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**Programme Specification**

**Title of Course: MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning)**

**Date Specification Produced: December 2012**

**Date Specification Last Revised: September 2019**

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each module can be found in the Course Handbook on Canvas and in individual Module Descriptors.

**SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

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| **Title:** | MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning) |
| **Awarding Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Teaching Institution:** | Kingston University |
| **Location:** | Penrhyn Road |
| **Programme Accredited by:** | n/a |

**SECTION2: THE PROGRAMME**

1. **Programme Introduction**

The Distance Learning Creative Writing MA at Kingston University offers a distinctive, flexible format for students wishing to join a writing programme on freer and more wide-ranging terms than those offered by a conventional residential course. The Distance Learning course is designed to maximise tutor-student contact while providing greater liberty to write, and is tailored to students for whom structured weekly workshops are either unwanted or inconvenient. The programme makes use of the range of modern communications technologies that make distance learning an increasingly viable and attractive option for students. The uniqueness of the programme lies in its separation of writing workshops and the personal development of creativity from the obligation to travel to and attend sessions on campus. During the two non-compulsory campus days, students can attend lectures or writing workshops and meet tutors and other members of their creative writing cohort; the rest of the time they will be able to focus on their own work, assisted by a tailored timetable of dedicated tutor feedback and support. This radical rethinking and restructuring of the traditional Creative Writing postgraduate programme has the obvious benefit of fostering individual creativity and enabling students to focus on their own creative goals and projects, while still offering an opportunity to meet the cohort and establish workshop contact that is fundamental to the ethos of creative writing and forms an enjoyable and stimulating aspect of the student experience of a Creative Writing MA.

Distance Learning students will undertake the same modules as students doing the campus-based MA and will enjoy all the benefits of extensive writing practice, contextual reading, regular tutor interaction and feedback on their work, and circulation of work among their peers for commentary and criticism. Likewise the programme offers the same breadth and depth of developmental tools and options: students may choose to work in a specific genre (including Poetry, Fiction, Travel Writing, Crime, YA, Biography, Crime Writing and Life Writing) and study a number of genres and forms during the course of their degree. They will in all cases receive close guidance from an expert in their particular field, and will work with assigned tutors to master the skills required to bring their work to publishable standard.

The Distance Learning Creative Writing MA seeks to employ the most modern and effective methods of communication to deliver a course that is scholarly, rigorous, passionate and personal. Course tutors design and structure both individual and group contact with students by any combination of a number of different methods, including email, Skype, virtual classrooms and other forums, and can deliver course content for certain modules by digital voice file and filmed lectures. Students engage with critical and developmental modules, as well as enjoying intensive workshopping of their writing. Most of the module interaction is asynchronous, so that students can access the material and contribute at convenient time during the week. Online masterclasses with distinguished writers or live writing workshops also run in each teaching block. Campus days provide the opportunity to meet one another and there may also be the opportunity to attend events with professionals in the fields of publishing and literary agency, and of course the range of writers associated with the Writers Centre Kingston.

The content of the modules in this programme emphasises its distinct, practice-based character. Students take two online workshop modules per teaching block (one and two), followed by a final Creative Writing Dissertation. The framework of tutor-student contact and online group discussion, as well as regular peer review of students’ own writing, is designed to offer formative feed forward, and to foster a mutually supportive cohort spirit. In order to further this latter aim, students will be encouraged to communicate and express themselves outside the parameters of module-delivery by means such as journal-writing, blogging, and engagement in online forums for discussion. In addition all students will be assigned a Personal Tutor to guide them through their studies.

The course includes the option of an integrated work placement or placements, which enables students to further develop their professional skills and enhance their employability. From the start of the course, students will begin to work to secure (a) placement(s) suitable for their course and career, supported and advised by the Careers and Employability Services team and the Professional Placement Module Leader. Workshops are provided on CV creation, interview techniques and placement searching, with drop-in sessions to provide additional support. In order to take the Professional Placement module, students need to have arranged a placement, approved by the Course Leader, by the end the preceding teaching block. Students undertake the placement either before the final module, or following the completion of the final module. During the placement students will be supervised (online) by a tutor who, if possible, will visit during the placement. Depending on the location of the placement, meetings might take place face-to-face or via platforms such as Skype. The placement module will make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Canvas for communication and dissemination of information between students and staff as well as making online learning materials available. Students will be required to keep a critical diary of the tasks and duties undertaken during their placement, to provide a framework for a reflective essay and work placement report, which is submitted for assessment at the end of the placement. They will also assemble and collate samples of work and evidence of achievement produced during their placement which will also be submitted for assessment. Placement providers will be asked to appraise the students’ work and this feedback will be made available to the student. The placement module will be assessed on a pass/fail basis.

