University of Birmingham

MA Shakespeare and Education (on campus or by distance learning)

The **Shakespeare Institute's (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx)** MA in Shakespeare and Education is a unique, modular programme that is particularly appropriate for practicing teachers, offering the opportunity to enhance expertise in different aspects of Shakespeare's work. It focuses centrally on the ways in which Shakespeare has been used in the classroom in different historical and cultural moments while also incorporating study of Shakespeare's plays in performance and adaptation. You can study on campus or by distance learning.

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: Continuing professional development, distance learning, taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: 12 months full-time, 24 - 36 months part-time

Start date: September

Contact

The Shakespeare Institute
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Email: **shakespeare@bham.ac.uk (mailto:shakespeare@bham.ac.uk)**

College of Arts and Law Graduate School (/schools/calgs/index.aspx)

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

Shakespeare Institute (/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx)

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Details

This programme offers you the opportunity to enhance your expertise in different aspects of Shakespeare's work, while maintaining a pedagogical focus.

You will study three core modules:

- Shakespeare and Pedagogy
- Shakespeare's Theatre
- Research Skills

You will also choose three optional modules (see module information below). Each module is assessed by one 4,000-word essay with the exception of: Research Skills which is assessed by 2–3 shorter assignments; and Shakespeare and Theatre Practice, which is assessed by either two performance assignments and a 2,000-word research paper, or by one 4,000-word research paper. You will complete the programme with a 15,000-word pedagogical dissertation.

The flexible structure of this course allows study in a wide variety of ways, on a full- or part-time basis. Modules are available to study through a variety of routes that may include:

- Three long weekends at the Shakespeare Institute at approximately monthly intervals
- One day a week throughout a semester at the Shakespeare Institute (ten days).
- Distance-learning option via online WebCt.

Full-time study is on site in Stratford-upon-Avon and part-time students can choose to study the whole programme either on-site, via online distance learning or a combination of the two. The schedule of delivery allows access to all modules through a range of modes over any three-year period, although some are not available to study via distance learning.

Visiting the Shakespeare Institute

We welcome prospective students to visit the Shakespeare Institute. We usually arrange open afternoons to coincide with two of our weekly Thursday seminar series a term which gives you a good opportunity to experience the Shakespeare Institute and to meet our staff and students. If you would like to visit us at another time, please contact us.

- **View our interactive virtual tour of the Shakespeare Institute (/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/virtual-tour.aspx)**
- **Watch our videos about the Shakespeare Institute, our specialist library and student life in Stratford-upon-Avon (/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/videos.aspx)**

Modules

You will study three core modules:

Shakespeare and Pedagogy *(on-site only)*

This module is an opportunity to explore the history, philosophy and pedagogy of 'teaching Shakespeare.' You will consider the different elements of Shakespeare's work that are taught and the methods and resources used to teach them. You will have the chance to prepare practical teaching activities and assess learning outcomes. The Pedagogy module is taught collaboratively by the Royal Shakespeare Company Education department and the Shakespeare Institute over a six-day course at Easter. (Please note: because of the nature of this module it cannot be delivered via distance learning.)

Shakespeare's Theatre *(on-site and distance learning)*

There are three components of this module. The first is a close reading of text that will lead to a consideration of the theatrical function and distinctive qualities of Shakespeare's language. The second is a study of Elizabethan and early Jacobean stages and performance; and the third is an extension of the historical perspective, including Shakespeare's medieval inheritance, that will inform inquiry into the contemporary and continuing theatrical life. Plays studied include some or all of *Hamlet, The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, Richard II, Titus Andronicus, Henry V, Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*.

Research Skills *(on-site and distance learning)*

This module provides you with essential research skills training applicable in the fields of Shakespeare studies, with a particular emphasis on performance studies. You will actively assess the different kinds of evidence and methods used in these fields and critically evaluate the epistemological assumptions that underline them.

You will then choose three optional modules from a range of Shakespeare Institute modules:

Shakespeare's Craftsmanship *(on-site and distance learning)*

This module is intended to convey, from a variety of standpoints, a sense of how Shakespeare worked. We will explore a selection of plays from across his career in order to highlight the fluidity of his creativity in terms of such elements as language, structure, mood, adaptation of source material, and how they are made to function in innovative ways alongside the more pragmatic considerations of live performance in the early modern theatre. Alongside these historical, textual, and dramaturgical issues we will also consider how such questions of craft may influence performance practice today.

Shakespeare's Legacy *(on-site and distance learning)*

This module considers the adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare's plays, persona, and possessions from the seventeenth century to the present day. It pays special attention to how changes in theatre practice, aesthetic tastes, politics, and commercial markets have shaped the history of Shakespeare's 'afterlife'. Plays studied include some or all of *King Lear, The Tempest, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice, Othello, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet* and *Measure for Measure*.

