

BA English with Creative Writing

If you love reading and you have a passion for writing, this course is for you. Like all students of English at Birmingham, you will study a range of literature from across all periods, from medieval to the 21st century. As a student of Creative Writing you will also be given a comprehensive introduction to writing poetry, short fiction and drama, as well as exploring the professional aspects of contemporary writing and editing.

You will have the privilege of learning from respected practising writers, published authors and industry professionals. You will receive input in your core teaching from esteemed visiting writers, as well as benefitting from regular guest readings and talks from well-known writers and artists. Recent guests have included novelist David Lodge, poet and writer Jackie Kay, poet Simon Armitage, playwright Simon Stephens and theatre director Greg Doran.

English with Creative Writing graduates from Birmingham benefit from a high rate of employability for the subject, the wide range of posts they have secured includes roles in journalism, law, marketing, publishing and events management.

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

Course fact file

UCAS code: Q3W8

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 43

Applications in 2013: 288

Typical Offer: AAA (**[More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details \(? OpenSection=EntryRequirements\)](#)**)

Start date: September

Contact

Admissions Tutor: **[Dr Luke Kennard \(/staff/profiles/fcw/kennard-luke.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/fcw/kennard-luke.aspx)**

Admissions and Recruitment Co-ordinator: Sophia Robertshaw

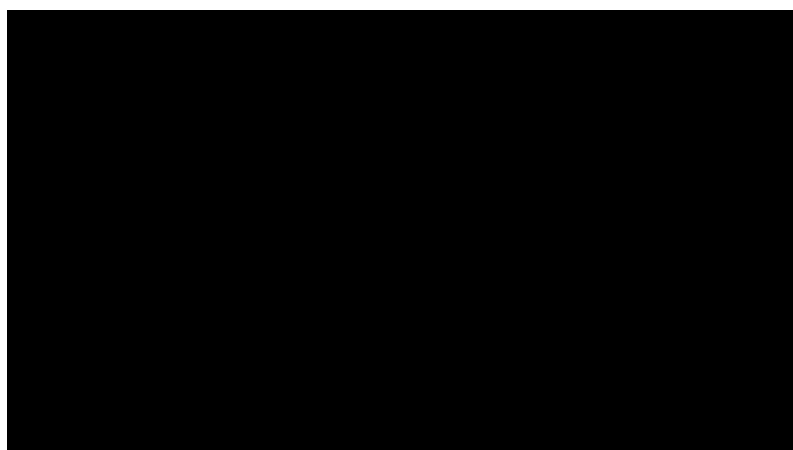
Telephone enquiries:+44 (0)121 414 5511

Email:**english-ug-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk** (**<mailto:english-ug-admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk>**)

[Department of English Literature \(/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/english/index.aspx)

[Department of Film and Creative Writing \(/schools/edacs/departments/fcw/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/fcw/index.aspx)

Details



This specialist programme is aimed at students who have obtained A-level English Literature or the combined Literature and Language A-level and who wish to study Creative Writing as a substantial part of an English Literature degree. Each year you will take 60 credits of English Literature and 60 credits of Creative Writing.

First year

Our first-year modules in BA English will introduce you to all the key genres of English Literature across a wide historical span, and train you in new ways of thinking about literature. By studying core modules on 'Poetry', 'Prose', 'Plays and Performance' and 'Language for Literature', you will develop the close reading skills needed to analyse all kinds of texts, from medieval plays and early modern poetry to contemporary drama. You will also develop new understanding of how the historical and cultural contexts in which literature is produced and read can shape its meaning.

In your Creative Writing studies, the main focus will be on exploring the practice of authorship and gaining new insights into writing as art and craft, supported by tutors who are practising writers and genre specialists. You will develop competence in basic Creative Writing skills in the traditional genres of prose, poetry and dramatic writing, as relevant to each stage of the writing process; and explore purpose and method in writing through practical writing exercises, both individually and in groups. You will also explore the professional aspects of contemporary writing. Writing successfully involves knowing the field. Which are the best publishers (small-press and

mainstream)? Which novels, poetry collections and plays are winning awards? This module combines creative and critical work to assess your own work's place in the contemporary literary scene.

