

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	MA in Writing Poetry
5	Programme Code	4154P (Newcastle); 4155P (Poetry School, London)
6	Programme Accreditation	NA
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Last updated	April 2026

10 Programme Aims

(a) To produce Masters graduates who have:

1. advanced their creative ability through practice, discussion and revision
2. an advanced awareness of the processes of writing both in their own work and that of others
3. a knowledge of a range of the writing of poetry in English
4. knowledge of the professional world of writing and publishing
5. an ability to edit and prepare poetry for submission and publication.

(b) To provide a programme which:

1. has nationally and internationally recognised poets teaching on the course
2. allows the practice of writing poetry to be combined with directed reading and the opportunity to study contemporary poetry
3. draws on the expertise of those engaged in the professional world of publishing and revising and editing poetry
4. attracts a diverse student body, including a significant number of mature students
5. establishes connections with the professional world of writing and publishing poetry
6. fully meets the requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for a level 7 award and complies with University policies and procedures and QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas (the programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Creative Writing):

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

A1 Advanced knowledge of the making, revising and editing and critical discussion of poems in various forms and of the relationship between the poet, the poem and the reader

A2 Advanced understanding of verbal creativity and the techniques used in the process of revising and editing and presenting their own and other people's poetry

A3 Advanced knowledge in the application of the techniques of writing poetry and the critical understanding of the poetry of others

Teaching and Learning Methods

Knowledge and understanding is acquired through participation in and preparation for workshops, consultations, seminars, talks, readings and supervision. In workshops this will involve the writing of original poems and their development through a response to the criticism and comments of others; the reading of others' work and developing knowledge through discussion of how to form and articulate modes of response and criticism; the reading and discussion of published and other contemporary work. In consultations, the knowledge and understanding will be developed through close scrutiny and discussion of the poet's own work. In seminars the development will primarily be through the study and critical discussion of published texts. Seminars, along with talks, readings and project work will also lead to knowledge and understanding of the professional poetry world, public performance and publishing.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment of knowledge and understanding is via the submission of files of work produced in workshops with accompanying essays; and a final portfolio of creative work.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate the following subject-specific/intellectual skills:

B1 Conceptual awareness of how poems are made and developed

B2 Advanced ability to understand and judge the timing and duration of creative projects

B3 Professional skill in the process of revising and editing their own poetry

B4 Practical knowledge and professional skill in the presentation of their own poetry for performance and/or publication

Teaching and Learning Methods

Subject-specific professional skills are also acquired through workshop preparation and participation, consultations, seminars, talks and reading. Skills relating to shorter and more various projects will be acquired and developed through these means. The supervised portfolio will develop skills in working on a larger, more sustained project. An understanding of professional skills will also be developed through participation in the Summer Schools, preparation of individual readings or performances, and work for publication.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment of subject-specific skills is through preparing and submitting to deadline files of work produced in workshops; a portfolio of work (a short collection of poems).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1 exercise and develop a sensitivity to verbal creativity

