

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Undergraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Hons)
4	Programme Title	English Literature and History
5	UCAS/Programme Code	QV31
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	English and History
8	FHEQ Level	6
9	Last updated	March 2026

10 Programme Aims

- (a) To produce graduates with
- (i) The knowledge, understanding, transferrable and subject-specific skills, and the general intellectual development required to make them employable in graduate positions in a wide range of employments, capable of undertaking a taught postgraduate programme, and equipped for lifelong learning.
 - (ii) Have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects of English Literature and History and an in-depth knowledge of self-selected specialist areas within these subjects.
 - (iii) Knowledge of world literature, creative writing and film in English from the medieval to the contemporary periods.
 - (iv) An ability to address the cultural and political contexts in which texts are produced and read
 - (v) A familiarity with a variety of literary genres and forms and the history of those forms.
 - (vi) Experience of a range of critical practices and an ability to reflect on those practices.
 - (vii) An awareness of changing historical phenomena over a long period of space and time.
 - (viii) Comparative methodological and critical skills
 - (ix) The ability to investigate historical problems in depth, use source materials critically and be able to assimilate and appreciate historiographical arguments and traditions
 - (x) The ability to apply the techniques of literary analysis to written texts
 - (xi) The ability to apply the complementary skills of literary and historical analysis in their research.
 - (xii) The ability to synthesise historical and literary evidence when developing their research findings
 - (xiii) The capacity for independent study
- (b) To provide an integrated programme
- (i) For students interested in both English and History that guides them in the specific reading, research and writing skills that are required in each discipline and for interdisciplinary work.
 - (ii) To provide students with the opportunity to study historical subjects alongside literary ones and to draw connections and comparisons between the two.
 - (iii) 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
 - (iv) which consistently attracts highly qualified applicants

- (v) which fully meets the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Benchmark statements for both subjects and
- (vi) which fully meets the criteria for Level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- (vii) which complies with University policies and QAA codes of practice.

(c) Additional aims of the Placement Year form of the programme:

- (i) To provide students with the experience of seeking and securing a position with an employer.
- (ii) To facilitate independent self-management and proactive interaction in a non-university setting.
- (iii) To provide a period of practical work experience that will benefit current academic study and longer term career plans.
- (iv) To enable students to ethically apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace, 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 outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for English and History.

Knowledge and Understanding

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

- A1 A range of texts in English, across different media, time periods, places and cultural perspectives.
- A2 How language, culture, politics and technology affect the ways texts are produced and read.
- A3 The complex relationships between texts, other forms of expression, and their contexts.
- A4 A range of literary critical practices.
- A5 Genre and generic conventions and the vocabulary of textual and theoretical analysis.
- A6 Key historical concepts.
- A7 Key themes in world history, and an ability to detect similarities, differences, patterns and interconnections in the histories and geographical regions and periods over a long period of time.
- A8 A wide range of primary source material and an understanding of how such material should be interpreted and evaluated.
- A9 How to critically evaluate scholarship, in terms of both argument and use of evidence, and how to weigh competing arguments against each other.
- A10 How to synthesise the findings of literary and historical methodologies.

For students on the Placement Year programme:

- A11 Apply personal and professional development strategies to prioritise, plan and manage their own skills development and learning.
- A12 Research, select and apply relevant knowledge aimed at enhancing their own skills and effectiveness in specific duties at their placement.
- A13 Demonstrate an understanding of a work environment, how it functions and their contribution to it.
- A14 Relate their work based learning to other areas of personal development, including academic performance.

Teaching and Learning Methods

At Stage 1, the primary methods of imparting knowledge and understanding (A1-9) are through lectures, with seminars and peer-led study groups serving to reinforce and amplify learning. At Stage 2 they are acquired via lectures, seminars, study groups, independent study and A2-3, A6-7, and A9-10 through interdisciplinary group project workshops on archival materials and an independent project. Independent study is a fundamental part of gaining knowledge and understanding at all three stages and students are given extensive support and guidance through provision of source materials and oral, written and web-based guidance on how to use and interpret these materials. At Stage 3, one third of the student's time will be dedicated to independent study, which will take the form of an interdisciplinary dissertation co-directed by a historian and a literary scholar in order to achieve A10.

Assessment Strategy

Where there is a single assessment of knowledge and understanding on a module, it will normally be via submitted work of 3500-4000 or, in the case of the capstone module, 9000-11,000 words in length. Many modules have mixed forms of assessments, and many have mid-module assignments. Where this is the case, the lengths for exams and essays 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.

