

MRes Playwriting Studies

This is Britain's leading programme dedicated to the craft of the dramatist. It was founded by internationally renowned playwright Professor David Edgar and is now convened by professional playwright Fraser Grace.

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14
(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Combined research and taught

Study Options: Full time

Duration: 1 year full-time

Start date: September

Contact

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[School of English, Drama and American & Canadian Studies \(/schools/edacs/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/index.aspx)

[Department of Drama and Theatre Arts \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/index.aspx)

Details

This is an intensive course that encourages you to think critically about dramatic writing and helps you put these insights into practice in your own plays. The programme is committed to the exploration of new forms of writing, and this process is supported by structured and ongoing dramaturgy.

On the programme, you study three taught modules and create an original and complete, full length work for the stage, accompanied by a 6,000-word critical analysis.

Why study this course

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Martin Gulbis talks about being a mature student at the University. He also discusses his postgraduate study in the College of Arts and Law and the excitement of returning to higher education.

Modules

You will complete the following taught modules:

Dramatic Structure

This module addresses key dramaturgical terms, introduces you to a range of dramatic approaches and centres on three case studies, which form the basis of the first 4,000-word assignment.

Media, Form and Genre

This module widens the focus to embrace the differing dramatic media (TV, radio, film) as well as considering other questions of genre (comedy, monologue, TIE). Assessment offers a choice of 4,000 word essay, or an adaptation project with 1,000-word introduction.

Writing in Context

This module focuses on some of the practical concerns of the playwright and includes: creative workshops; developing an awareness of the professional writing context; consideration of the roles and processes of the playwright within the production process; introduction to the processes of creative partners; developing an explicit, personal aesthetic, and the preparation of a pitch document. Assessment is via a portfolio of work, comprising both original writing (monologue, or short play) and writing about writing, in the form of eg, a manifesto, personal aesthetic, pitch document . 3,500 words plus 500 word contextualising statement.

Modules and courses are constantly updated and reviewed. As with most academic programmes, please remember that it is possible that a module may not be offered in any particular year, for instance because a member of staff is on study leave or too few students opt for it. The University of Birmingham reserves the right to vary or withdraw any course or module.

Fees and funding

We charge an annual tuition fee*. Fees for 2015/16 are as follows:

- Home / EU: £4,590 full-time
- Overseas: £13,695 full-time

*NB: Due to the nature of this course, it is subject to a £500 bench fee which is included in the fee quoted above.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about [fees for international students \(/International/students/finance/fees.aspx\)](#).

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments. Learn more about [postgraduate tuition fees and funding \(/postgraduate/dr-fees/index.aspx\)](#).

Scholarships and studentships

Scholarships to cover fees and/or maintenance costs may be available. To discover whether you are eligible for any award across the University, and to start your funding application, please visit the University's [Postgraduate Funding Database \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/funding/FundingFilter.aspx\)](#).

International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

All applicants for the MRes in Playwriting Studies are also automatically considered for the Barry Jackson Award. This award contributes to the cost of tuition fees and is presented annually to applicants whose previous achievement and writing sample demonstrate outstanding potential to succeed on the course. The winners of this award are notified each summer.

Playwriting scholarship application guidance

The MRes in Playwriting Studies is committed to critically-informed dramatic writing. The course, therefore, is based on writing practice and critical reflection on writing practice. You should be aware that scholarship applications are generally considered by panels whose purview crosses the entire field of performing arts. As a result, you should use precise language that speaks to as wide an audience as possible.

Entry requirements

We would normally expect applicants to have a 2:1 Honours degree or equivalent, although suitable professional experience or clear evidence of achievement in the field of original playwriting may be taken into account when assessing qualifications. Applicants should be aware that the coursework for the degree includes the submission of formal academic essays and that no special preparation is offered for these essays beyond that offered to all students undertaking the course.

All applicants must submit a sample of their original creative writing for the stage. This work should be approximately 30-40 minutes in playing time, and may comprise a part of a larger play (in which case we recommend submitting a portion that commences with the play's opening). Only one writing sample will be considered by assessors and screenplays, radio plays, or teledramas will not be taken into consideration.