C2 practise critical skills in the drafting and revision of writing

C3 engage imaginatively and critically in the reading and discussion of poetry

C4 critically examine the conditions within which contemporary writing is published and distributed
Teaching and Learning Methods
Practical skills are acquired via workshops, tutorials, seminars, talks, readings and supervision.
Assessment Strategy
Assessment of practical skills is via the submission of draft work, projects and a portfolio.
Transferable/Key Skills
<p><i>On completing the programme students should be able to:</i></p> <p>D1 understand and put into effect the appropriate presentation of a specific text</p> <p>D2 analyse and evaluate complex evidence critically and imaginatively</p> <p>D3 work and plan independently on large and small projects involving skill and originality</p> <p>D4 write and speak to different audiences</p> <p>D5 use information technology (word processing; the internet)</p> <p>D6 gather, evaluate, organise and summarise information</p> <p>D7 work to deadlines and/or within specified time-limits</p> <p>D8 work effectively in a team and/or independently</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
Key skills are promoted through workshops, tutorials, seminars and supervisions. Throughout, revising and editing, selecting and presenting poetry both in written form and orally, to a group and receiving critical feedback will develop these skills both working individually and in a group.
Assessment Strategy
Assessment of key skills is implicit in coursework at all levels.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme is studied over two years part-time and divided into taught modules with a value of 20 and a portfolio module with a value of 60. • Each 20 credit module represents 200 hours of student learning. • At least a 'Pass' in the course work is required for progression to the portfolio stage. <p>The structure is straightforward, with students at each site studying parallel programmes, with aims and outcomes, the broad content areas and the assessments identical in each case.</p> <p>In the first year, students studying at the Poetry School in London will take one module in semester 1 and one in semester 2, with the normal route being to take the Masterclass 1 and Workshop 1 modules in the first year. Students at Newcastle will take parallel versions of those same modules in the same semesters. Both cohorts will thus shadow each other.</p>

In semester 3, all students will be offered the chance to come together to study on a 5 day summer school module. The summer school will be run at each site in alternating years (i.e. one year in Newcastle, the following year in London). Students who cannot attend the summer school will be able to take an annual submission module instead.

This pattern will be repeated in the second year of the degree, with students in London working on one module in semester 1 and one in semester 2 in ways that again parallel the programme and experience of students in Newcastle, with again the normal route being to take the Masterclass 2 and Workshop 2 modules in the second year. As before, the students will then have the option of joining the summer school, or to take an annual submission in its stead.

All students will be required to complete their taught modules before preceding to the portfolio. Prepared under the supervision and editorial guidance of a named member of staff, this portfolio of poems (or a single long poem or cycle), will be submitted at the end of the degree and will represent the culmination of their learning and progress on the MA.

The structure of the MA will therefore be the same regardless of whether a student is studying in London or Newcastle with 6 x 20 credits of taught modules studied across two years and a 60 credit Portfolio in the second year. Students need to have successfully completed all of their taught modules before they can progress to submission of the portfolio.

In the event of a student choosing to study one part of his or her degree on one site and then complete the degree at another, the DPD will use discretion to allow the student to swap from the Newcastle track to the London track of the degree, or vice versa.

The degree will be managed from the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics in Newcastle (SELLL), with the DPD for the MA in Writing Poetry overseeing quality and assessment at both sites under the guidance of the school's director of graduate studies. The MA will be represented on the school's PG Board of Studies (BoS) and constitute part of the business of the Creative Writing Subject group. Grades and awards will all be run through existing school processes and students will come before the PG exam board. An external examiner will oversee all of the work done on both sites. The poetry school teaching team will be represented at the BoS and the exam board in person.

A course leader for the Poetry School will also be appointed. This individual will act as a main point of contact for students on the PS site in terms of the management of the degree and will work in close contact with the DPD in SELLL. Oversight of poetry school (PS) related issues, their site, and representation of degree related issues at relevant NU committees will be central to their remit, as will ensuring the smooth running of the teaching in PS and overseeing that students get their work returned in a timely manner. Each module taught at the PS will be managed by a single course tutor who will be responsible for the delivery of all of the teaching sessions on an individual module. There may be occasions when guest lecturers/tutors will be included in the programme, but these guests will normally attend in addition to, not instead of the course tutors who will retain oversight of the teaching experience throughout. The normal expectation is then that when there are occasional guest lecturers, they will be working alongside the named course tutors.

Each module in will have its own NU based module leader (the DPD for modules taking place in London) and he/she will be responsible for ensuring the quality of the provision on individual modules, overseeing arrangements for offering support and guidance to students on an individual module in terms of teaching, learning and assessment and for ensuring appropriate office hour time is supplied to students. Modules run at the Poetry School will have designated deputy module leaders (course tutors) who will liaise with the NU DPD on matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment. In all cases, office hour consultations may take place remotely via email or Skype, or in person on either of the respective sites.

