language, drawing from their own experience and/or from accounts provided by others
- work flexibly, both independently and collaboratively
- demonstrate and actively use a wide range of transferable communication skills and story skills
- communicate their own ideas and the ideas of others concisely, accurately and persuasively to influence opinion, developing, constructing and presenting arguments in appropriate ways
- develop skills in and understand the importance of listening actively

- communicate in a variety of media, with a strong awareness of the values and uses of story, narrative and language
- interact effectively with diverse groups of others, in team or group work, for example through collaboration or in workshop situations
- demonstrate an understanding of equality, diversity and inclusivity (see paragraphs 1.21-1.30) and commitment to uphold and improve these within their education and the creative writing industries
- be able to communicate with a diverse range of audiences and appreciate different appropriate means of communication
- adapt to different demands and tasks and be able to look beyond the immediate task to the wider context, including the social and commercial effects of their work
- appreciate the benefits of giving and receiving feedback
- evaluate and be self-reflective, able to critically reflect on their own practices and assumptions
- exhibit increased confidence in a wide range of life-enhancing skills related to the subject, such as confidence, expression and self-awareness.

Master's level

4.7 Creative Writing students achieving master's level demonstrate:

- advanced creative and imaginative skills to support the effective conception, design, and production of a substantial Creative Writing project
- composite professional skills (managing self, time, writing independently and learning autonomously) required to deliver a substantial writing project in a way that demonstrates initiative and decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the ability to complete a substantial piece of Creative Writing of an appropriate length and/or form that constitutes an original contribution to its field
- the ability to produce a critical piece of writing relating to the genesis and execution of their project, contextualising their work within an appropriate scholarly or creative tradition, and illuminating the original aspects of their contribution
- advanced analytical and imaginative skills as required to identify, define and resolve challenges arising from their professional writing project

- an applied awareness of their own processes, influences and approaches to writing, enabling skilful adaptation to any creative challenge that might arise
- the ability to carry out independent research in support of their project
- advanced craft, editing and story skills to support the progressive development of their work, including the ability to respond to feedback from peers/tutors; and the confidence to form their own judgements about how to improve their project
- the ability to engage in analytical and critical group discussion, applying problem-solving skills to the assessment of **peers'** work
- the ability to give feedback in a way that demonstrates sensitivity - exhibiting, for example, a strong awareness of what a writer is trying to achieve and considering the diversity of contexts and experiences that may influence perceptions of skilful writing
- skills in adapting writing styles to a range of media and narrative forms, considering the creative risks and benefits of technology as a creative and representational tool
- the ability to evaluate, discuss, adapt and position their work within the context of broader social challenges and contexts such as sustainable development, diversity and/or the ethics of using new technologies such as AI to develop work
- the ability to transform complex cultural and sometimes emotionally challenging materials, observations and experiences into effective Creative Writing, applying relevant narrative and literary forms and techniques. This may include, for example, an exploration of the relationship between people and place through writing, in a way that transforms the audience's perception of how they see and experience other beings and the environment around them
- advanced teamworking skills, demonstrating the ability to respond to rapidly changing cultural industries, professional challenges and global contexts
- the ability to communicate effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences, demonstrated through advanced writing, speaking and narrative skills
- the ability to apply an understanding of the values and uses of Creative Writing as a life-enhancing skill to improve both their own and others' well-being, confidence, expression and self-awareness.

5 List of references and further resources

Equality Act (2010)

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

QAA (2024) *Annex D in the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies*

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks

QAA and Advance HE (2021) Education for Sustainable Development Guidance

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/education-for-sustainable-development

QAA (2018) Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/enterprise-and-entrepreneurship-education

QAA (2022) Glossary

www.qaa.ac.uk/glossary

QAA, Quality Enhancement Framework (Scotland)

www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/quality-enhancement-framework

QAA (2021) Quality Enhancement Review (Wales)

www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/quality-enhancement-review

QAA (2018) The UK Quality Code for Higher Education

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks

QAA (2018) Quality Code Advice and Guidance

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/advice-and-guidance

UNESCO (2017) Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>

6 Membership of the Advisory Group

Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Creative Writing 2023

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Membership of the Advisory Group for the Subject Benchmark Statement for Creative Writing 2019

The second edition, published in 2019, was revised by QAA to align the content with the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, published in 2018.

Proposed revisions were checked and verified by members of the original benchmark statement group for creative writing from 2016.

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Membership of the original benchmark statement group for creative writing 2016

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