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 3,000 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 – 9) before they start Stage 3.

At Stage 2, students undertake a compulsory interdisciplinary module that develops their ability to think across the subjects (A10) and that provides them with the opportunity to engage intensively with primary historical and literary source materials to produce an independently devised topic. This independent work is continued and developed at Stage 3 with the capstone dissertation module which sees them develop an extended essay of 9000-11000 words (A10). This allows students to demonstrate individual ability to design, research and execute a project which exhibits the core skills of the historian and the literary critic. Students also have the option of undertaking a Digital Exhibition as a capstone module (A10).

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Critically evaluate different sorts of data and evidence
- B2 Critically evaluate a range of critical arguments from literary studies and/or history
- B3 Understand, evaluate and synthesise findings
- B4 Use appropriate evidence to support a sustained argument or line of reasoning delivered in written and/or oral form
- B5 Design and appropriately research a project independently

Teaching and Learning Methods

Intellectual skills B1-4 are taught and B5 is promoted through exercises and guidance in lectures, seminars, study groups and in the case of B1-5 through written feedback and group and one-to-one discussions with staff. Students employ and receive feedback on

these skills through summative and formative assessments.. A greater emphasis on interdisciplinary work at Stage 2 helps to develop B2-3 and prepare students to achieve B5 through designing and researching a case-study, which is supported by the taught elements of the dissertation module at Stage 3. B1-B4 are also taught and encouraged through debate in lectures and seminars.

Assessment Strategy

Submitted and group work (including presentations) is key to the assessment strategy for intellectual skills. Submitted work enables students to demonstrate these skills, demonstrate a self-reflexive awareness of their approach and show they can use appropriate techniques and methodologies (B1-3). To ensure all these skills are fully assessed all students will by the end of Stage 2 have written at least one piece of submitted work of over 3000 words per subject (B1-2, B4) and researched an interdisciplinary project based on archival material (B1-4). At Stage 3 students will be asked to demonstrate more advanced intellectual skills by designing, researching and completing an individual interdisciplinary project and giving an oral presentation at a dissertation workshop (B1-B5).

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 Locate, retrieve and interpret a range of archival materials.
- C3 Organise and present ideas cogently and according to appropriate conventions in both written and oral formats.
- C4 Appreciate different interpretations of past events and processes and be able to argue for and contextualise particular theories and points of interpretation.
- C5 Exercise and develop a sensitivity to verbal creativity.
- C6 Apply scholarly bibliographic skills appropriate to the subject.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Skill in writing and oral presentation are fostered on the compulsory Stage 1 modules (C1-C6,C4) and developed through formative and summative assessments and written and oral feedback at Stage 2. C2 is taught through the research skills element which involves master-classes delivered by English and History staff, by Special Collections, and by archivists and curators from around the North-East. Subject-specific skills (C1-C2, C4) are taught and learned in lectures, seminars and study groups and supported by assigned work (formative and summative) (C1, C3, C6).

Assessment Strategy

Formative and summative written work across the subjects over the course of the degree (C1-6). Individual submitted work and the final group project in the interdisciplinary stage 2 module in particular show students' ability to work with archival materials (C2); the group presentation and individual presentations through the degree (C3) have students developing written and oral communication skills; C2 and C3 are assessed as part of the research skills component and C1, C3, C4, and C6 through the preparation of the dissertation itself and in the course of dissertation supervisions.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- D1 Plan and complete essay and project work both independently and as part of a group
- D2 Write and speak to different audiences in a variety of media
- D3 Co-ordinate multiple projects to deadlines
- D4 Present information in a coherent and structured way
- D5 Communicate and debate effectively
- D6 Locate, critically evaluate and accurately summarise material
- D7 Adapt to varied working environments and challenges
- D8 Deploy a range of digital skills for research and communication
- D9 Listen and take notes effectively
- D10 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 on the Placement Year programme:

- D11 Reflect on and manage own learning and development within the workplace.
- D12 Use existing and new knowledge to enhance personal performance in a workplace environment, evaluate the impact and communicate this process.
- D13 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

D1-D7 are taught through subject-specific and jointly-run modules. On Stage 1 compulsory modules, students are taught elements of effective argumentation (D2, D4-6) and experience working independently and (in a non-assessed way) as part of a group. D1 is assessed at Stage 2; D9 is developed principally in lectures, seminars and through attendance and giving feedback at other students' oral presentations (Stages 1-3). D2 is developed through oral and written assessments and at subject-specific level; D8 is developed on some modules and when training students to use and interpret digital archives. D7 is learned both at a subject specific-level as students switch between each School and in other learning environments (archives, museums) through the archival training. D10 is developed over the course of the degree as students respond to feedback and hone their writing skills.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment of key/transferable skills are developed through course-work at all stages. D1-6 and D9 are assessed principally at subject-specific levels through mixed assessment but D1 and D4-8 receive special emphasis at Stages 2 and 3. D10 is assessed on all modules.

