

# MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning)

course outline (180 credits)



[Summary](#)

[What will I study?](#)

[How will I study?](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Printable version](#)

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## Summary

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This exciting, flexible, supportive and no residency online course offers you the structure you need to develop your creative writing practice, and define and meet your individual writing goals.

Taught throughout by tutors who are both practising creative writers and experienced teachers of creative writing at postgraduate level, the emphasis is on developing practical skills whilst gaining an understanding of your own work within a rigorous critical context and framework.

**Click here** to watch programme leader Chris Thurgar-Dawson explain the advantages of studying Creative Writing by distance learning in under a minute (1 min)

[What will I study?](#)

[How will I study?](#)

[FAQs](#)

[Printable version](#)

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MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning)    School of Design, Culture & The Arts    [tees.ac.uk](http://tees.ac.uk)

## What will I study?

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### Our MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning) consists of four taught modules plus a Creative Writing Project, a final portfolio of your creative writing.

The four modules offer you opportunities to develop your interests – whether these are in prose fiction, poetry, creative life writing, dramatic writing and screen writing – or in using writing to work with people in personal and professional development and healthcare settings.

#### Module 1 (30 credits)

##### Core Skills and Techniques

This introductory module allows you to explore and express your ideas in a supportive environment. Weekly topics cover poetry, prose fiction, creative non-fiction and dramatic writing with an emphasis on developing your confidence, identifying your core strengths and interests, and extending your skills and knowledge. You consider key concepts such as form, style, register, audience and genre. You also gain skills and experience in crafting, redrafting and editing, helping you to work more effectively and respond to the work of others. You also gain skills in advanced critical and reflective practices, helping you develop your technical analysis and understanding your own creative work. By the end of this module, you will have established or further developed a regular creative writing practice. You will have learned new techniques and approaches that will help you continue to develop as a writer.

#### Module 2 (30 credits)

##### Writing and the Self

This module explores the connections between creativity, writing and the self. You reflect on the idea of the self in the writing process and use key ideas and theories drawn from literary autobiography, life writing, narrative theory and the psychology of creativity to develop your work and process. This module enables you to let go of any unhelpful self-concepts about yourself as a writer that may be getting in the way of you producing imaginative work. Ideas explored in this module often help people overcome blocks, access greater fluidity and flexibility in their writing, develop imaginatively and creatively, and rediscover the sheer pleasure of the writing process. You explore approaches such as writing the body, fictionalising from self-experience, objectifying and shaping the stories of our lives on the page and exploring personal metaphor. Concepts such as personal truth, inner dialogue and helpful distance allow you to deepen your writing and gain a clearer sense of what it feels like to be the writer you need to be.

#### Module 3 (30 credits)

##### The Professional Writer in the World

Unique to our approach at Teesside is our emphasis on helping you develop the skills you need to present your work professionally. We explore the nuts and bolts of selling a manuscript or idea, the distinctions between writing online and for print, how to find an agent, the world of self-publishing, and how to make an income as a writer. We help you gain the knowledge and skills needed to market your writing through readings and workshop sessions; or to develop your work with others by creating and delivering professional workshop materials and by developing and extending your writing facilitation and mentoring skills. If you are already a teacher or writing facilitator, this is an opportunity to reflect on your practice and develop it, drawing on an evidence-based framework that can be used in personal and professional development, community, therapy, coaching and healthcare settings.

#### Module 4 (30 credits)

##### Writing Specialisms

In this module you learn more about your chosen area of interest in terms of form, genre and audience. Working with a tutor who is a practising writer in your chosen area, you gain in-depth knowledge of the techniques and approaches needed to develop your skills. You select ONE from:

- (i) Poetry for Publishing and Performance
- (ii) Forming Fictions
- (iii) Writing into Dramatic Space
- (iv) Active Screenwriting

#### Creative Writing Project (60 credits)

This project draws together the learning and development you have gained throughout the course. You complete this independent research project under the supervision of your tutor. With regular guidance and support you develop an initial project proposal outlining your key aims and objectives, and work this into a final portfolio of creative writing (in any form or genre), of publishable standard. You also produce an accompanying reflective and critical analysis of your work. This forms your final submission for the master's award.

Modules may vary

## How will I study?

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## FAQs

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## Printable version

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## How will I study?

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**You study by distance learning. Each taught module will consist of eight weekly units.**

Each unit will consist of:

- a short introductory video, in which your tutor introduces the week's key themes
- supporting materials to read on-screen and/or save and print for your reference
- writing prompts and exercises
- suggestions for further reading and research
- reading questions to discuss in the discussion forum
- a dedicated private space to workshop your ideas and writing-in-progress with your tutor and fellow students.

In addition, you receive help, support and feedback on your work directly from the tutor, both through the online course space and by email.

You don't need to be a technology expert to take this course. All you need is a PC, laptop or tablet to access the course materials and forum and share your writing with the tutors and your peers.

[FAQs](#)

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[Printable version](#)

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### What equipment do I need to do this course?

All you need to take the MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning) is access to a PC, laptop or tablet to watch the videos, read the course materials, share your work-in-progress and take part in the online discussion forum. You also need an email address – but we can provide you with one when you enrol.

The software that we use to run the course is simple, reliable and designed to work easily on different versions of technology. Ideally, we recommend your operating system is Windows XP/7 (or higher) or Mac OS X (or higher) and a high-speed internet connection to access audio and video content.

### How confident do I need to be with technology to take this course?

Don't worry if you don't have much experience of using the internet. Our course materials are very easy to use. Many of our students won't have taken a distance learning course before but we give you lots of help and support. It really is as simple as sending an email or updating your Facebook page. And if you've never done either of those things before, we can help.