- [Detailed descriptions of English with Creative Writing first year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/english/english-creative-year-one-modules.aspx\)](#)

Second year

The second year of your degree is an excellent opportunity to build on the new interests and passions that you discovered in your first-year modules.

In the second year you will have the opportunity to encounter Shakespeare's work through two exciting modules taught in collaboration with Birmingham's world-leading Shakespeare Institute, based in Stratford-upon-Avon, and working closely with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Alternatively you will also have the option of exploring a 'Themes in Literature' module, with a wide range of options such as 'Plato to Postmodernism', 'Theatre of the Absurd' or 'North American Cinema'.

Having built your confidence in Creative Writing in year one, you will now specialise in three core modules: Prose and Poetry Writing, Drama and Media Writing, and Editing. Each module is designed to introduce you to new perspectives on the writing and publishing process. In your Editing module you will be given the opportunity to hone your ability to make editorial judgments, and gain specific editing skill; which in turn will make you a better editor of your own writing. The project will involve the collaborative selection, text-editing/proof-reading, and in-house publication of an Anthology of work by fellow students.

- [Detailed descriptions of English with Creative Writing second year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/english/english-creative-year-two-modules.aspx\)](#)

Final year

In your final year, you will choose from an impressive range of Literature Special Subjects, working closely with specialists in each field.

Creative Writing Special Subjects include options in Genre Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction and Writing a Short Film.

By your final year as a Creative Writing student you'll have found your 'voice' and 'genre', and so you will be ready to complete a substantial individual project, chosen and structured according to your own writing interests. You will also choose from an impressive range of Special Subjects, working closely with specialists in each field.

- [Detailed descriptions of English with Creative Writing final year modules \(/undergraduate/courses/english/english-creative-year-final-modules.aspx\)](#)

Year abroad

You will have the option to take a year abroad between your second and final year at one of a wide range of [carefully selected partner institutions from around the world \(/undergraduate/studyabroad/outgoingstudents/index.aspx\)](#).

Why study this course

Study here and you will have the privilege of learning from academics at the forefront of research with a commitment to excellence in teaching.

Consistently rated highly in the UK teaching and research rankings and ranked [39th in the world in the QS World Rankings \(/schools/edacs/news/2014/world-university-rankings-2014.aspx\)](#), the [Department of English Literature \(/schools/edacs/departments/english/about/index.aspx\)](#) at Birmingham is widely respected and attracts a high calibre of undergraduate talent.

In the [Department of Film and Creative Writing \(/schools/edacs/departments/fcw/index.aspx\)](#) your lecturers and tutors for Creative Writing will be practising writers: [Elsa Braekkan Payne \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/english/braekkan-payne-elsa.aspx\)](#), an expert in the short story who also has particular interests in editing; [Luke Kennard \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/english/kennard-luke.aspx\)](#), a poet and novelist whose criticism appears in *Poetry London* and the *Times Literary Supplement*; and [Richard House \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/english/house-richard.aspx\)](#), fiction and screenwriter, recently long-listed for the Man Booker Prize; Dan Vyleta, author of four award-winning novels, the most recent being *The Crooked Maid*, published by Bloomsbury in 2014; and the best-selling novelist Ruth Gilligan. Visiting writers and industry professionals also contribute to the student experience. Recent visitors have included Marina Warner and Alan Mahar, former managing editor of Tindall Street Press.

