Programme Specification for MA English

This document applies to Academic Year 2026/27 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for MA English

1.	**Awarding institution/body**	University of Worcester
2.	**Teaching institution**	University of Worcester
3.	**Programme accredited by**	NA
4.	**Final award or awards**	MA English
5.	**Programme title**	MA English
6.	**Pathways available**	NA
7.	**Mode and/or site of delivery**	Campus-based, University of Worcester Combination of taught classes, guided independent study, online activities, and research supervision
8.	**Mode of attendance and duration**	Full-time: 13 months (Sep. to Sep.) Part-time: the course may be taken over two or more academic years Evening study may be required.
9.	**UCAS Code**	NA
10.	**Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement**	The programme is informed by the QAA Master's Degree Characteristics (2020) The Level of the award is defined by the FHEQ in the QAA Quality Code for HE: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks At the time of writing, there is no benchmark statement for English Studies at Level 7.
11.	**Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision**	Approved July 2019. August 2019 – AQU amendments to Section 19. August 2020 – AQU amendments. August 2021 – Amendments to mode of delivery and duration for part-time attendance and AQU amendments to Section 13. August 2022 – AQU amendments. July 2023 – annual updates August 2026 – Annual updates

12. Educational aims of the programme

The MA English programme is intended for all students who wish to take their knowledge and interpretation of English literature and culture to a higher level, and to apply their critical skills in a rewarding and challenging interdisciplinary environment.

The programme will enable students to develop new specialist interests and research skills in the context of the interdisciplinary modern Humanities. Students will explore a range of new themes that build on their existing literary knowledge, such as eco-criticism and the literary representation of the body and gain hands-on experience with the recovery and digital editing of historical texts. Students will undertake a special study of literary forms and genres, analysing the way in which new literary forms emerge and genres evolve in response to social and cultural pressures, and researching particular instances of generic change and hybridity. The degree culminates in an independent Dissertation, in which students specialise in a theme of their own choosing, and work

with individual guidance from an academic expert to produce a piece of ambitious literary research.

One of the distinctive features of the MA English programme is its integration of work-based learning and career planning, to complement the transferable skills provided by literary study. All students will develop new forms of digital competence, working with historical documents in online platforms, and also gain experience in organising a professional networking event or academic conference.

Students' motivations for undertaking Master's-level study vary considerably. The course is designed to cater for a broad range of educational and professional needs and aspirations. One of the key aims is to enhance students' prospects and readiness for a range of different professional career paths, including cultural and creative industries, educational work, and doctoral study leading to academic careers.

The main aims of the course may be summarised as follows:

- Enable students to build on and extend their subject knowledge in English studies to postgraduate standard.
- Deliver a course of advanced study in literary forms and genres, cultural theories, research methodologies, and other key aspects of the subject.
- Develop students' critical and research expertise, while working alongside nationally and internationally acknowledged subject experts.
- Enable students to think analytically and independently, while developing the ability to evaluate different critical methodologies.
- Develop students' research methods and skills appropriate to the context and discipline of their Dissertation project.
- Help students to develop transferable project management skills including: independent working; effective planning and time management; the ability to devise, research, and execute a substantial project; set goals, priorities and schedules; document, report, and reflect on progress
- Support students to develop their plans and readiness to pursue a range of career paths, by gaining relevant work experience and opportunities to reflect on this.
- Provide a stimulating, collaborative, and supportive community for postgraduate studies.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

These Learning Outcomes are informed by the descriptor for a Master's degree set out in The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024) and by the QAA Master's Degree 'Characteristics Statement' (2020).

