



Department of English &
Creative Writing

Postgraduate studies in

English & Creative Writing

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Welcome

Here in the Department of English and Creative Writing, we deliver an outstanding learning environment. Aberystwyth students are some of the happiest and the best taught in the country and we are proud to be consistently ranked as one of the top UK English Departments for teaching quality and student experience.

Literature has the power to effect genuine change, and at Aberystwyth you can channel your own passion for reading and writing into making your own contributions to our literary heritage and to the literature of the future. We ensure that your talents are fostered and nurtured, opening up some fantastic career opportunities for you. Our graduates have signed to some of the UK's major literary agents and have published with some of the world's most prestigious publishing houses, including Faber & Faber and Penguin.

We have an excellent university library which, above and beyond the usual array of scholarly and critical editions, houses a fascinating collection of rare books that are a delight to anyone interested in reading and the art of textual production. In addition, we have one of the biggest libraries in the world, the National Library of Wales, on our doorstep - one of only five copyright institutions entitled to receive a copy of every book published in the UK.

The Department is also home to *New Welsh Review* - Wales's foremost literary magazine - and the *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English*. Through these affiliations we offer exciting opportunities for you to get involved in a variety of writing and publishing activities, internships, and training opportunities.

Every year, we organise guest lectures and workshops, which involve a range of well-known writers, scholars, and industry professionals from around the world. Amongst those who have visited recently are columnist and critic Caitlin Moran; Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy; National Poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke; award-winning poet, Andrew McMillan; novelists Niall Griffiths, Gareth L Powell and Sarah Hall; and the popular vlogger and social media manager for Vintage, Leena Normington.

As the world-renowned "cultural capital" of Wales, Aberystwyth is a truly exceptional place to study. Not only is the University situated in one of the most attractive landscapes in the UK, but it also offers excellent academic resources and learning opportunities.

We look forward to welcoming you into our stimulating postgraduate and research community.

Prof Louise Marshall, Head of School



THE SUNDAY TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

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UNIVERSITY
GUIDE
2026

UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR
FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Important information

The programme information published in this brochure was correct at time of going to print (January 2026) and may be subject to change. Prospective students are advised to check the definitive programme information, including entry requirements, that is available on our website before making an application, to ensure that the course meets their needs.

Why choose Aberystwyth?

Specialist opportunities for postgraduates include:

- ⋖ Our annual captivating writing retreat designed to ignite your research and writing endeavours.
- ⋖ The chance to work with leading literary and cultural institutions such as New Welsh Review – Wales’s foremost literary magazine – and Honno Welsh Women’s Press.
- ⋖ Trips to the world-famous Hay Festival, which is an annual feature of our calendar, plus access to subsidised performances at Aberystwyth Arts Centre.
- ⋖ Being part of an engaging and interactive seminar series where staff, students, and guest speakers come together to share and showcase their research.
- ⋖ Unlocking your creative potential with the MA Anthology. Every year, students have the exciting opportunity to contribute, design, and edit an anthology showcasing their exceptional creative and critical work.
- ⋖ Support in setting up specialist reading groups of your own, to ensure that postgraduate students are given the chance to play an active part in developing the Department’s overall research culture. Contributions that build on the Department’s foundational research strands of ‘Creative Wellbeing’, ‘Place and Belonging’ and ‘Emotional Lives’ are particularly encouraged.



- ⋖ **For research students in particular:** the opportunity to engage with work fostered by specialist research centres, such as the Department’s Centre for Creative Wellbeing, and other cognate research centres within the University such as the Centre for the Movement of Peoples, the Centre for Material Thinking, and the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society.
- ⋖ **For research students specifically:** the chance to work as a team to build the Department’s annual postgraduate conference - in order to showcase the work, interests, and achievements of your research degree community in any particular year.
- ⋖ **For research students later in their degrees:** opportunities to gain paid experience of university-level teaching, including workshops, seminars, lectures and marking undergraduate work. (These opportunities vary according to availability, year on year.) Additionally, research students involved in teaching can participate in the Teaching for Postgraduates at Aberystwyth University (TPAU) programme, which is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) at the Associate Fellowship level.

What our students say



Metin Mitchell
PhD

I can't recommend highly enough the PhD in Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University. Not only was I blessed with a fantastic supervisor (the poet, Matthew Francis) but I had amazing support from the whole Department of English & Creative Writing. When it came to the Viva, I had been so well prepared for it that, in the event, it felt just like an enjoyable and constructive conversation between academic colleagues. I also received tremendous encouragement with my own novel, *The Crescent Moon Fox*, which was published in the year following my PhD.