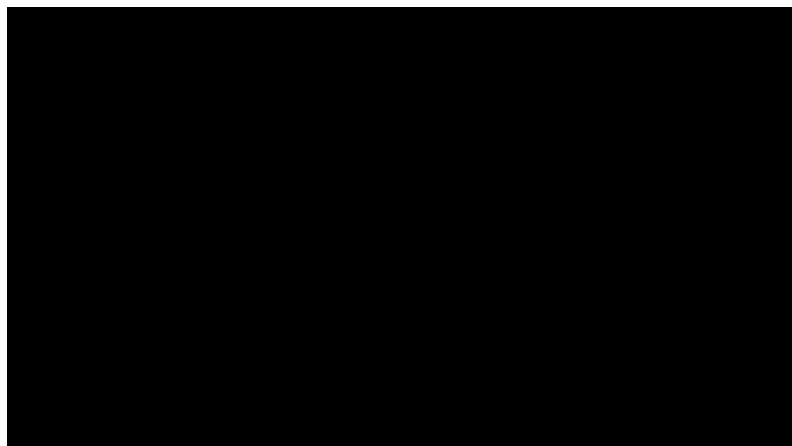
We boast enviable research resources available to students, including the substantial holdings of the [university library \(http://www.is.bham.ac.uk/\)](#), as well as the collections in the new [Library of Birmingham \(http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com\)](#). We are currently in discussions with the Royal Shakespeare Company about an exciting new collaboration that will bring a range of benefits to students starting in 2015.

Our affiliation with the [Shakespeare Institute \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx\)](#) in nearby Stratford, which oversees your core second-year Shakespeare modules, means that you will have access to unparalleled resources for the study of Shakespeare and his times. The Institute is an internationally renowned research institution established in 1951 to push the boundaries of knowledge about Shakespeare studies and Renaissance drama. You can also take part in our popular Stratford Residential, which is based at the Institute.

Students at Birmingham will benefit from frequent lectures and readings from award-winning writers and industry professionals. Speakers in recent years have included novelist David Lodge, poet and writer Jackie Kay, poet Simon Armitage, playwright Simon Stephens and theatre director Greg Doran.

At Birmingham, you will benefit from an intellectually challenging and stimulating environment for your undergraduate studies. We work hard to ensure that you are a fully supported and active learner. Our unique degrees are designed to provide both academic excellence and vocational development; a balance that is highly sought after by today's employers. The course is also very flexible, allowing you to specialise more and more as you progress, culminating in a final-year creative writing project that allows you to develop an original piece of writing in the genre of your choice.

Meet our students



Undergraduate open day





Dr Luke Kennard introduces the BA English with Creative Writing course at the University of Birmingham undergraduate open day 2013.

Fees and funding

Standard fees (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/fees/standard>) apply
Learn more about **fees and funding** (</undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx>)

Scholarships

Learn more about our **scholarships and awards** (</undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx>)

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: AAA

Required subjects and grades: A level English Literature or English Language and Literature at grade A.

General Studies: not accepted

Additional information:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 36 points to include English at Higher Level with a minimum of 6 points.

We do not ask applicants for English with Creative Writing to submit portfolios of their work: instead we ask that you give evidence in your application of your interest in and experience of creative writing, as well as your reasons for wishing to pursue the subject at university-level.

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about **entry requirements** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/requirements>).

International students:

We welcome applications from international students and invite you to join our vibrant community of over 4500 international students who represent 150 different countries. 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.

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the **foundation academy web pages** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx>).

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at www.ucas.com (<http://www.ucas.com/>)

Learn more about **applying** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply>)



Joint Honours combinations

We do not offer Joint Honours programmes with Creative Writing. You can study English Literature in combination with other disciplines on the Literature pathway of our Joint Honours English programmes:

- [American and Canadian Studies and English Literature BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/american-and-canadian-and-english-lit.aspx\)](#)
- [Drama and English Literature BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/drama-and-english-literature.aspx\)](#)
- [English Literature and Classical Literature & Civilisation BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-classical-literature-and-civilisation.aspx\)](#)
- [English Literature and History BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-history.aspx\)](#)
- [English Literature and History of Art BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-history-of-art.aspx\)](#)
- [English Literature and Philosophy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/english-literature-and-philosophy.aspx\)](#)
- [Modern Languages and English Literature BA \(/undergraduate/courses/jointhonours/modern-languages-and-english-literature.aspx\)](#)

Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the [Unistats website \(http://unistats.direct.gov.uk\)](#) you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Related news and events

