English
Undergraduate study
Courses

Single Honours
BA English
three years Q300
BA English Literature and Community Engagement
direct entry (see separate leaflet), part-time only

Joint Honours
BA English and Classical Studies
three years QQ38
BA English and Philosophy
three years QV35
BA Film and English
three years 6T3X
BA Theatre and English
three years 4CC8

Why study English at Bristol?

English literature is an enjoyable and exciting subject to study at university. At Bristol, you will join a department that prides itself on the close relationship between research staff and undergraduates, and which puts small-group teaching at the heart of its degree. Our Department of English has a distinguished history in the field of literary studies and is consistently ranked as one of the top departments in the UK.

An English degree from the University of Bristol will give you the opportunity to study the full breadth and range of literature written in English. You will enter a demanding three-year course, during which your time will be shared between studying the larger movements of English literature, from the medieval period to the present day, and studying particular authors or topics chosen by yourself.

Become an arts student at Bristol and you will be joining a diverse group of staff, students and subjects united by a fascination in exploring how humans express their experiences. From 2018 we are offering you even greater opportunities to explore subjects beyond your core studies and an average of ten or more contact hours per week. Through our innovative curriculum we ensure you develop the key skills and attributes employers seek while receiving a first-class education.
Many people take the activity of reading for granted, but it is one of the most difficult and exciting things we do. Reading literature allows us to question our world and to realise the limits of our understanding. The English degree at Bristol explores literary studies as a serious yet enjoyable academic discipline and promotes an awareness of how much may be gained through dialogue with other disciplines in the University and beyond.

Besides the core focus on literature you will also have the opportunity to contextualise your studies by taking options beyond your department. You may choose to take units in related or broader subject areas or in a foreign language. You will also take part in the Bristol Futures programme, which builds knowledge and experience in the fields of innovation and enterprise, global citizenship, and sustainable development.

You may also choose to spend one semester living and studying abroad, an experience which broadens horizons and which employers highly value.

The University has partnerships with institutions worldwide, including Australia, Europe, and North America.

Why study English at Bristol?

‘The optional units on my course have been the best part. Choosing from a wide variety gives a lot of agency and encourages me to think pragmatically about what I most want to study. This means that I’m far more enthusiastic about attending seminars because it offers a break from the normal curriculum.’

Naomi Adedokun (BA English 2014-15)

Helen Astle (BA English 2016-)

The advantage of a degree in English means that the number of different careers available to you is huge, and as a first year, I am still unsure as to which path I want to follow after graduation. I found the lectures hosted by the Arts Faculty Careers Week were a great opportunity to learn about my options within international relations, publishing and the charity sector, and to start to think about the working world.
Year one of the BA English course has been designed to lay strong foundations for the following years, providing training in close reading and in the skills and conventions of academic writing, alongside the study of poetry, narrative writing, and drama from 1150-1740. Year one also presents options in women’s writing, in Anglophone writing in a global context, and in the ideas of revision and influence.

In year two the continued study of successive periods of English literature, from 1740 to the present, is combined with work on individual authors and topics chosen from a list of optional, special subject units and options in earlier literature.

The third year offers a combination of options in later literature, in transhistorical topics, and in special subjects. You also have the chance to undertake a dissertation project on a subject of your choice, approved by the department.

**Special subjects**

Alongside our compulsory period units you can choose from a wide range of special subject units in years two and three. Units change from year to year, but below are some current examples:

- Aesthetic Possibilities
- American Masculinities
- Author as Character
- Beats and Crazies
- Black British Literature
- Creative Writing: Poetry
- Contemporary Literature and Science
- Contemporary Multi-ethnic Writing of America
- Dangerous Books
- Darkest London
- 18th Century Women’s Writing
- The Fairy Tale in English
- Freud and Shakespeare
- Gender, Desire and the Renaissance Stage
- Introduction to Digital Humanities
- Introduction to Medical Humanities
- James Joyce
- Literature and Medicine
- Literature and Revolution
- Literature and the Sea
- Modernism and the Body
- Modern Medievalisms
- New England’s Dreaming
- Paradise Lost
- The Poet as Witness
- Poetry of the 1960s
- Postcolonial Imaginings
- Presenting the Future
- Prize Culture and Prestige in Contemporary Fiction
- Publishing and Marketing Arthurian Grail Literature
- Queer Writing
- Revenge Tragedy
- Samuel Beckett
- Sex and Gender at the Fin de Siècle
- Shakespeare’s Sonnets
- Shakespearean Tragedy
- Travellers’ Tales
- The Uncanny
- U.S. Postmodernist Fiction
- Utopian Literature
- Victorian Afterlives
- War Stories: Women Writers and Conflict
- Writing for Art
- Writing the Self
- Writing the Working Classes.