I would also say that overall, Aberystwyth is a gem of a university. What I particularly like about it, is its whole ethos of focusing on learning (rather than making profit from students), the easy access to the National Library of Wales - which is invaluable for a PhD student - and the sheer joy of being surrounded by beautiful scenery.



Freya Blyth
Creative Writing MA

I have absolutely loved the course here at Aberystwyth University. The department is truly a community that helps build and grow our creative practices as well as our development as writers! The teaching is so fantastic, I can't tell you how many amazing discussions and debates over feminist texts we've gotten into on a Monday morning!

There's nowhere else I would rather have studied, and the combination of the community and town itself and their support that I feel here, is unparalleled. I would highly recommend anyone who is considering joining this course to come here as they will be welcomed into the community that has become my home, and that is now where I have opened my own independent, feminist Bookshop By The Sea!



Natalia Elliot
Literary Studies MA

For someone who originally applied to do psychology, I actually quite enjoyed ending up on the English MA course! It was a really interesting experience with the variation of topics that are taught.

English was always an enjoyable subject for me, so after undergrad I chose to continue to an MA. A particular favourite of the course was how lively and relaxed some of the discussions could be - especially on the 'Women, Fiction and Female Community 1660-1792' module.

I found that all my modules included interesting, detailed context that I otherwise wouldn't have thought twice about; it was never boring.

After my MA I ended up going into publishing where some of the work involves research, deadlines, and interpersonal skills, which I feel that both the MA as well as the lovely staff at Aberystwyth have prepared me very well for.



Abbie Ena-Smith
Literary Studies MA

Though I have a special interest in queer and Victorian studies, I enjoy a wide variety of literature throughout history - which my course has allowed me to explore with the rich variety of optional modules on offer.

As well as the wide variety of modules on the course, the departmental staff were one of the many reasons I chose to study at Aberystwyth. They are not only really approachable and enthusiastic, but everyone in the department is incredibly supportive of the approaches that you wish to take with your own learning. During my degree I have been able to hone my research skills, in view of studying for a PhD. Additionally, I have been able to bolster my professional skillset through writing academic portfolios and participating in conference-like presentations. These skills will take me further in the career I wish to pursue.

One of the biggest positives about this experience for me has been the close-knit community within the department, allowing me to feel supported and to strive for my best.



Eva Morris

Literary Studies MA

My MA with the English and Creative Writing department has been nothing but supportive and collaborative.

Beginning the MA during the pandemic, there has been nothing but continual, steady support from the departmental team. Choosing to go part time in the first year of my degree was an easy and smooth process, and when I needed a year out of study, that too was incredibly well supported and easy to manage.

My personal tutor remained in contact with me throughout my year away from studies, meaning the transition back to university was a lot less stressful than I thought it would be, and allowed me to settle back into the department with ease.

I truly cannot thank the English and Creative Writing Department enough for their wonderful team, and their constant communication throughout the degree – which was the main factor in why I chose to stay at the university for my MA degree.

The variety in the module choices were well supported by the department. Course module books tend to have multiple copies in the Hugh Owen Library, which makes everything so much easier, and the entire reading list is available either physically or virtually which makes study and assignment work go much smoother.

Aberystwyth and the university as a whole are a beautiful place – both the student and local community are wonderful, and your surroundings are truly gorgeous. The experience here is wonderful, and I am so grateful to have been a part of the community.



Emma Butler-Way

PhD

I chose to do the PhD here as I had had a fantastic experience within the English Department for both my BA and MA degrees, and when the opportunity to stick around for a bit longer in the department and its nurturing, engaging environment came up, I did everything I could to make the most of it. I picked Aberystwyth due to the vibrant and welcoming atmosphere – particularly within the Department of English and Creative Writing – and the various extra-curricular opportunities available, from the Music Centre to the pottery classes available at the Arts Centre. Being by the sea was also a big draw, despite the inclement weather it brings in the winter months!

As a PhD student, I was able to enrol on the University's TPAU scheme, through which I was able to gain a teaching qualification (AFHEA). Gaining this qualification, and attending the training sessions for it, helped me to develop my own teaching practice as I took on teaching work within the Department of English and Creative Writing. From a researcher perspective, opportunities to present work both in internal research seminars and external conferences, have proved to be invaluable in the development of my research practice.