Shakespeare's Text *(on-site and distance learning)*

The module will develop a critical awareness of the textual foundations of Shakespeare's plays. Topics covered include: the relationship between a modern edition of a play and the earliest printed texts, the nature of the printing process that first made the plays available to readers of books, the characteristics of Shakespeare's dramatic composition, the treatment of the text in the theatre (including censorship, revision and adaptation), and Shakespeare as a collaborator. Plays studied include some or all of *Hamlet, Troilus and Cressida, Sir Thomas More, Romeo and Juliet, Richard II, King Lear, Measure for Measure, The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Timon of Athens*.

History of Shakespeare in Performance *(on-site and distance learning)*

This module will consider trends of acting and directing Shakespeare from the Restoration to the present day, and will exploit the Stratford archives to undertake studies of individual actors and directors from the eighteenth century onwards. Subjects of study might include Colley Cibber, David Garrick, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, Laurence Olivier, Peter Brook, John Barton and Sam Mendes. There will be opportunities to analyse and interpret primary evidence and to consider the cultural context(s) of performance. Plays studied include some or all of *Richard III, Hamlet, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Shakespearience *(distance learning only)*

This module considers the ways in which Shakespearean language and drama bears on experience, with a view to making the experience of Shakespeare more available to contemporary Shakespeare scholarship and creative practice. It is, above all, a shared experiment in experientially alert and susceptible close reading. In a series of intensively collaborative workshops, special course blog and in seminars, it will dwell and linger in Shakespeare's language and stagecraft in order to explore how its complexity produces experiential meanings, in readers, audience members and in character. "Shakespearience" will be about reading as process rather than product, and as such, at least potentially, experientially exciting and adventurous.

Shakespeare and Theatre Practice *(on-site only)*

This module will provide you with experiential knowledge that will inform the way you interrogate and interpret performance evidence in a variety of media. Through a series of practical workshops and performance assignments, you will explore different systematic approaches to performing the language of Shakespeare: the first approach is rooted in the verse and text work of John Barton, Peter Hall, and Giles Block; the second approach explores the legacy of Stanislavski in the Shakespearean work of 20th/21st century practitioners in Europe and the United States; the third approach brings the devising techniques of prominent physical theatre practitioners to a creative examination of Shakespeare's text.

This module is assessed either by two performance assignments and a 2,000-word research paper, or by one 4,000-word research paper. (Please note: because of the nature of this module it cannot be delivered via distance learning.)

History of Shakespeare Criticism *(on-site only)*

The course will combine a historical overview of the main developments in Shakespeare criticism from the 1590s to the present with detailed investigation of key texts, covering: the canonization of Shakespeare; character criticism; biographical criticism; imagery and symbolist criticism; critical study of the plays as created artifacts; the relationship between criticism and performance; historicist criticism; and new critical approaches. Students will read weekly set texts for discussion in seminar, and a weekly lecture will place these texts in their historical context. Students are expected to undertake independent reading around the topics after the seminar discussion, guided by topic-specific reading lists which are circulated each week.

Plays and Poems A *(on-site only)*

This module encourages you to engage with most of Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Poems. Each class will cover a topic relating to one or more texts, using individual student input, and group discussion and analysis. This module can be studied as a standalone module or with Play and Poems B.

Plays and Poems B *(on-site only)*

This module encourages you to engage with most of Shakespeare's Problem Plays, Tragedies and Late Plays. Each class will cover a topic relating to one or more texts, using individual student input, and group discussion and analysis. (Plays and Poems A is the pre-requisite module for Plays and Poems B).

Social and Cultural History of Renaissance England A and B *(on-site only)*

These two modules will provide a broad introduction to the social and cultural history of the period, but also focus more specifically on issues relevant to Shakespeare's life and drama and the two local societies of which he had experience, Stratford upon-Avon and London. Among the principal topics will be social mobility and crises in social relations; social disorder and agrarian discontent; changing notions of honour; the impact of the Reformation and the nature of Catholicism and Puritanism; and rebellion, authority and the royal court. Please note these modules are taught in the History Department at the University of Birmingham main campus in Edgbaston. The modules can be studied individually or together.

Shakespeare, the Playwright and his Drama A and B *(on-site only)*

Shakespeare's life and career are examined as a case study in the position of professional playwrights in early modern England. You will examine the way the theatre for which Shakespeare was writing worked - how plays were written, how play texts were circulated and the impact censorship had upon them. You will then be able to consider the relationship between Shakespeare's plays and the issues affecting his society, and to analyse the intervention the plays made in important social debates.

These two modules can be studied individually or together.

Early Modern Drama: Middleton and Jonson *(on-site only)*

This module will introduce and contextualise two of the most significant dramatists working in the same period as Shakespeare. Each week you will focus on a pair of plays, usually one by Jonson and one by Middleton. Seminars will focus on student presentations, usually two in each class, each of which will place one of the plays in a broader dramatic and/or cultural context, and/or engage in close analysis of key passages. Special classes will identify the plays as intersections between dramatists and theatre companies, engage with issues relating to dramatic language and technique, and explore issues of textual circulation and canon formation.