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding			
LO no.	**On successful completion of the named award students will be able to:**	**Module Code/s**	**Award**
1.	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the development and hybridisation of literary genres	HUMS4005	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
2.	Identify and apply appropriate methods and theories for literary research.	MHCA4001 HUMS4010	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
3.	Demonstrate critical understanding of cultural theories associated with the modern Humanities	HUMS4007	PG Dip. MA

4.	Apply theorised techniques and methods in the editing of literary texts sourced from electronic databases	HUMS4008	PG Dip. MA

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills			
LO no.	**On successful completion of the named award students will be able to:**	**Module Code/s**	**Award**
5.	Synthesise complex arguments and ideas and communicate those clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences	MHCA4001 HUMS4005 HUMS4007	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
6.	Construct informed, current, complex, and intellectually coherent arguments in the field of English Studies	HUMS4005 HUMS4007 HUMS4010	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
7.	Critically evaluate theoretical arguments in an interdisciplinary context	HUMS4007	PG Dip. MA
8.	Devise and realise an independent research project, applying appropriate critical theories and methodologies	HUMS4010	MA

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability			
LO no.	**On successful completion of the named award students will be able to:**	**Module Code/s**	**Award**
9.	Communicate complex ideas accessibly and with clarity	MHCA4001 HUMS4005 HUMS4007	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
10.	Articulate the relevance and application of their academic practice to selected non-academic professions	HUMS4009	PG Dip. MA
11.	Critically reflect on work-based learning in a relevant non-academic field	HUMS4009	PG Dip. MA

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills			
LO no.	**On successful completion of the named award students will be able to:**	**Module Code/s**	**Award**
12.	Demonstrate practical skills in project management including time management, contingency planning, self-reflection, and constructive liaison with a supervisor	HUMS4009 HUMS4010	PG Dip. MA
13.	Exercise initiative, personal responsibility, and independent intellectual judgement or practice with regard to complex subject matter	HUMS4005 HUMS4009	PG Cert. PG Dip. MA
14.	Demonstrate competence in focused research from electronic databases, and in the manipulation of documents using digital media	HUMS4008	PG Dip. MA

Learning, Teaching & Assessment
The course is taught through a combination of supervisor-guided negotiated study and classroom-based modules. Teaching approaches are wide-ranging, and will include practical work, lectures, seminars, workshops, problem-based learning, group tasks, negotiated study, and peer appraisal. Students' planning and development of their Dissertations will be guided throughout by regular meetings with their supervisor; the supervisory process will be recorded by a jointly maintained supervision log, shared between student and supervisor.

All modules will be supported by the University of Worcester's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Blackboard. Module VLEs will be used for basic file delivery (lecture slides, seminar handouts, etc.), for linking to relevant online resources within the University and externally, and for various forms of online interaction, including formative and summative feedback on course work, collaborative blogs, and discussion fora. Reading Lists, including direct links to many of the required / recommended sources, are available online through Talis Aspire. Assessment grades and written feedback are likewise made available via module VLEs.

The QAA Master's 'Characteristics Statement' observes that all master's degree involve training in research methods. Accordingly, module MHCA 4001 Research Approaches in the Humanities and Arts will be mandatory for all students, and shared with the closely interrelated MA Cultural Studies course, as well as with all MRes. awards in the Schools of Arts and Humanities (including Media & Culture, and History). This module delivers education and training in a diverse range of research methods, as well as evaluative discussion of relevant research philosophies; it is also an integral part of the interdisciplinary environment in which English students will situate their studies.

Teaching
Students will be taught through a combination of classroom modules and supervisor-supported independent study. Lectures are used to impart the core contextual knowledge essential to each component of the course. Analysis, problem solving skills, and the application of knowledge to the student's own studies are all developed through interactive seminars and workshops.

Students will be assigned a Personal Academic Tutors (PAT) during their course Induction; the PAT will work with them throughout their studies on the MA. If a PAT becomes unavailable for any reason, the Course Leader will step in and assume all regular PAT duties for the individual student. Meetings with PATs are scheduled on at least 8 occasions in the year for FT students, and approximately 4 for PT.

Contact time
In a typical week, a FT student will have around 6 to 9 contact hours of teaching, and PT student around 3 to 6 hours. The precise contact hours will depend on the timetabling of modules and is variable; for example, module MHCA 4001 is taught in two intensive six-week blocks in semesters 1 and 2 and is therefore not always in session.