Aly Cuddy

Creative Writing MA

I attended Aberystwyth University as a mature student and pursued a Creative Writing degree before advancing to an MA. The MA was a natural progression, allowing me to continue exploring chosen research avenues with greater independence whilst retaining access to the valued guidance of the department's exceptional tutors.

While each module during my time at Aberystwyth held its own special significance, what resonated throughout was the freedom for creative expression, alongside opportunity for in-depth research, that had the added bonus of broadening my academic network and horizons. The course's interdisciplinary approach developed a holistic appreciation of my chosen craft, whilst collaborative opportunities amidst a vibrant student community encouraged creativity, critical thinking, and innovation.

Our courses

Taught degrees

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Creative Writing

MA

This degree will help you develop your creative vision and writing abilities through a balanced programme of reading, analysis, and writing workshops. Working in small groups with professional writers, you will develop your creative work as well as your understanding of the practical aspects of writing and publishing.

Our lecturers will introduce you to a range of contemporary writers of both prose and poetry to serve as a catalyst for your own creative growth, allowing you to develop greater confidence and maturity in your approach to writing. You will also engage in discussions about technique and undertake an exploration of the wider issues related to the practice of writing, such as the significance of genre and the mechanics of publication. The programme also includes a strong critical element, encouraging you to reflect on your own creative practice as well as that of others.

You will receive individual tuition from the excellent staff in the department, all of whom are published creative writers. Under their guidance, you will produce a substantial portfolio in the form of a collection of poetry or an extended piece of prose.

You will benefit from:

- learning alongside a team of distinguished, award-winning authors who work across a broad spectrum of creative fields
- the flexibility to combine your creative writing with the study of literature in areas that directly complement your main area of focus
- access to specialist teaching and expert knowledge on contemporary poetry, crime fiction, life writing, horror, nature writing, black diaspora literature, and postcolonial fiction
- the chance to work with leading literary and cultural institutions such as *New Welsh Review* – Wales's foremost literary magazine – and Aberystwyth Arts Centre
- unlimited access to the National Library of Wales, one of the UK's five copyright libraries
- the option to contribute your own original creative material to our annual anthology, and to work as a member of the editorial team preparing the anthology for publication.

Key facts



Course code: Q394



Duration: 1 year (full-time)
or 2 years (part-time)



Contact time: Approximately 10-14 hours a week in the first two semesters, then mutually agreed contact time with assigned supervisor.

Literary Studies

MA

This degree offers you a stimulating engagement with English literature in all its depth and diversity, with the opportunity to develop expertise in specialist areas of your own choosing.

Our research-led specialist optional modules offer fascinating insights into the literature of specific periods, national cultures, and literary traditions. Staff research interests are diverse and continuously evolving, so you will discover a wide variety of approaches to literature and cultural history that blend advanced scholarship with critical thinking.

By studying the latest developments in critical theory and research methodology you will cultivate the necessary skills to undertake your 15,000-word MA Dissertation, an extensive piece of critical research in your chosen field. You will also develop a host of transferable skills to take into a range of other academic or employment contexts.

You will benefit from:

- the opportunity to learn alongside researchers who are recognised internationally for their contributions to knowledge and the furthering of the discipline
- a strong tradition of specialist teaching in the fields of women's writing, literary geography, LGBTQIA+ writing, Romanticism, Welsh writing in English, surveillance, Victorian literature, Modernism, and Postmodernism
- the flexibility to combine your study of literature with creative practice in areas that directly complement your main area of focus
- opportunities to work with leading literary and cultural institutions such as *New Welsh Review* — Wales's foremost literary magazine — and Aberystwyth Arts Centre
- unlimited access to the National Library of Wales, one of the UK's five copyright libraries
- the option to contribute to our annual anthology as a member of the editorial team preparing the anthology for publication, or you could even contribute your own creative material.

Key facts



Course code: Q392



Duration: 1 year (full-time)
or 2 years (part-time)



Contact time: Approximately 10-14 hours a week in the first two semesters, then mutually agreed contact time with assigned supervisor.

PhD

We welcome PhD proposals in all areas from Medieval literature to literature of the 2020s, and across a wide range of Creative Writing genres. Our department brings together award-winning critics working on literatures from the global to the local with award-winning authors; our research centres provide a dynamic home and foundation for our PhD students' academic and career development.