### What exactly is distance learning?

Distance learning is another way of saying 'online learning' or 'e-learning.' Although it's called distance learning we make sure that you will never feel distant from us – you are very much a part of our learning community from the outset.

Distance learning is a truly flexible way of learning, enabling you to fit your studies around other life and work commitments. There are no requirements for you to attend classes on certain dates and times. You can access the materials at the times that work best for you.

Distance learning at Teesside University builds on our years of experience in teaching Creative Writing and English Studies, and the expertise that we have developed in teaching writing online. We offer you the very best in terms of content and teaching methods.

### Why choose distance learning?

Our distance learning course attracts a range of students for different reasons. Some have full-time jobs, or need to combine studies with childcare or other commitments. Some may not be able to access high-quality courses in their local area. Some may have personal circumstances that mean distance learning is a practical and attractive way to learn. Whatever your own reasons, you are part of a supportive, non-competitive community.

There is now solid evidence to show that online learning is a very effective way of developing skills and knowledge, particularly as you learn at your own pace in a way that works best for you. In fact, these days, we find ourselves increasingly interacting with our face-to-face students online, providing support and feedback on work-in-progress by email and through our online learning environment between classes. Creative writing courses, with the emphasis on drafting and feedback, work extremely well online.

### How much support and feedback will I receive from my tutor?

This course provides the same level of personalised support and feedback on offer to our face-to-face creative writing students. Your tutor provides detailed feedback on your work-in-progress with advice and guidance on how best to develop your technical skills. Most importantly, your tutor helps you to identify your strengths as a writer and the areas to focus on to develop your ability. As practising writers we can offer advice about publishing your work and/or using your writing skills in the real world. We respond quickly and efficiently to your queries, wherever you might be in the world.

### How will I be assessed?

Each taught module is assessed through portfolio-style written assignments. These consist of your creative writing and accompanying reflective and/or critical work, which helps you to think through your ideas and explore critical approaches to your writing. You receive lots of feedback and support from your tutor while working towards these assessments.

### How much time do I need to commit to the course?

There is no easy answer to this question. Whether you study part time (taking two taught modules a year) or full time, you will find the course very flexible so that you can be online at the time that is right for you.

We ask you to submit a piece of writing for assessment for each module plus weekly writing exercises to help you to experiment, build your confidence and skills, and work towards your formal assignments. There is some core reading and your tutor recommends further reading, based on your developing interests. Each weekly unit of learning provides an informal discussion forum where you can talk about the writing exercises and reading, and share your experiences.

As each module develops, you share your work-in-progress in our private online workshop space. It's entirely up to you how much you participate in the forums and workshops. We find that the more you are willing to share your own thoughts and creative work, the more you gain from the course.

### Will there be a chance to interact with other students?

You can interact with other students as much or as little as you choose through the private course discussion forum and workshop space. You can share your work-in-progress and discuss reading questions and key ideas. You can do this at times that suit you best. There is no requirement to attend online classes.

You are also part of an international learning community. Some of your fellow students may be based in other countries so there is an opportunity to meet fellow writers and study creative writing within a rich cultural context.

### I like to do things in my own way – do I have to interact with other students?

There is no requirement to take part in online discussions but, if you are willing to dedicate some time to this each week, your experience will be enriched. We recognise that sharing work and ideas can be difficult at first and we pride ourselves on creating a supportive space for you to develop your confidence. Some students find that sharing their work-in-progress online is actually much easier than in a real-time workshop environment.

### Should I study full or part time?

The full-time course consists of four taught modules of eight weekly units (studied October to June) plus an individual project (July to September). The part-time route can be adapted to your needs but students usually opt to take two taught modules a year.

### Will this course prepare me for PhD study in creative writing?

Like our face-to-face MA, this course provides a route through to doctoral-level study. You develop the writing and research skills you need to compile a successful PhD proposal and undertake further study. The tutors teaching our distance learning course are all fully trained, experienced supervisors of doctoral research. We have a growing body of research into creative writing at Teesside University with specialisms in creative writing and wellbeing, space and location, fiction, performance poetry and dramatic writing.

### Find out more

Sophie Nicholls  
Programme Leader,  
MA Creative Writing (Distance Learning)  
E: s.nicholls@tees.ac.uk

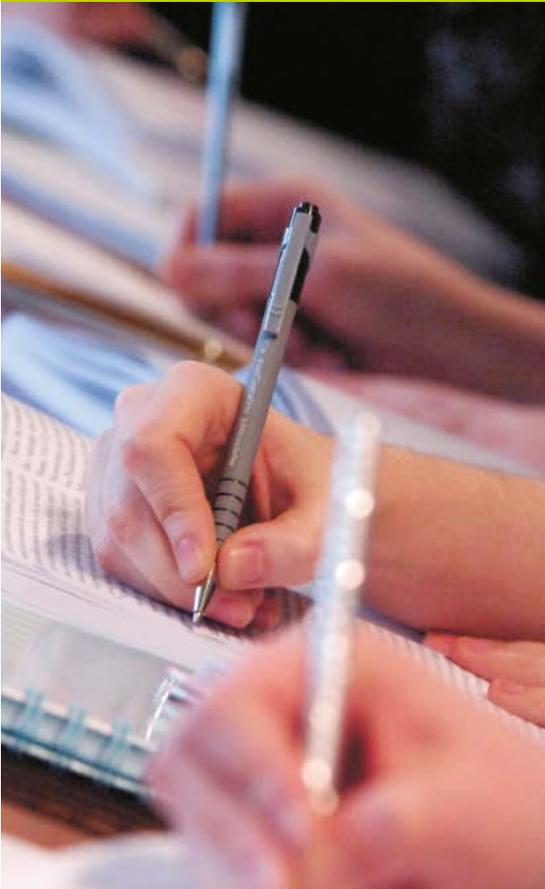
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