This integrated placement(s) provides students with a valuable opportunity to apply and develop their knowledge and skills in a professional working environment, enabling them to deepen their knowledge of the industry, develop their self-confidence, and strengthen their CV. Students undertaking placement activities are in a stronger position to gain the skills and experience which are valued by employers.

1. **Aims of the Programme**

The aims of the programme are to:

* develop professional writing skills, techniques and originality of expression through extensive writing practice, peer review and workshop activities, with the supervision and guidance of published writers
* enable students to master the skills necessary to the publication, presentation and/or performance of their original writing
* enhance students’ knowledge of a considerable range of contemporary writing in different popular forms and genres
* teach students the critical skills necessary to undertake the advanced and specialised analysis of literary texts in their chosen genre or form
* ensure that students gain the skills necessary to work effectively with others in the generation and improvement of material, through offering and receiving constructive criticism
* develop students’ ability to write creatively and extensively in at least one popular form or genre of their choosing
* teach students the critical skills necessary to undertake the advanced analysis of a variety of literary texts
* enable students to master professional writing and publishing skills and techniques
* enhance the development of each student’s ‘voice’ through extensive writing practice, peer review and workshop activities, with the supervision and guidance of a variety of published writers
* offer the opportunity to write creatively in more than one popular form or genre of their choosing
* develop the capacity for critical and creative analysis of published and draft writing
* produce through independent study a substantial piece of creative writing and a piece of critical commentary that considers the relationships between the student’s own text and published works within their chosen genre
* teach students to produce independently well-drafted and scrupulously edited writing projects of substantial length
* provide the opportunity for students to make use of their research, analytic and professional skills, and their self-reflection on critiques from teachers and peers in the production of substantial writing projects
* The 2-year programme with integrated placement(s) also provides students with an opportunity to enhance their professional skills, preparing them for higher levels of employment, further study and lifelong learning

1. **Intended Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes in the following areas. Where appropriate, the programme outcomes are referenced to the QAA subject benchmarks for English and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2014), and relate to the typical student. Note that there is no benchmark statement relating specifically to Creative Writing at Level 7. Where appropriate, we are guided by the most recent QAA benchmark statement for Creative Writing at Honours level.

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| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | | | | |  |
|  | **Knowledge and Understanding**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Intellectual skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  | **Subject Practical skills**  **On completion of the course students will be able to:** |  |
| A1 | demonstrate a critical awareness and creative understanding of a variety of other genres | B1 | shape complex critical and creative material into a substantial creative writing project and a self-reflective critique on their writing in relation to their chosen genre or form | C1 | draft and edit a sustained piece of creative writing in their own genre |  |
| A2 | independently evaluate the success of their writing style and technique, and show the ability to document that process | B2 | reflect critically on a piece of sustained creative writing | C2 | independently devise and manage the production of a substantial piece of creative and critical writing |  |
| A3 | demonstrate a sophisticated awareness of the intellectual, historical l and theoretical framework of their chosen genre | B3 | produce a sustained piece of writing suitable to be considered for publication and/or performance | C3 | work independently to produce original work to appropriate professional standards |  |
| A4 | show an in-depth knowledge of popular literary texts in their chosen form or genre | B4 | demonstrate a capacity for sophisticated critical thought and the development of practices of constructive peer review, self-reflection, editing and redrafting | C4 | develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed in the professional arena |  |

In addition to the programme learning outcomes identified overleaf, the programme of study defined in this programme specification will allow students to develop a range of Key Skills as follows:

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| **Key Skills** | | | | | | |
| **Self-Awareness Skills** | **Communication Skills** | **Interpersonal Skills** | **Research and information Literacy Skills** | **Numeracy Skills** | **Management & Leadership Skills** | **Creativity and Problem Solving Skills** |
| Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development | Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken work | Work well with others in a group or team | Search for and select relevant sources of information | Collect data from primary and secondary sources and use appropriate methods to manipulate and analyse this data | Determine the scope of a task (or project) | Apply scientific and other knowledge to analyse and evaluate information and data and to find solutions to problems |
| Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses, reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback | Present, challenge and defend ideas and results effectively orally and in writing | Work flexibly and respond to change | Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately | Present and record data in appropriate formats | Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources | Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence |
| Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets | Actively listen and respond appropriately to ideas of others | Discuss and debate with others and make concession to reach agreement | Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information | Interpret and evaluate data to inform and justify arguments | Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary |  |
| Work effectively with limited supervision in unfamiliar contexts |  | Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback | Accurately cite and reference information sources | Be aware of issues of selection, accuracy and uncertainty in the collection and analysis of data | Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants |  |
|  |  | Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs | Use software and IT technology as appropriate |  |  |  |

