

Programme specification

1. Overview/ factual information

Programme/award title(s)	Foundation Degree [FdA] Writing For Performance
Teaching Institution	Ruskin College
Awarding Institution	The Open University (OU)
Date of latest OU validation	March 2013
Next revalidation	2017-18
Credit points for the award	240 Credits (120 Credits at Level 5 plus 120 Credits achieved at Level 4 and accredited to the student as prior learning)
UCAS Code	WP89
Programme start date	September 2010
Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)	NAWE Creative Writing (2008) Foundation Degree (2010) Dance, drama and performance (2007)
Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes	Not applicable
Professional/statutory recognition	Not applicable
Duration of the programme for each mode of study (P/T, FT,DL)	One year (three terms) full-time Two years (six terms) part-time
Dual accreditation (if applicable)	Not applicable
Date of production/revision of this specification	April 2013

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in student module guide(s) and the student's handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

2.1 Educational aims and objectives

2.1.1 Students progress onto this programme from the College's CertHE Writing for Performance. Following successful interview, and with 120 credits at level 4 in a suitable subject, the Level 5 programme can be a progression route for other students.

2.1.2 The Ruskin College Foundation Degree in Writing for Performance aims to provide a course which will enable students to learn the skills needed to find work in the literary and performing arts fields as well as training and developing their creative talent.

2.1.3 Most of the course tutors are teachers and writers who have a portfolio of skills with which to find all kinds of writing work and to survive in what is a particularly competitive career. Because of this they are ideally placed to help students develop skills as writers and learn how to apply them to a range of opportunities.

2.1.4 Working alongside other writers and in writerly environments will enable students to hone their own skills as writers and produce work, which is realistically attuned to the needs of the industry.

2.1.5 The course also aims to equip students with the educational background to progress to the third year of up to 30 identified Creative Writing BA Hons degrees courses (see Annexe 2 below) and we are developing a particular relationship with Bath Spa University.

2.2 Relationship to other programmes and awards

(Where the award is part of a hierarchy of awards/programmes, this section describes the articulation between them, opportunities for progression upon completion of the programme, and arrangements for bridging modules or induction)

2.2.1 The FdA Writing for Performance is directly linked to the College's CertHE Writing for Performance. Students successful on that level 4 programme are entitled to apply to progress onto the level 5 FdA.

2.2.2 The complete programme consists of separate stand-alone units Cert HE and Foundation Degree but which also makes sense as a whole and which successfully takes students on a sequential and progressional journey from the gentle introduction of Term 1 of the CertHE at Level 4 to graduation as aspiring script writers fully prepared to enter the professional market place.

2.2.3 The College does not currently offer a suitable progression for FdA Writing for Performance students onto full honours level, however, post qualification, students would be equipped with the necessary academic and practical skills to study at Level 6 on a similar programme. An example of this progression would be onto:

The Bath Spa University BA (Hons) in Creative Writing: They expect the following skills/knowledge from students coming from the Foundation Degree:

- Writing skills
- Ability to clearly and explicitly express ideas and arguments
- Understanding contemporary contexts and other writers (what is influencing them)
- The ability to analyse a piece of writing and be able to give a critical commentary
- To be able to reflect on their own writing practice and trace progression i.e.:
 - How to generate ideas/ come up with the initial idea
 - How to resolve problems
 - How the writing changed through the process of editing and revisiting
 - How to assess their own strengths and weaknesses

2.2.4 Student feedback from the Writing for Performance FdA programme suggests that if a Level 6 route provided at Ruskin itself were provided then sustainable numbers from the Foundation degree would enrol onto such an in-house Level 6 offer. Therefore it is our ambition to develop the curriculum for such a route over the next 12 months for validation in early 2014 and for delivery in October 2014. Such an offer has not been made at the time of this revalidation because of the current staff vacancy of Programme Coordinator. It is intended to appoint a Programme Coordinator during the Summer term of 2013 and that the new Programme coordinator will be tasked with overseeing the curriculum design for the proposed Level 6 offer.

3. Programme outcomes

Intended learning outcomes are listed below.

