

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Undergraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Hons)
4	Programme Title	English Literature English Literature with Placement Year
5	UCAS/Programme Code	Q306 1548U
6	Programme Accreditation	n/a
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	English
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Date written/revised	April 2026

10 Programme Aims

- (a) To produce graduates with:
- i. the knowledge, understanding, key and specific skills and general intellectual development required to make them employable in graduate positions in a wide range of employments or capable of undertaking a taught postgraduate programme
 - ii. a knowledge of the range of texts from past and present cultures
 - iii. an introduction to world literature, creative writing, and film in English
 - iv. an ability to address the cultural and political contexts in which texts are produced and read
 - v. a familiarity with a variety of genres and forms
 - vi. experience of a range of critical practices and an ability to reflect on those practices
 - vii. an ability to reflect on the processes of creative writing.
- (b) To provide a programme:
- i. in which teaching is informed by research, both in terms of research that is relevant to the discipline and with regard to research carried out by members of staff
 - ii. which consistently attracts highly qualified applicants
 - iii. which fully meets the requirements of the relevant Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark statement
 - iv. which complies with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice, and
 - v. which fully meets the criteria for a level 6 award within the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year

- (c) Provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.
- (d) Facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
- (e) Provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer term career plans.
- (f) Enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the work place, reflect upon their development and effectively evidence and articulate their learning in relevant future settings.

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 aims and learning outcomes have references to the Subject Benchmark Statements for English.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have knowledge and understanding of the following:

- A1. A range of texts in English, across different media
- A2. Varieties of writing in English from different periods, places, and cultural perspectives
- A3. How language, culture, politics and technology affect the ways texts are produced and read
- A4. The complex relationships between texts, other forms of expression, and their contexts
- A5. A range of critical practices
- A6. Genre and generic conventions
- A7. The vocabulary of textual and theoretical analysis.

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year

- A8. Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan, and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A9. Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A10. Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.
- A11. Relate their work based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

Teaching and Learning Methods

At Stage 1 knowledge and understanding (A1 – 7) is acquired via lectures, seminars and student-led study groups (directed sessions where students meet to discuss set material without their seminar tutor). At Stage 2 they are acquired via lectures, seminars, study groups, tutorials and independent research (A1 – 7). At Stage 3, a third of a student's time is dedicated to independent work, which will typically take the form of a capstone dissertation, developing more advanced knowledge and understanding (A1 - 7). These capstone dissertations take the form of a long-form essay; a digital exhibition; a scholarly digital edition; or a placement and project. Programmes students also have the option to do a creative portfolio as a capstone (prose, poetry, theatre script, screenwriting). In some circumstances, students will write two independent extended studies, instead of undertaking a capstone project. At all stages, students are encouraged to supplement taught material through independent reading. Guidance on further reading will be provided by the module director and/or the seminar tutor.

Assessment Strategy

Where there is a single assessment of knowledge and understanding on a module, it will normally be via submitted work of 4,000 or (for capstone modules) up to 10,000 words in length. Many modules have mixed forms of assessments, and many have mid-module assignments. Where this is the case, the word limits are determined on a *pro rata* basis. Many modules divide their assessments into 'formative' and 'summative' assessment, where the former do not count towards the overall mark but provide clear structured preparation and practice for those assessments that do.

A few modules make use of examinations. Examinations provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding under specific conditions. All students take at least one examination during their degree (A1 – 7).