In semesters 1 and 2, FT students will typically study three modules at a given time, and PT students two modules. Students on both FT and PT routes will undertake the final Dissertation over the 'third semester', between May and September; regular campus-based and remote supervision will be available during this time.

Negotiated independent self-study
In addition to direct contact time, FT students will be expected to undertake around 30 hours of personal self-study per week; for PT students, the expectation is reduced in proportion to the amount of credit they are taking at a given time. Typically, this will involve guided reading and research, and/or writing; the Digital Editing Project and Professional Development modules will entail other forms of independent work, such as use of online databases and editing tools, and external liaison and networking respectively. Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the physical and digital resources of the Hive library.

Teaching staff
The MA English course is planned and delivered by an extended teaching team in combination with MA Cultural Studies and therefore draws on a wide range of expertise. Teaching staff have both doctoral research qualifications and accreditation of the Higher Education Academy to at least Fellowship level. The core team will be supplemented on occasion by Visiting Lecturers with specific expertise to enhance provision.

Details of the core teaching team, their qualifications and experience, can be found in the course handbook and on the Institute of Arts and Humanities web pages:
https://www.worc.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/school-of-humanities/humanities-staff-profiles.aspx

14. Assessment strategy

In line with the University of Worcester's Assessment and Feedback Policy, the assessment strategy on the MA has been designed to help ensure that our students meet the modular and course-level Learning Outcomes, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the appropriate award.

A full outline of assessment methods and weightings, mapped against Learning Outcomes, grade descriptors, and assessment dates is published in the MA course handbook with further, specific details included in module guides. The course team are committed to a policy of timely and consistent feedback.

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy, assessments for individual modules are designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the Learning Outcomes for the course. The particular Learning Outcomes being assessed are specified in each assignment brief. How these combine across the course is mapped via a grid in the course handbook. The MA teaching team have developed course-specific assessment criteria which are published in the course handbook. These ensure that assessment is carried out consistently across the modules; however, criteria are customised for specific assignments as and when this is necessary (e.g., for alternative assessment methods, such as poster presentations, or portfolios of online discussion). These criteria are also closely benchmarked to the University generic grade descriptors.

15. Programme structures and requirements

The Programme and exit awards consist of:

60 credits at Level 7 (PG Cert. in English)
120 credits at Level 7 (PG Dip. in English)
180 credits at Level 7, including 60-credit Dissertation (MA English)

The award map is as follows.

Table 6 award map for each level of the course

		Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)			
Module Code	**Module Title**	**Credits** (Number)	**PG Cert**	**PG Dip**	**MA/MSc/ MBA**
MHCA4001	Research Approaches in the Humanities and Arts	30	M	M	M
HUMS4005	Evolving Genres	30	M	M	M

HUMS4008	Digital Editing Project	15	-	M	M
HUMS4009	Professional Development	15	-	M	M
HUMS4007	The New Humanities	30	-	M	M
HUMS4010	English Dissertation	60	-	-	M
	Total Credits	180			
PG Certificate To be awarded the PG Cert Humanities, students must successfully complete at least 60 credits at Level 7 (including MHCA4001 and HUMS4005).					
PG Diploma To be awarded the PG Dip English, students must successfully complete 120 credits at Level 7 (MHCA4001, HUMS4005, HUMS4008, HUMS4009, HUMS4007).					
Masters (MA/MSc/MBA) To be awarded the Masters, students must successfully complete 180 credits at Level 7 (MHCA4001, HUMS4005, HUMS4008, HUMS4009, HUMS4007, HUMS4010).					

This course is available in full-time or part-time mode. For students taking the degree on a part-time basis, there is some flexibility with the order in which modules are studied, and the amount of credit taken in a given year: these decisions should be agreed with the Course Leader before module registration. This flexibility does not extend to the Dissertation module, however, which should be the final component for all students, full-time or part-time.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at Level 7 of the OfS sector recognised standards. There is currently no QAA benchmarking statement for English Studies at Level 7. The academic Level of the course – embedded in the course content, Learning Outcomes, and assessment strategy – has been established via the generic Master's level descriptor published in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (2024) (FHEQ) and the QAA Master's Degree Characteristics (2020).