[A Christmas Carol Celebration \(/news/latest/2012/12/20-Dec-A-Christmas-Carol-Celebration.aspx\)](#)

[Researchers to unlock distinctive West Midlands accent \(/research/impact/our/news/items/vernon-manuscript.aspx\)](#)

Learning and teaching

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. At Birmingham we advocate an enquiry based learning approach, from the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner, qualities that are highly sought after by employers. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

Support

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we will enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our **Academic Skills Centre** also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

From the outset, you will be assigned your own **Personal Tutor** who will get to know you as you progress through your studies, providing academic and welfare advice, encouraging you and offering assistance in any areas you may feel you need extra support to make the most of your potential and your time here at Birmingham.

The **Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS)** will provide you with individual support from an academic writing advisor and postgraduate subject-specialist writing tutors. You will receive guidance on writing essays and dissertations at University-level which can be quite different from your previous experiences of writing. Support is given in a variety of ways, such as small-group workshops, online activities, feedback through email and tutorials.

Student experience

Supporting you throughout your transition to University, offering research opportunities and study skills support and helping you develop and prepare for your post-University careers - our **Arts and Law Student Experience Team (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/student-experience/index.aspx)** strive to help you get the most out of your academic experience.

BA English with Creative Writing offers a carefully structured and integrated learning journey, reflecting the distinctive methodologies of the two subject strands. We use a balanced range of teaching methods, which include traditional lectures, small- and large-group seminars, workshops and mixed-activity sessions, and one-to-one tutorials. Teaching delivery within individual modules in each of the subject strands is carefully planned in order to meet the needs both of the students and of the module itself. For example, in the first year, to help you through the transition from school to university, we make greater use of workshop-based skills sessions to support small-group seminar teaching in the English modules. In the Creative Writing modules we recognise that as a learner-writer you will need to build skills in a gradual way and to practice writing in a range of different genres. Your learning journey will be supported with extensive resources and information within our Virtual Learning Environment. From first to final year, our aim is to guide and support you in your progress through the degree, helping you to gain confidence as a reader, researcher and writer/creative practitioner and assisting you to prepare for life beyond your undergraduate studies.

In the **first year**, the emphasis in each of the subject strands is on acquiring the foundational skills and knowledge which will form the basis of your studies throughout the rest of your degree. In your **English Literature** modules, you will work on a wide variety of authors and genres, including texts from the medieval period through to the present day. You will be encouraged to develop your skills in literary analysis and essay-writing, and will also be introduced to the major library and electronic resources relevant to university-level study of English literature. During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support. In the **second year**, you will continue your studies in all the major literary periods, but will work more closely on the key literary issues and genres specific to each era. In your **final year**, you will choose from a wide range of research-led modules, each taught by a leading specialist in the field. These include a Shakespeare module, overseen by our colleagues from the world-renowned Shakespeare Institute in Stratford. Creative Writing students can replace some of the literature modules with English Language ones if they wish.

In the teaching of **Creative Writing**, the main emphasis will be on exploring the practice of authorship and on gaining new insights into writing as art and craft, supported by tutors who are practicing writers and genre specialists. The skills and confidence you gain in the **first year** will enable you to choose between different module options in the **second year** (prose and poetry writing or drama and media writing). In the **final year**, when you have found your 'voice' and 'genre', you will complete a substantial individual project, chosen and structured according to your own writing interests. Throughout your three years of study you will be offered opportunities to expand your notion of what constitutes authorship, through guest lectures by visiting writing professionals, e.g. in the key Editing module in Year 2.

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a new style of learning, and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

You will be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations and formal exams (depending on your chosen degree).

During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you will be given information on how and when you will be assessed for that particular programme of study. You will receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You will be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

We use a wide variety of different assessment methods for English with Creative Writing, reflecting the range of learning outcomes in a degree that offers an exploration of writing as both 'product' and 'process'.

