

MFA Creative and Life Writing

Programme specification

1. Programme details

Item	Information
a) Programme name (incl. pathways):	MFA Creative and Life Writing
b) Programme code(s)	
c) Programme credit value(s)	300 CATS
d) Programme author(s)	Tom Lee
e) Entry requirements	Standard requirement is an Upper Second-Class BA or equivalent degree in English or a related humanities/arts subject together with submission of a portfolio of the student's creative writing. Other qualifications of equivalent level to a degree are considered; as are degree results below the upper second class where there are indications of particular strength in this specialism. A high level of competence in written and spoken English is also required. Students without BA- equivalent qualifications who have substantial work experience (e.g. in literary journalism, creative writing, publishing etc.) which may be considered as equivalent to formal qualifications, may be admitted.
f) Academic year effective from	2026-2027

2. Programme Aims & Overview

Aims

The programme specification is informed by: Goldsmiths' declared focus on 'the study of creative, cultural and social processes'; the English Subject Benchmark Statement; the UK Quality Code; the National Qualifications Framework; the English and Creative Writing and the Goldsmiths Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies.

The main purpose of the programme is to offer ways to develop your own writing skills within a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research. The programme aims to extend students' specialist knowledge and critical/contextual understanding of the study and practice of Creative and Life Writing. In particular, the MFA programme builds on the existing MA programme by requiring the students to gain knowledge of the professional context of the publishing industry and by producing a book length piece of creative work. The programme aspires to:

- develop your particular writing skills and interests
- enhance independent critical and evaluative skills
- expand your knowledge and understanding of cultural, historical and intellectual contexts of modern literature
- develop an understanding of diverse literary trends, movements and schools
- promote your analytical engagement with the complexities of modern literary discourse
- encourage students' development into professionally organised and interactive individuals by practising skills of selection, assimilation and communication in both written and oral domains
- facilitate a learning environment that offers an appropriate foundation for further literary development or scholarly research in literary studies

Overview

This programme is designed to meet the needs of committed writers who are interested in exploring and exploiting their own possibilities as writers, and in critically examining their own writing. It is unique in combining creative and life writing in a stimulating and enriching programme. It offers ways to develop your own writing skills within a challenging, flexible and advanced scheme of study invigorated by current research. The programme aims to extend students' specialist knowledge and critical/contextual understanding of the study and practice of Creative and Life Writing. You will examine relevant literary and cultural theory as well as the politics and practicalities of language and writing from the point of view of the writer. Practitioner-led, the programme offers you the opportunity to work with a range of published writers who visit the College to give readings and lead workshops. You will also draw upon London's rich tradition as a converging point for culturally diverse literary practices. Visiting writers in the past have included Daljit Nagra, Jackie Kay and Ali Smith; poetry masterclasses have been led by Sharon Olds, Les Murray, Patience Agbabi and Paul Muldoon.

3. External reference

Item	Information
a) FHEQ Level of Award:	7
b) UCAS Code(s):	Not applicable
c) HECoS Code(s):	TBC
d) QAA Benchmark group:	Not applicable

4. Awards

Item	Information
g) Awarding institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London

Item	Information
h) Teaching institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
i) Home School:	Music, English & Theatre
j) School(s) also involved in teaching of the programme:	1. Mind, Body & Society 2. None 3. None If other, name here:
k) Entry awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input type="checkbox"/> PGDip
l) Interim exit awards:	<input type="checkbox"/> CertHE <input type="checkbox"/> DipHE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGCert <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PGDip
m) Final awards:	MFA Creative and Life Writing

5. Delivery

Item	Information	
a) Language of study:	English	
b) Valid intake points in year:	<input type="checkbox"/> January <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sept/Oct <input type="checkbox"/> Other If other, specify: N/A	
c) Mode of study:	On Campus Indicate the overall balance of teaching modes in the table below.	
d) Total hours directed learning/year	160	
e) In-person hours	160	100%
f) Online hours	0	0%
g) Pace of study:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part time	
h) Duration of programme	Full time: 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> months Part time: 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> years <input type="checkbox"/> months	
i) External accreditation:	Not applicable	
j) Apprenticeship Standard:	Not applicable	

6. Programme Learning Outcomes

Also, see the [curriculum map](#) at the end of document.