3A. Knowledge and understanding	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>A successful learner from this programme will be able to: A1: Demonstrate a critical understanding of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the generation of texts. A2: Demonstrate a critical understanding of the collaborative nature of writing/ scriptwriting, including revising, proofing and editing their own work and that of other people. A3: Critically understand and appreciate how to structure a script A4: Demonstrate a critical understanding of their own abilities and strengths as writers</p>	<p>Whole class teaching, formal input, workshops and seminars</p> <p>Assignment, exam, coursework, written script, self-reflective journal</p>
3B. Cognitive skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>A successful learner from this programme will be able to: B1: Apply key skills learned from the study of good texts and performances to the development of their own writing B2: Critically appraise your own and peer group writing B3: Distinguish between different readerships and audiences B4: Draw creatively on life experience to inform your writing</p>	<p>Whole class teaching, formal input, workshops and seminars, theatre visits and film viewings</p>
3C. Practical and professional skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
<p>A successful learner from this programme will be able to: C1: Apply knowledge of underlying concepts and principles to generate text in appropriate forms C2: Develop a script or other textual source into public performance C3: Create original work using the skills and crafts of performance C4: Critically engage with issues of equality</p>	<p>Whole class teaching, formal input, workshops and seminars</p>

3C. Practical and professional skills	
and diversity C5: Effectively negotiate the commissioning and production process, C6: Understand how to meet objectives and requirements in the submission of funding proposals C7: Be capable of promoting their own work and the work of others through marketing and PR	

3D. Key/transferable skills	
Learning outcomes:	Learning and teaching strategy/ assessment methods
A successful learner from this programme will be able to: D1: Source and critically understand relevant research materials D2: Demonstrate enhanced oral and written communication skills and the ability to construct an argument and justify decisions D3: Demonstrate the ability to work either independently or cooperatively in groups D4: Demonstrate a critical understanding of the importance of budgets, time- keeping and timescales and be able to produce work plans and strategies D5: Demonstrate good IT skills	Whole class teaching, formal input, workshops and seminars

4. Programme Structure

Programme Structure - LEVEL 5	
Compulsory modules	Credit points
Screenwriting II: Screenplay	20
Theatre II: Theatre In Practice	20
Double Module Placement	40
Facilitating Other People's Creativity	20
Foundation Portfolio	20

120 Credits at Level 5

Upon successful; completion of both Levels of the programme, the student will receive a: **FdA Writing for Performance** (120 credits at Level 4 [from earlier study] and 120 credits at Level 5)

5. Distinctive features of the programme structure
Where applicable, this section provides details on distinctive features such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where in the structure above a professional/placement year fits in and how it may affect progression. • Any restrictions regarding the availability of elective modules

- Where in the programme structure students must make a choice of pathway/route

5.1 Ruskin has a student cohort dominated by mature students, many without experience of previous academic study. This is the determining factor in the design of the programme and has led a particular approach to the sequential progression of the curriculum design.

5.2 This second and final year of the Writing for Performance programme becomes increasingly practice-based with students working on their own projects using a proto-professional writing process and with further professional contextualising within the double *Placement* module in Term 2. In Term 3 students are almost entirely professionally focused as they have to design and run creative workshops on the *Facilitating Others* module, while simultaneously working on their own full length 'calling card' script (theatre, film or TV).

5.3 Thus the programme succeeds in pulling off a fairly unique trick; a programme that consists of separate stand-alone units Cert HE and Foundation Degree but which also makes sense as a whole and which successfully takes students on a sequential and progressional journey from the gentle introduction of Term 1 of the CertHE at Level 4 to graduation as aspiring script writers fully prepared to enter the professional market place.

6. Support for students and their learning

6.1 Teaching on the programme is delivered in classes of normally no more than 20 students supported by tutorials with normally 3 or 4 students in a group. Additionally, every student at Ruskin is allocated a personal tutor from the course team monitoring the progress of students, providing advice and guidance and suggesting other forms of support as appropriate.

6.2 Learning support and study skills, encompassing study support for disabled students is an area of undoubted strength at Ruskin, with the Ruskin tutorial system and specialist Learning Development services adding up to comprehensive and highly individualised support for students. Every HE student at Ruskin undergoes an initial assessment of their basic skills and learning needs. This is particularly important in view of the lack of formal educational qualifications and prevalence of past underachievement. Where a student is diagnosed as dyslexic, or as having another disability need, tutors are informed of the ways they can help support the student better (with their students' consent). This dedicated and whole-College approach to support explains the success of some disabled students at Ruskin who had previously not achieved elsewhere.

6.3 The College Counsellor has an office close to the Callaghan Library. The confidential support offered encompasses short-term, focused individual work, as well as longer-term personal support. During their time at Ruskin, many students access the service to assist them to cope with the challenges of studying or of living in College, or with problems impinging from their outside or earlier lives. The College Counsellor meets students in their first term. The counselling service that the College provides has been taken up by older learners in the past and has provided an invaluable service in providing them with strategies for managing stress and coping with living communally.

6.4 The Academic Registrar at Ruskin is undertaking formal IAG training with College support. She offers advice to applicants and current students about financing their studies, meeting their accommodation and childcare needs, and coping with personal and social issues. Older learners may face additional funding difficulties when considering higher education beyond the CertHE level and the Academic Registrar is a valuable resource for advice and guidance, alongside *Head Start*, the adult careers advice service.