All applicants must also submit a research statement which articulates what you wish to accomplish in your dissertation play and why you believe that the MRes in Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham is the most appropriate place to do this. There is no definitive list of issues to address in your statement, but you may wish to identify topics or themes that the script will explore, problems of writing craft the script will engage, and social or political imperatives the script will possess.

Learn more about [entry requirements](#)

International students

Academic requirements

We accept a range of qualifications, our [country pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/international/students/country/index.aspx\)](#) show you what qualifications we accept from your country.

English language requirements

You can satisfy our English language requirements in two ways:

- By holding an [English language qualification \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/index.aspx\)](#) to the right level
- By taking and successfully completing one of our [English courses for international students \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/international/english-courses.aspx\)](#)

How to apply

Before you make your application

You may wish to [register your interest with us \(https://bham.hobsons.co.uk/emtinterestpage.aspx?ip=postgraduate\)](#) to receive regular news and updates on postgraduate life within this Department and the wider University.

Making your application

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the [How to apply pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx\)](#)

[Apply now \(https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL039.htm\)](https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/CAL039.htm)

[5x5 at the MAC \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/capital-plays.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/capital-plays.aspx)

[Fighting out the Fringes: The last of the lake \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/fringes.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/fringes.aspx)

[Jerusalem Tango set for Leeds and London run \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/jerusalem-tango.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/jerusalem-tango.aspx)

[Playwrights should learn the benefits of staying in education \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2011/stay-in-education.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2011/stay-in-education.aspx)

[The Big Interview: Madani Younis \(/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/madani-younis.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/drama/news/2012/madani-younis.aspx)

Learning and teaching

You are taught by some of the key practitioners in new writing for the theatre through tutorials, workshops and seminars. Professional playwrights and other practitioners are invited to lead classes and discuss their work in colloquia; recent instructors and guests have included David Edgar, Lin Coghlan, Prof David Johnston, Steve Waters, Kate Chapman, Stephanie Dale, Richard Pinner, Peter Leslie Wild and Simon Block. Students also learn about the workings of the industry on visits to literary departments at some of the country's leading theatres, recently including the Royal Shakespeare Company and Birmingham REP.

In June, the Department holds the annual Playwrights' Workshop where an extract of each student's play will be rehearsed in a directed, staged reading, and performed for an audience that will include literary managers and agents, who will provide constructive and practical feedback for the future development of this final script.

Alumni from the programme have embarked on successful careers in theatre, television and radio, and include Sarah Kane, Steve Waters, Helen Blakeman, Sarah Woods and Fraser Grace, who currently convenes the course.

You will also become part of, and contribute to, the vibrant international community of the College of Arts and Law Graduate School, which offers dedicated research resources and a supportive working environment. Our team of academic and operational staff are on hand to offer support and advice to all postgraduate students within the College.

Related staff

[Fraser Grace \(/staff/profiles/drama/grace-fraser.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/drama/grace-fraser.aspx)

Employability

The University of Birmingham has been ranked 8th in the UK and 60th in the world for post-qualification employability in the latest global survey of universities commissioned by the International Herald Tribune.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for employment and this will be further enhanced by the employability skills training offered through the College of Arts and Law Graduate School.

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Birmingham's Drama and Theatre Arts postgraduates develop a very wide range of skills and qualities during their degree. Performance develops communication, team working and confidence, whilst all of our postgraduates also develop time management, critical and analytical skills, the ability to formulate and solve problems, develop opinions and new ideas, and an aptitude for thinking and working creatively with others.

Over the past five years, over 94% of Drama and Theatre Arts postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation. Some of our graduates enter roles for which their programme has especially prepared them, such as playwriting, screenwriting or teaching drama; others use their transferable skills in a wide variety of occupations ranging from media sales and management to events and arts administration; and some choose to pursue careers in academia. Employers that our graduates have gone on to work for include: Arts Council England; Imperial College London; Musicleader West Midlands; National Theatre; North Warwickshire Council; University of Gloucestershire.