1. **Entry Requirements**

The minimum entry qualifications for the programme are:

A second class degree or above, or equivalent, in creative writing, English literature, literature and language, drama or theatre studies or a similar subject; and/or a demonstrable interest in creative writing. Students are required to submit a sample of their writing as part of the application process.

A minimum IELTS score of 6.5 overall and 7.0 in writing is required for those for whom English is not their first language.

No DBS clearance is required.

1. **Programme Structure**

This programme is offered in full-time, / part-time and ‘with professional placement’ mode, and leads to the award of Masters. Entry is normally at level 7. Intake is normally in September.

**E1. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies**

N/A

**E2. Work-based learning**

As part of the Faculty work placement initiative, students on the MA Literature and Philosophy have the option of taking the programme with a placement year. If this option is taken then students will complete 120 taught credits before taking a placement year, returning the following May to complete their dissertation.

Work placement is an integral part of the 2-year programme and students will receive support from the award winning Careers and Employability Services team. While it is the responsibility of individual students to secure appropriate placements, the Careers and Employability Services team offers each student support at all stages of the application process, including writing CVs, completing application forms, participating in mock interviews, assessment centre activities and psychometric tests. Sourcing and applying for placement(s) gives students the opportunity to experience a competitive job application process.

The experience of the work placement period enables students to apply their learning in the professional work environment, to reflect upon their own personal experience of working in an applied setting, to focus on aspects of this experience that they can clearly relate to their prior learning, and to evaluate the relationships between academic skills and employers’ expectations. Students will be assessed during and at the end of this period, through a portfolio of work, which will be marked as pass/fail.

**E3. Outline Programme Structure**

The Creative Writing MA degree consists of 180 credits, four modules of 30 credits each and a final dissertation of 60 credits. Students taking Creative Writing as a half field (with Publishing) take two 30 credit modules from Publishing (one must be ‘Create’ but the other they can choose) and two from Creative Writing. They can then choose whether to pursue a dissertation/practical project within Publishing or Creative Writing. Students taking Creative Writing as a minor field (with Publishing) take one module within Creative Writing and then the balance of the modules, including the dissertation or practical project, from within Publishing.

Students on the 2-year programme (with integrated placement) must complete all modules except the final ‘capstone project’ module, by the end of TB2, and then work in their placement(s) for a maximum of 12 months. The student should confirm that their placement opportunity is available by the end of May, and the course team will confirm whether this is acceptable within two weeks. Students on placement(s) must complete a portfolio assessment which includes a reflection on how they have applied the skills they have developed during the previous year, within a professional working environment.

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| **Level 7** | | | | |
| **Compulsory modules** | **Module code** | **Credit**  **Value** | **Level** | **Teaching Block** |
| Writers’ Workshop | CW7021 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Special Study: Workshops in Popular Genre Writing | CW7024 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Structure and Style | CW7023 | 30 | 7 | 1 |
| Critical Challenges | CW7022 | 30 | 7 | 2 |
| Creative Dissertation | CW7110 | 60 | 7 | 3 |
| Professional Placement | HU7100 | 120 | 7 | TB3 (Yr 1)  and  TB1&TB2  (Yr 2) |

Students exiting the programme with 60 credits are eligible for the award of PgCert. in Creative Writing.

Students exiting the programme with 120 credits are eligible for the award of PgDip. In Creative Writing.

Students may gain credits from any of the modules offered to achieve these awards.