For UG exit awards, Learning Outcomes must be achieved in the level indicated below:

- CertHE = Level 4
- DipHE = Level 5

Learning outcomes are grouped in categories of:

- **Declarative learning** - knowledge, thinking & facts (D1-3)
- **Functional learning** - application of knowledge, thinking & facts (F1-3)
- **Professional and transferable skills and behaviours** (P1-3)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

	Learning Outcome	Level	Graduate Attribute
D1	Development of writing skills (prose fiction, poetry, life-writing) enabling you to be in a stronger position to gain publication	7	Responsible agency
D2	Awareness of the range of literary and cultural forms available and progress in exploring which forms are most rewarding in their own work	7	Diversity of perspective
D3	An ability to analyse your aims as a writer and how, in practice, you might fulfil them	7	Responsible agency
F1	Develop skills of critical analysis in relation to your own creative work	7	Responsible agency
F2	Conduct textual analysis informed by appropriate contextual knowledge	7	Political in the personal
F3	Draw together diverse, but relevant, contexts and perspectives	7	Diversity of perspective
P1	Power to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments	7	Diversity of perspective
P2	Enhanced communication and discussion skills, in written and oral contexts	7	Collaboration
P3	Capacity to handle ideas in rational, critical and evaluative ways	7	Responsible agency

7. Programme Structure

For Undergraduate programmes (UG), each level must amount to at least **120 CATS** (60 ECTS).

Postgraduate (PGT) programmes must amount to at least 180 CATS (90ECTS), with exception to interim exit awards.

Compulsory modules must be taken by all students.

Option modules – you must choose one or more of the options available to this programme at this level and point. The option modules available from this list may vary from year to year, depending on student numbers and staff availability. Selection takes place during your studies, not before.

Also, see [curriculum structure grid](#).

Academic year 1 (FT)

Module Name	Code	Credit	Level	Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
Workshop in Creative and Life Writing	EN71033A	60	7	Compulsory	1	1	N/A
Contemporary Contexts for Creative and Life Writing	EN71034A	30	7	Compulsory	1	2	N/A
Specialist Option in Creative and Life Writing	EN7XXXX	30	7	Compulsory	2	2	N/A

Academic year 2 (FT)

Module Name	Module Code	Credit	Level	Module Type	Term	Year PT	Pathway
MFA Portfolio Project	EN7XXX	180	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	N/A	FT only
MFA Portfolio Project PT Year 1	EN7XXX	90	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	3	PT only
MFA Portfolio Project PT Year 2	EN7XXX	90	7	Compulsory	1-2-3	4	PT only

8. Learning, Teaching & Assessment

Learning & Teaching methods

Teaching will be via a range of formats to be as relevant as possible to the topic and learning outcomes. This may be through workshops, practical labs, lectures and seminars. It may have a mix of in-person and online activities, designed to give you the best learning experience and to make the most out of your time on campus. You are expected to attend all your timetabled learning activities.

Specifically, this programme will be taught in the following ways:

The programme is committed to the centrality of the workshop and tutorial in the teaching and learning process. The programme provides a weekly workshop in the autumn and spring term for every participant in their first year of study. The workshop focuses specifically on the development of writing skills and the advancement of critical debate about contemporary writing. Knowledge gained through reading, presentations and debate is reinforced through individually supervised tutorials.

In the autumn term of the first year a series of weekly 2-hr seminars in Contemporary Contexts amplifies and complements the debate taking place in the workshops. This structure provides contextual and theoretical perspectives and enables you to enhance and develop your understanding. In the Spring term of the first year students take a Specialist Option in which they develop their creative work in the area of, for example, Poetry, Fiction, Life Writing, Writing for Children.

Assessment modes and approaches

You will be assessed in a range ways throughout your course. These will be both Formative (for feedback and development), and Summative (required to pass and progress to the next level). Summative assessments are compulsory.

Feedback is a crucial part of your learning and development in this programme. You will receive feedback both on your Formative (work in progress) tasks/assessments, and your Summative (graded) assessments. This feedback will help the assessment to be a part of your learning, not just a test. It may be verbal, written or video based. Please engage with this feedback to improve your future work.