According to the QAA Characteristics Statement, the principal purposes of Master's programmes include: 'enabling students to focus on a particular aspect of a broader subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience through previous study or employment' (p. 2); and 'enabling students to focus on a particular subject area or field of study in greater depth than they encountered during the course of previous study or experience (this may include enabling students to develop knowledge of a new subject or field of study in combination with a relevant subject area in which they have prior knowledge or experience, or enabling students to undertake inter or multidisciplinary study' (pp. 2-3)

According to the QAA Characteristics Statement, typical attributes of Master's graduates include: 'in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research. This will include a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession; critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner' (p. 4).

The FHEQ (2014) states that Masters' degrees will be awarded to students who have demonstrated 'a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice' (p. 28). The FHEQ also states that holders of Level 7 qualifications will be able to 'deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences' (p. 28).

In light of these principles, the MA English course has been designed to provide its students with a high-quality postgraduate educational experience, building on and extending their existing

Undergraduate knowledge of English Studies, raising their level of critical skill in the interpretation of literary texts, and facilitating further specialisation in the extended field of literary and cultural interpretation. The course will deliver new contextual and theoretical perspectives to students, allowing them to re-evaluate their prior learning and apply new methodologies in the interdisciplinary environment of the modern Humanities.

17. Support for students

The following activities, resources, and documents will support on the course:

- Induction programme
- Personal Academic Tutor (PAT): see below.
- Course handbook and module guides
- Talis Aspire reading and resource lists for each module and support from ILS staff during Induction and throughout the course (e.g., via the Information Desk)
- Student representation on the MA Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)
- A range of support services provided through Student Services (Firstpoint). See *https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/*
  https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx
- English language support provision (where necessary), including writing support from the Royal Literary Fund Fellows / writers in residence and, for international and EU students, from the University Language Centre
- The Disability and Dyslexia service offer a range of support and advice for students with particular needs. See https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/
- The electronic learning and teaching interface Blackboard is our primary medium for offering support material. Both the course and individual modules will have a Blackboard page / VLE. Here students will be able to access a range of material which may include: module guides; Talis Aspire resource lists; digital copies of academic material; lecture slides; seminar handouts; module information and announcements; assessment criteria and grade descriptors; skills advice relevant to specific modules; audio-visual material; links to relevant resources available on the internet

Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
The MA English / MA History programme will operate a similar Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) system to that for undergraduate courses at UW. Regular discussions with PATs will support students' academic progress, their reflection on the acquisition of transferable skills and professional experience, and their career planning. Students will be assigned to a PAT in the subject of their named award (English or Cultural Studies). If a PAT becomes unavailable during the year for any reason, the Course Leader will step in. There will be no formal attendance requirement at tutorials, but students will be expected and encouraged to engage with their tutors. FT students will have approximately eight sessions with their PATs over the year, and PT students around five; all interactions with PATs will be logged on the student record system (SOLE). Further explanation can be found in the Course Handbook.

18. Admissions

Admissions policy
The MA English course is intended to attract both existing UW students and external applicants. The course is publicised on the University website, in the University's publication schedule, and via postgraduate resource lists such as Hobson's *The Good Universities Guide to Postgraduate Courses*, *The Graduate Guide*, and Postgraduatesearch.com. Existing University of Worcester undergraduates who wish to pursue their studies to Master's level are briefed about PG opportunities during their final year and may be put directly in touch with the Course Leader for informal discussion prior to making an application. The course meets the aspiration of the University of Worcester's strategic plan to 'inspire our students to reach their full potential'. We are, in other ways, committed to Widening Participation and access to PG education, and will

work closely with Student Services, the Disability and Dyslexia Service, etc., to support applications from students from a variety of backgrounds. We will continue that support as and when they enter the course. Much of our research and expertise in English – in areas such as Early Modern Studies; Romanticism; the 'long' nineteenth century; modern and contemporary literature; critical theory; ecocriticism; socio-linguistics; and Creative Writing – has an international dimension and international students are welcome to apply. While all enquirers / applicants are strongly encouraged to visit the UW campus and meet the CL in person, arrangements can be made for international students to conduct their informal interview by skype or conference call.