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 twenty credits or, in the case of the dissertation only, 40 credits (with every 10

credits representing 100 hours of student learning). Each year, a student is required to take 120 credits amounting to 360 credits over the course of three years. At Stage 1, half of those credits (60) are in English Literature and half in History. There is one compulsory History module (HIS1100 Evidence and Argument) and one compulsory English module (SEL1033). At Stage 2, students take a 20-credit interdisciplinary module (SEL2218), taught jointly by staff members in English and History. The student chooses five further modules (3 from one subject, 2 from another) to make up the 120 credits. At Stage 3, students are required to take a 40-credit dissertation module (SEL3377), that is jointly supervised by members of staff from English and History. The remaining 80 credits represent 2 modules from each subject. For degree classification purposes, all Level 6 (that is Stage 2 and Stage 3) modules count. Stage 3 credits have twice the weight of Stage 2 credits in the final classification. Progression to the next stage of the programme relies on the student meeting the conditions laid down by the university for progression.

At Stage 1, each student will take the compulsory modules which together give students an introduction to the aims, theories and critical practices specific to each subject and the research and writing skills needed for their effective application. Students then have the option of selecting up to four survey modules in History and Literature designed to give them a thorough introduction to a range of texts and historical periods. The accompanying tutorials and study groups give students the opportunity to practise, experiment with and develop these knowledges and skills. Stage One modules also begin the acquisition of knowledge and understanding and the development of intellectual and practical skills (A1-A9, B1-4 and C1 and C3-6 and D1-D10)

At Stage 2 students begin to specialise within self-selected areas in both subjects. Students can choose history electives from countries and periods as far-ranging as Anglo-Saxon England and The Dark Ages to History and Politics in Colonial India. English electives are mainly period-based at Stage 2 and feature team-taught modules covering a wide range of texts from chronological periods from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, as well as incorporating electives on theatre and performance and creative writing. Stage 2 modules are mainly on narrower topics than Stage One modules and are studied at a more intensive and demanding level than Stage One. All modules at Stage 2 continue the acquisition of knowledge (A1-9) and the development of intellectual skills (B1-4) and practical skills (C1 and C3-6). At Stage 2 students start to learn and practice A8 and A10 and acquire B5 and C2 through the compulsory interdisciplinary module.

At Stage 3 students take an interdisciplinary dissertation on a subject of particular interest. In Semester 1 of Stage 3 they will receive preparatory dissertation research training, building on the skills introduced in stage 2, fostering generic independent research skills (D1-D2, D4-D5). The dissertation or digital exhibition capstone, like all stage 2 and 3 modules develops A19, B1-4 and C1 and 3-6 but pays especial attention to the refinement and application of A10, B5 and C2.

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

The programme allows students to combine the study of English Literature and History in a manner that gives them both a thorough grounding in each subject but also consistently offers them the opportunity to combine their subject-specific knowledge and skills in their independent research. This is conducted primarily through the interdisciplinary modules, which are co-taught by staff from both schools and specifically encourage students to synthesise their literary-critical and historical skills in their independent research. By basing the stage 2 compulsory module on the rich archival holdings in the university and the North-East and/or digital archives the degree also gives students a valuable grounding in working with original materials. This promotes interdisciplinarity, intellectual flexibility and independence in thought and practice, something also fostered by the obvious intellectual affinities between the research areas of both schools, as well as connecting students' own research to the wider community. This commitment to interdisciplinarity makes us unique amongst our comparator institutions who typically do not offer interdisciplinary modules on their English and History degrees.

All undergraduates in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics and The School of Classics, History and Archaeology may elect to study abroad for semester one of year two. Currently SELLL and SCHA has links with institutions in Europe and with universities in North America and can also take advantage of University and Faculty-led programmes (including exchanges with universities in Canada and Australia).

Students at Stage 3 may also apply to take a career placement year. These students transfer to a placement year programme and complete one compulsory module. This module does not contribute to their overall degree classification but students must pass in order to continue to Stage 3 on the 1466U code.

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/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.