Specifically, this programme will be assessed in the following ways:

Assessment allows students to demonstrate a range of appropriate skills: (i) by 2 submissions of written work (each 5,000 words or equivalent) which include a mixture of the students own creative work and a critical commentary on it, for the workshop course; (ii) by 5,000-word essays for the Contemporary Contexts seminar module and for the chosen option module; or by a further submission of 5,000 words of creative writing and critical commentary for the specialist workshop module; (iii) by 50,000- word, or equivalent, portfolio of creative writing and critical commentary. This portfolio represents the equivalent of a dissertation.

Assessment diet (number of assessments for compulsory modules)

Mode	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Total
Coursework	0	0	0	0	6	6
Exam	0	0	0	0	0	0
Live	0	0	0	0	0	0
Portfolio (multi-modal)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Practical / multimedia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Written	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	0	0	0	0	6	6
Of which...	Individual:		Group:			

9. Other information

Item	Information
a) Assessment regulations	https://www.gold.ac.uk/gam/taught-programmes/assessment/
b) Placement opportunities	Not applicable
c) Programme-specific requirements	<p>The MFA has a total value of 300 credits and involves two calendar years of full-time study. Programmes are composed of individual modules, each of which has its own credit value. Part-time students normally take modules to the value of 90 credits each year. If a programme has a part-time pathway, the structure will be set out in the Programme Structure section above.</p> <p>All modules are at level 7 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.</p> <p>More detailed information about the structure and requirements of a Goldsmiths degree is provided in the Goldsmiths Qualifications and Credit Framework.</p> <p>Intermediate Exit Points for this programme:</p> <p>Students may apply for the intermediate exit points of Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma, if extenuating circumstance prevent the completion of the MFA. These intermediate awards may be awarded on the successful completion of modules to the value of 60 credits or 120 credits respectively. The awards are made without classification. For the award of the Postgraduate Certificate, at least 30 credits of the compulsory module must be passed. For the award of Postgraduate Diploma to be awarded, at least 60 credits of compulsory modules must be passed.</p>
d) Programme specific costs and resources	Not applicable
e) Employability and potential career opportunities	<p>Graduates of the existing MA programme include Tom Lee, Lucy Caldwell, Ross Raisin, Amy Sackville, Evie Wyld, Sara Grant, Naomi Foyle, Joanna Quinn, Dizz Tate, Lisa Smith, Lijia Zhang,</p> <p>Elaine Castillo, Ashley Dartnell and Suzanne Joinson and the poets Emily Berry, Malika Booker, Nick Makoha, Jack Underwood, Abigail Parry, Anthony Joseph, Katrina Naomi, Rachel Long and Matthew Gregory.</p>

Item	Information
	<p>Among them they've won or been shortlisted for awards including the Sunday Times/EFG</p> <p>Private Bank Short Story Award, the Rooney Prize for Literature, the Dylan Thomas Prize, several Eric Gregory Awards, the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year Award 2009, the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, the Guardian First Book Award, the T.S. Eliot Prize, the Forward Prize, the New Writing Ventures Prize, and several Betty Trask Awards.</p> <p>Other graduates have gone on to work in publishing (for example, as senior commissioning editors), journalism, public relations, the Arts Council, teaching, advertising, the civil service, business, industry, and the media.</p> <p>Skills: The MFA will enable you to develop transferable skills, including: enhanced communication and discussion skills in written and oral contexts; the ability to analyse and evaluate different textual materials; the ability to organise information, and to assimilate and evaluate competing arguments.</p>

10. Academic support

There is a range of support available to you to give you the best possible chance of success in this programme.

Please see your tutors and student portal/VLE for details of what's available and how to access this support.

11. Curriculum map

Programme Learning Outcomes assessed by each module:

Module name	Code	Type	D1	D2	D3	F1	F2	F3	P1	P2	P3
Workshop in Creative and Life Writing	EN7103 3A	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
Contemporary Contexts for Creative and Life Writing	EN7103 4A	Compulsory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Either: Specialist Option in Creative and Life Writing	EN7XXX X	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								
MFA Portfolio Project	EN7XXX X	Compulsory	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>								