Entry requirements
Applicants are normally expected to hold a first degree in a relevant discipline, of at least Second Class Honours. Relevant subjects include, for example, English Literature, Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, etc.

International applicants will be required to demonstrate comparable prior subject experience and to have an appropriate level of written and spoken English (normally an IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 6 in written English). Entry qualifications for international students are guided by the National Academic Recognition Information Centre's (NARIC) advice on international qualifications.

International students may apply for this course through University of Worcester International College (UWIC) pre-Masters course.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements
It is highly unlikely that enhanced disclosure will be a requirement of this course but should this arise (e.g. as part of approved Dissertation research, or Professional development project), this will be discussed with and communicated to the student prior to starting the module.

Recognition of Prior Learning
Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111; further discussion with the Course Leader before application is also strongly recommended.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at:
http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm

Admissions procedures
Prospective students are strongly encouraged to have some informal discussion with the Course Leader before making an application. Information about the course can be found on the University / Institute of Arts and Humanities web pages. Those discussions could be instigated at Undergraduate level (e.g. for existing UW students), via direct enquiries to the Course Leader, or through information offered at the University's postgraduate Visit Days. Potential students are strongly advised to attend the latter.

Applications can be made via the UK PASS system, or directly to the University.

All applicants will be invited to an informal interview with the Course Leader or nominated alternate. The interview will be an opportunity for the student to evaluate the benefits of the course and how well it aligns with her interests and ambitions, and an opportunity for the CL or tutor to assess the student's potential and suitability.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- A student is required to submit assessment items by 3pm on the due date and in accordance with the published process described in the module outline.
- A student may request an automatic extension of up to seven days up to six times in an academic year (depending on the number of credits studied) as described in the Delayed Assessment Procedures.
- A student who submits work late will not have work marked unless they have an approved claim of exceptional circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Retrieval of failure

- A student is entitled to re-sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

Table 7 requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert. Humanities	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip. English	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
MA English	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

Graduates of Masters degrees in English studies typically pursue careers in educational professions (e.g. primary, secondary, and tertiary teaching; learning support; Quality management; Inclusive services; student counselling; learning technologies and Library

management), in the creative industries (e.g. print, broadcast, and online journalism; copywriting and editorial work; literary agency; arts administration; heritage sector; museums), and in other professional fields such as HR, local government, and the voluntary sector. However, English graduates – both BA and MA – can be found in a diverse range of professions and are sought after by employers for their high-level research, analytical, and communication skills.

Student employability

Government figures on graduate earnings show that up to the age of 30, postgraduates typically earn £9,000, or about 40%, more than those without degrees. However, with increased participation in HE, the biggest premium in salaries is now for those who undertake some form of PG studies. The differential applies across the working population between the ages of 16 and 64, 'with postgraduates averaging £40,000, compared with £34,000 for graduates and £24,000 for non-graduates.' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48058013> [28 April 2019].

The MA English programme presents a nuanced employability strategy, combining a traditional 'transferable skills' approach (e.g. MHCA4001, HUMS4005, HUMS4007) with opportunities to gain practical work experience and undertake supervised career planning, via module HUMS4009.

Links with employers

The Professional Development module supports students to work collaboratively with external bodies in the region, such as: the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA); Worcester Rep (e.g. in relation to Shakespeare at the Commandery and the Shakespeare at the Cathedral seasons); the Commandery Museum in Worcester; the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Library and Archive; Hay Festival; Ledbury Poetry Festival; Worcester LitFest; Worcester Cathedral; the National Trust; and the Archives at the Hive Library in Worcester; and local independent publishers, such as V Press and Black Pear Press.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and the course handbook provided to all students at the start of the course.