Submitted work enables students to further demonstrate knowledge and understanding; it also enables them to demonstrate their knowledge of the scholarly protocols of the discipline. All students will have written at least one essay of over 2,500 words in length by the time they have completed Stage 2, a requirement that means all students will have been assessed on the extent to which they have developed in-depth knowledge and understanding (A1 – 7) before they start Stage 3. At Stage 3 they will be asked to demonstrate deeper knowledge and understanding in the assessment of both specialised option modules and independent study modules.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1. critically evaluate arguments and evidence
- B2. develop an awareness of the complexity of intermedial and intertextual relations in context
- B3. organise and present ideas as part of a structured written argument
- B4. organise and present ideas as part of a structured oral presentation
- B5. design a research project and select and employ appropriate research methodologies.
- B6. generate new creative work

Teaching and Learning Methods

Intellectual skills are promoted through seminars, study groups and tutorials. At Stage 1 students are given guidance to ensure that they can debate effectively, evaluate arguments and evidence and present information to a group. Skills B1, 2, and 3 are introduced and practised in stage 1. These skills are developed further at Stage 2. Here a greater emphasis on small group work become key to refining a student's intellectual skills (B3 and B4 in particular). At Stage 3, more specialised modules and the greater emphasis on independent work focus students on developing the skills identified in B5. At all stages of the degree students have opportunities to engage in creative ways with the programme content (B6).

Assessment Strategy

Submitted work, produced either during the course or under limited conditions, is key to the assessment strategy for intellectual skills. Submitted work enables students to expand on these skills, demonstrate a self-reflexive awareness of their approach and show they can use appropriate techniques, theories and methodologies (B2, B3, B5). Opportunities to submit creative work also feature on many modules (B6). To ensure these skills are assessed fully, all students, by the time they have completed Stage 2, will have written at least one essay of over 2,00 words before they start Stage 3.

At Stage 3 they will be asked to demonstrate more advanced intellectual skills in the assessment of both specialised option modules and independent study modules.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1. practise critical skills in the analysis of texts across a range of media;
- C2. engage imaginatively and critically in the reading of complex texts;
- C3. exercise and develop a sensitivity to verbal creativity;
- C4. analyse a range of texts employing relevant theoretical perspectives;
- C5. apply scholarly bibliographic skills appropriate to the subject.

Teaching and Learning Methods

At Stage 1 practical skills are acquired via lectures, seminars, study-groups and tutorials (C1 – 5). Seminars, study groups and tutorials give students the opportunity to discuss ideas and critical practices introduced in the lectures. At Stage 2 they are acquired via

lectures, seminars, study groups, tutorials and independent study (C1 – 5). At Stage 3 more specialised modules and the increased emphasis on independent study offers students the chance to further refine all of these practical skills.

Assessment Strategy

Submitted work, produced either during the course or under limited conditions, constitutes a venue for students to showcase insights gained from their skilful engagement with literary material (C1-3); it also enables them to demonstrate their employment of appropriate research techniques (C4). They also learn scholarly bibliographic skills appropriate to the subject (C5). To ensure these skills are assessed fully, all students, by the time they have completed Stage 2, will have written at least one essay of over 2,00 words before they begin stage 3; they will also have tackled a variety of assessment tasks, from keyword essays through to prompts inspired by real-world writing scenarios.

At Stage 3 they will be asked to demonstrate more advanced practical skills in the assessment of both specialised option modules and independent study modules.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1. Plan and complete essays and project-work
- D2. Write and speak to different audiences
- D3. Co-ordinate multiple projects
- D4. Deploy a range of digital skills for research and communication
- D5. Gather, evaluate and organise material
- D6. Summarise and assimilate information
- D7. Communicate and debate effectively
- D8. Work to deadlines or within specified time-limits
- D9. Work and negotiate with others, with a sensitivity to cultural contexts
- D10. Work effectively both in a team and independently
- D11. Present information to a group in a structured and coherent way.
- D12. Display an excellent knowledge of the English language and of its proper use, including a correct application of grammar, syntax and spelling rules.

For Students Undertaking a Placement Year

- D13. Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace.
- D14. Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.
- D15. Use graduate skills in a professional manner in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate the personal development that has taken place.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Key/transferable skills are developed through tutorials, seminars, lectures and study groups. At Stage 1 students are given advice to ensure that they can debate effectively, negotiate with others and present information to a group. Skills D1 – 12 are introduced and practised in the stage 1 compulsory modules.