1. **Principles of Teaching Learning and Assessment**

As in the residential Creative Writing MA, the general approach to teaching and learning in the Distance Learning programme is predicated on the notion of several necessities: in-depth analysis of a variety of published textual material; regular, extensive writing practice; the mastery of professional writing skills; and the development of critical acumen through intensive feedback from peers and from professional writers, regular critical discussions and continuous self-evaluation. This approach, delivered remotely by a number of tailored options, translates into a range of specific strategies. Throughout the degree, major importance is given to peer review of students’ own writing and expert feedback from professional writers. These practices are seen as essential to the development of students’ writing skills. Rigorous intellectual engagement with literary texts in a theoretical and analytical manner is a further aim of the degree. This goal is achieved through the reading and study of published texts in all modules, thus ensuring that the reading and analysis of literature is an integral part of the students’ experience of the craft of writing. Moreover, the skills of literary analysis of popular genre texts gained in this module will prepare the students for the production of the Critical Essay that will accompany their Creative Writing Dissertation. The strategy of building the skills of reading alongside those of writing is fostered by course tutors as an intrinsic part of the programme delivery, and by the participation in online masterclasses of visiting speakers and practitioners working in a variety of popular forms and genres.

In the two workshop modules (Writer’s Workshop and Special Study) there is an emphasis on the acquisition of skills through regular presentation of, and rigorous feedback on, written work. Distance tutors and students will agree in advance how best to structure and deliver presentation and feedback during teaching blocks, in order to take account of individual preferences and circumstances. Formative diagnostic testing occurs in all modules through a rigorous focus on students’ presented written work. Active participation in discussion, regular presentation, the continuous interchange of constructive criticism through tutor and peer review are encouraged and reinforced through learning outcomes and assessment. The importance of good time-management and regular work are also stressed, in the form of daily writing and self-evaluation through practice, with a considerable proportion of study time given to drafting, revision and review.

In the final, creative dissertation module, students are called upon to make use of the skills they have developed throughout their period of study in the production of a Creative Dissertation of no more than 15,000 words in the form or genre of their choice. This creative piece is to be accompanied by a 3,000 word Critical Essay that examines the relationship between the student’s own text and achievements within the genre or form as a whole. While this module is based on independent research and imaginative interests, students are aided in the development of this substantial piece of writing by the knowledge gained in the various taught modules, and by one to one supervisory contact with a specialist member of the creative writing team.

Students’ work undergoes ongoing formative assessment from tutors throughout each module. Work is summatively assessed by tutors at the end of each module, a proportion undergoing both second marking and scrutiny from external examiners from different academic institutions. The marks and detailed comments given for the four 30 credit modules also feed forward formatively towards the Dissertation module.

Throughout the degree, formative guidance is also available for students by means of requested contact with members of staff. Moreover, the provision of a Personal Tutor for each student will further support students formatively over the course of their studies and particularly enhance our provision of early diagnostic assessment. The Personal Tutor will be assigned to the student and will be a core staff member, teaching regularly on the MA. The student will have the opportunity to meet with their Personal Tutor online or during a campus day to discuss issues of welfare, development, and professional practice within their specialism, and without. Tutors will guide students towards possible publication outlets and, wherever possible, point them towards employment avenues that will take advantage of their transferable skills.

1. **Support for Students and their Learning**

Students are supported by:

* A Module Leader for each module
* A Course Leader to help students understand the programme structure
* Personal Tutors to provide academic and personal support
* A placement tutor to give general advice on placements
* Technical support to advise students on IT and the use of software
* A designated Course Administrator
* An induction week at the beginning of each new academic session
* Staff Student Consultative Committee
* VLE/Canvas – a versatile online interactive intranet and learning environment accessible both on and off-site
* Lynda.com – an online platform offering self-paced software tutorials
* A substantial Study Skills Centre that provides academic skills support for both UG and PG students
* Student support facilities that provide advice on issues such as finance, regulations, legal matters, accommodation, international student support etc.
* A Student Achievement Officer who provides pastoral support
* Support for students with disabilities
* The Union of Kingston Students
* Careers and Employability Services team, who will provide support for students prior to undertaking work placement(s).

1. **Ensuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Course**

The University has several methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of its provision. These include:

* External Examiners
* Boards of Study with student representation
* Annual Monitoring and Enhancement
* Periodic review undertaken at subject level
* Student evaluation including MEQs
* Moderation policies
* Feedback from employers
* Rigorous second marking procedures
* Staff peer teaching observations

1. **Employability Statement**

The Creative Writing MA is designed to foster a range of skills desirable to employers, such as communication skills, self-management, meticulousness in editing and presentation, the ability to reflect on one’s own work and to respond to constructive criticism, the ability to write for particular purposes and the ability to work constructively with others.

In addition to a possible career as a writer, particular careers may include work in publishing, journalism, advertising and marketing, film, television, radio, arts management, new media, business, teaching and therapeutic programmes.For those interested in further research, the course provides an excellent foundation for Mphil/PhD level study in related programmes.