The Department's particular areas of expertise include:

- Contemporary poetry
- Crime fiction
- Life writing
- Horror
- Nature writing
- Black diaspora literature
- Postcolonial fiction
- Women's writing
- Children's literature
- Literary geography and ecocriticism
- Queer writing
- Memory and post-memory
- Welsh writing in English
- Literatures of surveillance
- Irish writing
- Gothic literature and ghost stories
- Psychoanalysis
- Late Medieval secular literature
- Contemporary medievalism
- Romanticism
- Victorian literature
- Modernism and late modernism
- Postmodernism.

A PhD in Literary Studies is awarded upon satisfactory completion of a thesis of 80-100,000 words followed by a viva voce examination.

A PhD in Creative Writing has two parts: the creative work (comprising 75-80,000 words of prose or 60 pages of poetry) plus a 20,000 word critical commentary. Award of the PhD in Creative Writing is subject to satisfactory completion of this twin written element, followed by a viva voce examination.

For both Literary Studies and Creative Writing PhDs, the normal period of registration is three years (full-time) or five years (part-time). For full-time students, it is expected that the thesis will be submitted within four years of initial registration. For part-time students, submission is expected within seven years of initial registration. Full-time research students are expected to be based in Aberystwyth. Part-time research students can pursue their studies at a distance, but may need to be available to attend sessions on campus on occasion.

All doctoral candidates are required to undertake a selection of research skills and professional development modules that are provided by the Aberystwyth University Graduate School. These modules are normally undertaken over the first two years of study. Under the guidance of their supervisors, students will be expected to develop advanced skills in handling a sustained project, which makes an original, rigorous contribution to the candidate's chosen field of Literary Studies or Creative Writing practice.

For further information, or to discuss options for the shorter MPhil research degree, please contact us directly on english@aber.ac.uk

Our research

Our staff publish in a wide range of fields within literary studies and creative writing, and are at the forefront of their disciplines and practices. Teaching and supervision in the Department are strongly research-led and a thriving series of research seminars gives students the opportunity to hear staff, visiting speakers and research students discuss their work informally, or to present papers drawn from work in progress.

The Department's research is divided into three broad themes:

1. Creative Wellbeing

The Centre for Creative Wellbeing recognises the increasing academic importance of wellbeing research for understanding civil society and its goals, coupled with the growing significance of using wellbeing as a key measure of social and economic progress. The Centre's particular focus on creative engagement with public health aims to champion and facilitate multidisciplinary creative practice research to inform and positively impact policy and practice in settings such as health, education, youthwork and community groups.

2. Emotional Lives

This area of the Department's research focuses on the ways in which our creative and critical practices explore and represent the diverse meanings of emotional experience. It asks how literature, both in the past and today, enables us to engage with feelings about ourselves and others. It explores how writers discover and give voice to a whole range of emotional experiences - experiences so often said to be 'beyond words', like grief, bewilderment, joy or inspiration - and makes those experiences part of the wider community.

3. Place and Belonging

Under this theme, staff pursue research on the diverse ways in which literature and the practice of creative writing relate to real and imagined locations and raise questions of belonging. Our research in this area approaches these ideas variously in terms of memory, geographical rootedness/ rootlessness, and real or imagined communities - including communities of interest, age, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. This work provides a particular focus for the Department's expertise in the field of Welsh Writing in English.



The Department's work also encompasses two further research centres:

David Jones Centre (DJC)

The David Jones Centre promotes the neglected critical field of Welsh modernism and highlights the huge potential for innovative research in the archives at the National Library of Wales. Founded in 2011, the Centre has been an international hub for research and practice in the field of Welsh modernist studies, as well as reflecting strong research synergies in the Department and across the University. Since 2011, there have been six David Jones Centre conferences at the National Library of Wales. In 2016 the DJC hosted the launch of the acclaimed biography of David Jones by Professor Thomas Dilworth.

Centre for Contemporary Poetry (ContemPo)

ContemPo is a collaborative, cross-institutional research centre. It is a critical-creative grouping devoted to the interests of poets, poetry critics, poets who are also critics and critics who are also poets. ContemPo has a special (but not exclusive) interest in investigating experimental and performance poetics and their poetics. Founded in 2006 by Professors Peter Barry and Ian Davidson, ContemPo is today led by five co-directors at the Universities of Aberystwyth, Bangor, Brighton, Plymouth, and Surrey.

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