**Second and third year optional units**

- Old English Language and Literature
- Chaucer and Chaucerians
- Arthurian Literature
- Shakespeare
- Writing the City: London 1550-1740
- Writing the Margins: 1550-1740
- Prison Writing
- Novel Territories: Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction
- Literatures of Slavery
- Victorian Fiction: Art and Ideas in the Marketplace
- American Revolutions: Twentieth-Century American Literature
- British and Irish Poetry: 1900 to the Present
- Decolonising Literature and Literary Studies.

What will you study?
Teaching and learning

The methods of teaching and learning used by the Department of English at Bristol are geared to an education at the forefront of the subject and are closely integrated with the acquisition of the key skills and attributes sought by employers for a very wide range of careers. Our diverse range of assessments ensure that you gain a thorough training in advanced research, source analysis and in sharing your findings in a number of ways.

We will ensure that you graduate with experience in formal writing, presentation skills and in using digital formats and other media to present knowledge, ideas and arguments. You will be experienced in working individually and in groups and in making connections with and communicating to audiences beyond the University.

As well as lectures you will attend tutorials – small groups of about ten students meeting weekly and lasting for one hour – and seminars, which are larger discussion groups of about 15 students meeting weekly for two hours and where special subjects are taught. Your option units will consist of a weekly two-hour workshop of up to 25 students.

Small-group teaching is at the core of the Bristol English degree and we believe that this best allows us to support your individual response to the course. You are encouraged to become a critical and independent reader and to develop your own sense of what you believe literature to be, questioning received critical opinion, while acknowledging the need to understand previous scholarly debates.

Assessment
Coursework essays of different lengths are the most common form of assessment; some units also require short examinations. Option units may be partially assessed by a portfolio of short pieces of writing or a presentation.

Careers support and graduate destinations

The skills that arts students traditionally bring to the workplace are now, more than ever, valued in every part of the employment market. Our students go on to succeed in careers as diverse as the subjects they study while here – commerce, tech start-ups, law, accountancy, theatre, museums, publishing, the charity sector, journalism, politics, education and international relations, to name just a few. Arts graduates also go on to work in sectors perhaps not immediately associated with arts disciplines, such as engineering and IT.

To ensure arts graduates continue to be appealing to employers, the Bristol Skills Framework enables students to recognise their development in areas such as academic writing, problem solving, group work and individual group presenting. We will equip you with the tools to market your skills, your achievement, and your potential in whatever career path you choose to pursue after you graduate.

English graduates are versatile researchers, active learners, and good communicators. The development of advanced literacy, and the broad range of communication skills and evaluative techniques that an English degree provides, is considered very favourably by employers. Recent Bristol English graduates have been successful in obtaining employment in the media, journalism, publishing, marketing, the theatre, arts administration and various kinds of teaching, as well as in industry, commerce, law, computing, accountancy, human resources and social work. Some of our students have written and published successful novels, plays, and poems. Bristol is a vibrant city in which to live and work and many of our students stay on to work here after graduating.

‘The quality of teaching on the English course is world class. I always come out of a seminar with lots of questions and a desire to read more about a particular idea that I may have encountered within a tutorial.’
Olivia Cooke (BA English 2015- )
Making your application

Typical offer for BA English*
Visit bristol.ac.uk/ug18-english for Joint Honours and other qualifications.

A-levels AAA (ABB contextual†) including A in English Literature or combined English Literature and Language.

IB Diploma 36 points overall (32 contextual†) including 18 points at Higher Level (16 contextual†) with 6 at Higher Level in English A Literature or combined English A Literature and Language.

English Language Profile A††

GCSEs No specific subjects required.

†For information on contextual offers, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-apply/#typical-contextual-offers.

††For details of English language profiles, visit bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

Selection UCAS or Common Application. We may interview mature applicants and applicants with non-standard qualifications.

Deferred entry Considered but places are limited to ensure fairness to applicants applying the following year.

*The typical offer is indicative only and the University accepts a wide range of qualifications. The information is correct at the time of printing (June 2017); however, we recommend you check the University’s website for the most up-to-date information: bristol.ac.uk/ug-study.

Further information
Find out more about the Department of English: bristol.ac.uk/english.

Why choose Bristol?

Top 10 UK university
(QS World University Rankings)

3rd most targeted university by top UK employers
(High Fliers Research)

Rated in top 50 universities worldwide
(QS World University Rankings)

Making your application

English is a particularly popular course and our students have an excellent academic record. Selection is usually based on your UCAS application, though we may interview mature applicants or those with non-standard qualifications; we might also request some written work.

Your personal statement should demonstrate your interest in the subject and your command of written English. We want to hear an account of the books and features of literature that you have found most interesting and enjoyable and why. Consider also telling us about any extracurricular activities you undertake or non-academic achievements, particularly if they relate to your chosen course.

Further information
Find out more about the Department of English: bristol.ac.uk/english.
Contact us

Enquiries Team
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If you have any questions about courses, applications or any aspect of being a UK or international student at Bristol please contact the Enquiries Team.

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University guide to the city of Bristol
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