7. Criteria for admission

7.1 Internal students wishing to progress to the L5 FdA Writing for Performance programme are subject to the College's internal application process.

Additionally:

7.2 All candidates must be able to satisfy the general admissions requirements for Ruskin College. These are:

- Candidates must attend an interview with two academic or academic-related staff members
- Candidates must demonstrate commitment to the ethos and vocation of Ruskin College
- Candidates must have the ability to benefit from study at this level, fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award. The ability to benefit focuses on the students being at the right stage in their lives to study successfully and ensuring that students are applying to the right programme (students who are on programmes which are not their interest area are far more likely to fail to achieve than motivated, prepared students). Ruskin is committed to the fact that achieving qualifications at this level can, and does, improve individual student's lives and the wellbeing of communities which it serves.

7.3 The quality of the student experience is captured in the College's feedback mechanisms. The College also holds both a Frank Buttle Award for its provision for care leavers (including guaranteeing accommodation) and the Association of Colleges 2011 award for Widening Participation in Lifelong Learning for its work with marginalised groups such as those who have experienced homeless, sexual and domestic violence and substance misuse issues. Students who identify specific or additional needs at the application or interview stage are encouraged to talk through support mechanisms, anxieties and barriers with interviewers and with their personal tutor, if accepted onto the programme. Where appropriate the College will also engage with other support networks such as addiction key workers or homelessness key workers to ensure the student is supported and able to achieve.

8. Language of study

English

9. Information about assessment regulations

Please refer to the attached Regulatory Framework (Sept 2012)

10. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning.

10.1 The College has quality assurance procedures in place in order to monitor the programmes it offers and to ensure opportunities for quality enhancement. Student evaluation of the programme takes place following each module. The outcomes of these evaluations are collated and tutors respond as appropriate

10.2 Evaluation is reported to and monitored by the Programme Board. In addition to this feedback on the teaching and learning, there is an Annual Student Survey which covers all aspects of the student experience. The outcomes of this are reported to the Programme Board and to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) which monitors the implementation of action arising from the survey.

10.3 The College has an External Examiner in place who will be responsible for monitoring the programme in order to enhance the analysis of the coherence and progression.

10.4 An Annual Report to the Open University is also prepared which gathers together the evaluation, external examiners reports, course review and action arising from them.

10.5 Student representatives attend the Programme Board and report directly on the current teaching and learning. Tutors meet informally throughout the term and discuss teaching and learning and review progress. They meet annually to consider all the evaluations and data on students and review, revise and enhance the course in response to the monitoring process.

10.6 For Quality Assurance purposes information is collected throughout the year on the

students' views about how well the College is doing in relation to the educational opportunities it offers. The College ensures all quality standards are met, including residential living and support for external students.

Annexe 1 - Curriculum map

This table indicates which study units assume responsibility for delivering (shaded) and assessing (✓) particular programme learning outcomes.

	Study module/unit	Programme outcomes																			
		A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Level 5	Screenwriting II: Screenplay	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Theatre II: Theatre In Practice	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
	Placement	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓					✓	✓	✓	
	Facilitating Other People's Creativity			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓	✓		
	Foundation Portfolio	✓				✓	✓								✓	✓	✓				✓

Annexe 2 – HEIs and potential Level 6 Routes

1. Bath Spa University	Creative Writing
2. University of Bedfordshire	Creative Writing
3. University of Bolton	Creative Writing
4. Bournemouth University	Scriptwriting for Film and Television
5. Brunel University	Creative Writing
	Theatre and Creative Writing
6. University of Central Lancashire	Screenwriting
7. University of Derby	Creative Writing
8. University of East Anglia (UEA)	Scriptwriting and Performance
9. University of East London	Creative and Professional Writing
	Creative and Professional Writing (Extended)
10. Edge Hill University	Creative Writing
11. The University of Essex	Creative Writing
12. Exeter College	Creative Writing
13. University College Falmouth	Creative Writing
14. The University of Gloucestershire	Creative Writing
15. University of Greenwich	Creative Writing
16. Liverpool John Moores University	Creative Writing
17. London Metropolitan University	Creative Writing
18. London South Bank University	Creative Writing
19. The Manchester Metropolitan University	Creative Writing
20. University of Northampton	Creative Writing
21. UCP Marjon Plymouth	Creative Writing
22. University of Portsmouth	Creative and Media Writing
23. Roehampton University	Creative Writing
24. Sheffield Hallam University	Creative Writing
25. Southampton Solent University	Screenwriting
26. South Essex College	Creative Writing for Media
27. Staffordshire University	Creative Writing
28. University of Wales Trinity Saint David	Creative Writing
29. University of Winchester	Creative Writing
30. University of Worcester	Creative & Prof Writing and Screenwriting