Related staff

[Dr Luke Kennard \(/staff/profiles/fcw/kennard-luke.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/fcw/kennard-luke.aspx)

[Dr Richard House \(/staff/profiles/fcw/house-richard.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/fcw/house-richard.aspx)

[Dr Tom Lockwood \(/staff/profiles/english/lockwood-tom.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/english/lockwood-tom.aspx)

Employability

Studying for an English with Creative Writing BA at Birmingham is an unparalleled opportunity to engage with a diverse cultural, textual and linguistic discipline, at the same time as developing your own writing 'voice' and 'genre'. You may go on to a career as a novelist, screenwriter, poet or journalist, but of course the skill of writing also qualifies you for a wide range of other careers. Whatever path you choose, you will also find the practical skills that you've acquired on your degree course - oral presentation, professional documentation, group work and the uses of information technology - extremely useful.

50% of vacancies advertised for new and recent graduates don't specify a degree subject, and English graduates enter a wide range of careers including advertising, journalism and media, government, law, publishing and teaching at every level. About 25% of English graduates pursue postgraduate study to specialise in an academic area or prepare for careers such as law and teaching.

English graduates from Birmingham have a higher than average rate for employability for the subject, and we are ranked in the top ten universities nationally for graduate employability. 90% of our English graduates go into work or study within six months of graduation, with 75% of those entering employment going straight into a professional or managerial job. Our graduates have started careers with employers including the BBC, Headline Publishing Group, Mirror Group Newspapers and Oxford University Press, in roles such as account executive, editorial assistant, marketing assistant and sales and events coordinator.

Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, **our Careers Network (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx>)** can help you achieve your goal. This is a unique careers guidance service tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team (in each of the five academic colleges) who can give you expert advice. This includes individual careers advice and events to give you insight into the professions and employers of interest to arts graduates. Our 'Creative careers' series is always popular with our students, and features events with employers and professionals from areas such as advertising, PR and communications, careers in journalism, publishing and writing, and careers in the theatre.

As a School, we also hold events covering careers in teaching, event management, marketing and working with charities; we are developing links with local arts organisations to create some amazing opportunities for students; and you can even apply for our 'Global Challenge' to work overseas on an expenses paid placement during your summer vacation. We also encourage all our students to apply their skills in the workplace by undertaking internships in the summer; the work experience bursary scheme enables students to apply for funding for those career areas where placements are often unpaid.

Internships



“ I always felt like I had good communication skills, but this work experience has proved that I can put them into practice in a professional setting. ”

Laura Megatli
English with Creative Writing, 3rd year



<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/undergraduate/english/internships.aspx>

Extra-curricular activities

To enhance your career prospects even further, you will need to think about engaging in some extra-curricular activities while you're at university to broaden your skills and your network of contacts. This can include the many societies at the Guild of Students and also the many voluntary opportunities offered with local arts organisations. Our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/psa.aspx>) (PSA) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Our College of Arts and Law **undergraduate research scholarship scheme**

(<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/university/colleges/artslaw/studentexperience/urs/index.aspx>) enables interested students to work on a current academic research project being run by one of the College's academic researchers. Undergraduate research scholars gain work experience over the summer after their first or second year and have the chance to develop skills in both collaborative and independent research.



Cultural Internships

Our innovative **Cultural Internships** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/culture/volunteering/regionally.aspx>) offer graduates the opportunity for a six month paid internship at a leading cultural institution in the West Midlands. These internships are a unique opportunity to learn fundamental, transferable business and interpersonal skills, through experience of real work in an established cultural institution. Our current partners include Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham REP, Birmingham Royal Ballet, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust and the Library of Birmingham. We have plans to expand the scheme to include our own major cultural assets, such as Winterbourne House, the Lapworth Museum, and the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This scheme will give you professional experience to set you apart in a competitive graduate market.

We also offer voluntary work which complements your studies by helping you gain practical experiences in occupational settings while contributing back to society. This can bring new skills that will be useful throughout your future and can make a positive impact on your learning whilst at university. Volunteering enables you to develop skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline all of which can be transferred into your studies.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

97% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) English with Creative Writing
Full time



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