Our students have gone on to become professional novelists, poets and dramatists, as well as pursuing careers in Creative Writing teaching, arts management and numerous other areas of professional writing. We support our students through regular workshops with agents, publishers, and professional writers who come in to share their tips on becoming a working writer. We are also developing links with local businesses that require writers for their websites.

Among the full-time staff in Creative Writing are writers who enjoy international reputations for their poetry, fiction, and playwriting, and the recent appointment of five distinguished writers has enriched the programme and increased the University’s reputation for excellence in this programme. Established in 2010, the Writers’ Centre Kingston (WCK) strengthens ties between English Language and Literature and Creative Writing and offers a distinctive setting for new lines of interdisciplinary research and publication. WCK has enabled the unit to establish opportunities for promoting varied forms of undergraduate and post-graduate study across disciplinary boundaries. Staff in Creative Writing are at the forefront of impact-based activities that develop and sustain collaborative projects with non-academic partners. We also have direct teaching links with industry figures such as agents and editors who supervise some dissertation students.

In addition, those students who take a half or minor field in Creative Writing, with a half or major field in Publishing, emerge with a strong understanding of the publishing industry, which promotes their ability to embark on the wider dissemination and promotion of their work, or the use of publishing skills in other areas. This has proved beneficial in a variety of contexts with former students using their experience of publishing in the furtherance of their writing careers, and also within other organisations such as charities, schools and retailing environments.

The 2-year integrated work placement programme is designed to provide students with enhanced opportunities for securing professional employment at the end of their degree, providing skills and experience that employers are looking for in their work force. These are supported by the Careers and Employability Services team, providing drop-in and scheduled events to support students in the preparation of CVs, applications, and preparation for interviews and assessment centres.

1. **Approved Variants from the Postgraduate Regulations**

N/A

1. **Other sources of information that you may wish to consult**

The Writers’ Centre Kingston which offers an open, inspirational and innovative environment that transcends the university. The WCK website provides details of readings and writers’ workshops, as well as talks by publishers, editors and literary agents. These offer the chance to maximise the impact of your work. Web reference: <http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/wck/>

The awards made to students who complete the programme or are awarded intermediate qualifications comply fully with the National Qualifications Framework.

All of the procedures associated with the programme comply with the QAA Codes of Practice for Higher Education.

**Development of Programme Learning Outcomes in Modules**

This map identifies where the field/course learning outcomes are **summatively** assessed across the modules for this field/course. It provides an aid to academic staff in understanding how individual modules contribute to the field/course aims, a means to help students monitor their own learning, personal and professional development as the field/course progresses and a checklist for quality assurance purposes.

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|  | |  |  | **Level 7** | | | | | |  | |
|  | | **Module Code** |  | CW7021 | | CW7024 | CW7022 | CW7023 | CW7110 |  |
| **Programme Learning Outcomes** | | **Knowledge & Understanding** | A1 | S | | S | S | S | S |  |
| A2 |  | |  | S | S | S |  |
| A3 | S | | S | S | S | S |  |
| A4 |  | |  | S | S | S |  |
| **Intellectual Skills** | B1 | S | | S | S | S | S |  |
| B2 |  | |  |  | S | S |  |
| B3 | S | | S | S |  | S |  |
| B4 | S | | S | S | S | S |  |
| **Subject Practical Skills** | C1 | S | | S | S |  | S |  |
| C2 | S | | S |  | S |  |  |
| C3 |  | |  | S | S | S |  |
| C4 | S | | S | S |  | S |  |
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**Students will be provided with formative assessment opportunities throughout the course to practise and develop their proficiency in the range of assessment methods utilised.**

**Technical Annex**

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| **Final Award(s):** | MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning) |
| **Intermediate Award(s):** | PgCert, PG Dip |
| **Minimum period of registration:** | 1 year full-time, 2 years full-time (with Professional Placement); 2 years part-time |
| **Maximum period of registration:** | 2 years full-time, 3 years full-time (with Professional Placement), 4 years part-time |
| **FHEQ Level for the Final Award:** | Masters |
| **QAA Subject Benchmark:** | Creative Writing (Honours) |
| **Modes of Delivery:** | Full-time, Part-time and ‘with Professional Placement’ |
| **Language of Delivery:** | English |
| **Faculty:** | Kingston School of Art |
| **School:** | Arts, Culture and Communication |
| **Department:** | Humanities |
| **UCAS Code:** | n/a |
| **Course/Route Code:** |  |
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