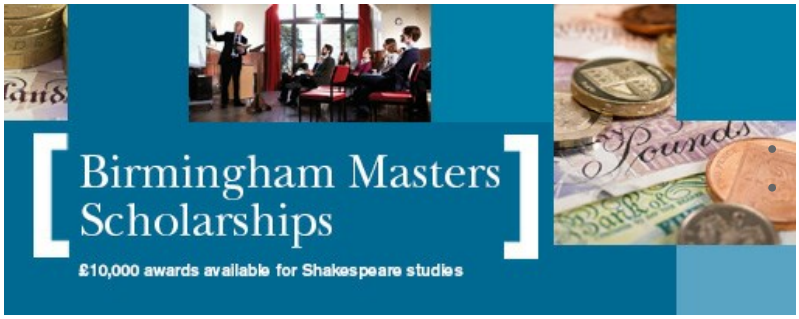
Please note that availability of optional modules may vary from year to year.

You will complete the programme with a dissertation:

Dissertation *(on-site and distance learning)*

The dissertation is an opportunity for you to extend ideas encountered in the 'Shakespeare and Pedagogy' module. Thus the dissertation will have a primary focus on methods, materials, or the philosophy/sociology/history of 'teaching Shakespeare'. It is possible, therefore, that a student (particularly if a practising teacher or lecturer) may be undertaking a practical project and the dissertation will be a report and assessment of the project. There should be some element of originality in the research and the research may make a contribution to the field of study. You will report the research in a dissertation of 15,000 words in appropriate academic English. In designing, carrying out and writing up the study, you will be supported by a supervisor.

Fees and funding



(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/birmingham-masters-subject-scholarship-scheme.aspx)

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

- Home / EU: £6,480 full-time
- Overseas: £14,140 full-time

Fees for part-time and distance learning modes are £720 per module and £2,160 for the dissertation.

Tuition fees can either be paid in full or by instalments. Learn more about **postgraduate tuition fees and funding (/postgraduate/pgt-fees/index.aspx)**.

Eligibility for Home/EU or Overseas fees can be verified with Admissions. Learn more about **fees for international students (/International/students/finance/fees.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.

Entry requirements

There are two admission routes to the programme:

1. Those who have a 2:1 degree in an appropriate subject or the Certificate of HE in Shakespeare Studies register for the MA.
2. Those who do not meet these formal admission requirements register initially as 'Affiliate' students and then change status on the successful completion of the two core modules.

Learn more about **entry requirements (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/requirements/requirements-pg/index.aspx)**

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/CAL058.htm)

Learning and teaching

The programme allows access to the unique Shakespearian resources of the **Shakespeare Institute Library (http://www.shakespeare.bham.ac.uk/research/collections.shtml)**, the Library of the Shakespeare Centre that curates the archives of the RSC, and the **Royal Shakespeare Company (http://www.rsc.org.uk/home/default.aspx)**. Study materials for this programme are enhanced by the close ties that the Shakespeare Institute has with the **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/)**, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the archives associated with both of these institutions.

Studying by distance learning

Many of the programme's modules are also available via distance learning, meaning that you can study online from anywhere in the world. Distance learning modules will combine print, audio, and video teaching methods in order to give students a varied and enriching educational experience.

This means that you can study for a Masters degree (MA) almost entirely by distance learning. However, you will need to come to Stratford-upon-Avon for a one-week residential school in the spring in order to complete your core module on Shakespeare and Education, which is scheduled to coincide with the Easter holidays.

Although self-study is central to doing a programme by distance learning, support is always available.

You will have a personal tutor and dissertation supervisor to guide you and answer any questions, and you have access to a wide range of online resources too. You also have the opportunity to meet other students and academic staff through online chats and discussion forums and at the Easter residential.

Read more about distance learning with the Shakespeare Institute (/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/distancelearning/index.aspx)

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.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/opportunities/awas/index.aspx)** which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

International students can access support through the **English for International Students Unit (EISU) (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/eisu/insessional/index.aspx)**.

Related staff

Dr Erin Sullivan (/staff/profiles/shakespeare/sullivan-erin.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.

Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback. Get the latest Flash Player Get the latest version of QuickTime

Postgraduates at the Shakespeare Institute are able to develop a broad range of creative, research and theatre skills, as well as in-depth subject knowledge.

In 2013, 99% of our postgraduates were in work and/or further study six months after graduation.

In recent years, our postgraduates have successfully entered a variety of sectors from teaching in secondary and higher education to performing arts, publishing, museums and library and archive work. Employers that graduates have gone on to work for include: Imperial College London; National Trust; Royal Shakespeare Company; Shakespeare Birthplace Trust; The Grove Theatre; and University of Bristol.

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