The module leader for the dissertation module will be the NU DPD. The DPD will oversee the mentoring of students with regard to the design of their projects, the allocation of supervisors and ensure that all receive appropriate supervision. The usual arrangement will be to connect students with a local supervisor. There may, however, be cases when

supervision will be conducted at a distance. This arrangement will only be applied if a student has particular needs and be done with student's approval and support.

The Newcastle DPD will be the personal tutor for all NU based students. The course tutors at the PS will work as personal tutor for PS students. PS students who need further support will be referred to the PG senior tutor in SELLL who can advise re PEC or student support options. Student Progress and Student wellbeing have wide experience with remote working and can support students regardless of their location. The opening of the Newcastle University London site will give students based at the PS the opportunity to access a full range of student services in person and make their experience commensurate with that available to students at NU.

There will be two annual meetings of the MA in Writing Poetry Management Committee. With 3 members from each institution, including the Director of the PS and the SELLL HoS, the SELLL DPD and the PS course leader. This committee will agree the programme, marketing, recruitment and admissions process for subsequent years. It will also review the business plan. In addition to these annual meetings, a weekly admin catch up (during term time) will be part of the schedule of business of both institutions. Reports on attendance, marketing, PEC and Health and Safety etc. will be shared on a weekly basis.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

This MA looks to establish itself as the most attractive and flexible nationally, addressing an established and growing demand for one-off poetry workshops, as demonstrated by the Poetry School, and allowing a cohort of poets to develop their interests to a further stage, in a structured way, and for which they receive formal recognition through a degree. Both Newcastle University and The Poetry School are able to draw on teaching by some of the best and most experienced poetry teachers in the UK, all distinguished poets in their own right. Furthermore, the Poetry School collaboration offers Newcastle University the chance to draw on a wider pool of students, gives it access to a base for its own activities in London, and the chance of further collaboration, around events, activities and research.

NCLA and The Poetry School are already collaborators on a research project on archiving where the Poetry School helped to recruit participants for the 'community' aspect. The development of a digital archival resource that is also part of this project will be of use for students on the MA, and it will be helpful, in the structure of the MA, to think through effective uses of the digital archive as a teaching resource. Future funding applications with the Poetry School as partners and collaborators are planned, and the reach through contacts and reputation offered by The Poetry School in this respect is invaluable.

The Summer school element of the degree offers huge scope for innovation and working with other partners, for instance galleries, and exploring such exciting new developments as poetry films, and the use of digital resources. We will be able to draw on our expertise in translation on the summer schools, and a well-developed network of placements and partners.

In London students will be able to access The Poetry Library, and visit galleries and collections (The Wellcome Collection for instance) and there will be opportunities for students to enrich their practice through the many collaborations already explored by The Poetry School. The Poetry School is centrally embedded in the poetry world (publishers, promoters etc) and has good links with other poetry and arts organisations in the capital and is sited in close proximity to both the Saison Poetry and the British Libraries. Regardless of their location, the summer school modules (2 over the life of the MA) will mean that students will be able to come together and not only forge a real cohort identity, but receive the benefits of the learning at both sites.

In London, a large and varied short course programme will be running alongside MA programme (and accessible to MA students for a supplementary fee). The richness of the educational environment in London will complement and deepen the learning experience in terms that parallel the opportunities for students in Newcastle. Both sites offer a wide range of opportunities and experiences, from digital projects and platforms to live events, collaborative projects, commissioning opportunities, competitions and publications.

The result will be an MA in poetry rooted within a large and diverse network of practitioners, enriched by significant contacts and connections within the poetry world, an MA made distinctive through its collaborative dimension and of unique value to students as result. Mutually reinforcing in terms not only of reputation but with regard to the educational experience for students, the programme will offer innovative masters level study in terms that will help establish, through their joint efforts, SELLL, The NCLA and The Poetry School as leaders in the teaching of Creative Writing in the UK

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[Programme regulations 2026/27](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

Accreditation reports
n/a

Additional mechanisms
n/a

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available [here](#).

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.