All of these skills are promoted further at Stage 2 with continued emphasis on small group work, and with increased opportunity for independent study (D1 – 12). The Career Development modules offered by the University Careers Service further enhance employability skills if the students opt to take them.

At Stage 3, students will refine their key/transferable Skills further, particularly in the course of studying more specialised modules and as they devote more time to independent work in taking one of the capstone dissertation options or two Independent Essay modules (D1, D5, D8). The capstone placement option at Stage 3 gives students the chance to further refine their key/transferable Skills. They also have the option of taking the University

Careers Service's Advanced Career Development modules for Stage 3 students, which further enhances their employability.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment of key/transferable skills is implicit in course work at all levels. At Stage 3 independent work will assess D1, D6 and D8 with especial rigour.

Throughout stages 2 and 3, a number of modules offer 'public-facing' assignments, which require students to adapt their research to a variety of different imagined audiences (D2, D7, D9).

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme is studied over three years full-time; it is divided into modules, which have a value of 20 credits, or, in the case of capstone dissertations only, 40 credits (with every 20 credits representing 200 hours of student learning).

At Stage 1, students are given a thorough introduction to a range of literatures in different media forms and the skills required for their studies, in particular close reading and theoretical approaches and methodologies. The seminars in the stage 1 compulsory modules give students the opportunity to practise, experiment with and develop this knowledge and these skills. Across Stage 1, there is an emphasis on small group teaching (tutorials and seminars) to enable the acquisition of academic, practical and key skills. Modules give students a broader view of the inter-relationships between texts and a sense of the significance of mythologies and traditions in shaping literary discourses.

These compulsory modules are complemented at Stage 1 by 40 credits of optional modules. Students might choose modules from those offered by other schools, or from our own options in creative writing, language and linguistics, and drama.

At Stage 2, students choose from a range of modules that are aimed at developing their knowledge of key areas of literary study in terms intended to give them a broad, contextual knowledge of particular areas. Required to take at least two modules from before 1800 and at least two post 1800, they will study a range of literature from across the periods in their work. Further, the option to study poetry, script & prose at stage 2 gives students the chance to develop their experience of and expertise in creative writing. Some literature modules offer opportunities for students to be assessed on creative engagements with the course material.

At Stage 3, students choose four taught modules from a wide menu of specialist options. The aim at Stage 3 is to give students the chance to build on the experience they have gained in Stages 1 and 2 and to make choices based on their own particular interests, at the same time as it gives them the opportunity to study with staff teaching material that draws on their own particular research expertise. The only restriction imposed upon students is that some of their choices must focus on the earlier periods, a requirement that ensures they have coverage of the subject. They also have the option of taking the University Careers Service's Advanced Career Development modules for Stage 3 students, which further enhances their employability.

In addition to their 80 credits of taught modules, Stage 3 students take 40 credits of independent study. This may take the form of an 8,000 word Dissertation; a digital exhibition of 30-60 items with an accompanying word count of 3500-4500 words; a scholarly edition of 4000-5000 words and an accompanying editorial introduction of 4000-5000 words; a placement portfolio and dissertation totalling 10,000 words; or a creative portfolio of prose, poetry, screenwriting, or theatre script. In exceptional circumstances students may replace the dissertation with two independent essay modules (4,500 word essays that extend the work done in an individual module). As with the taught modules at

Stage 3, the emphasis here is on developing in-depth and advanced level knowledge and understanding and fostering cognitive and key skills. The independent essay and dissertation also introduce students applying for postgraduate degrees to advanced research skills.

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

All undergraduates in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics may elect to study abroad for one semester, typically the second semester of year two. Currently SELLL has links with institutions in Europe and with universities in North America.

SELLL students can also take advantage of University and Faculty-led programmes (including exchanges with universities in Canada and Australia).

Students have the option to take part in a Careers Placement Year in-between Stage 2 and 3 of their programme. They will be transferred on to programme code 1548U.

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/undergraduate/degrees/#subject>

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

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.