Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Plymouth University

Master of Research (M.Res) English

Programme Specification

Informal Faculty Review: 18 July 2006
Approval Event: 22 November 2006
First intake: September 2007
First award: November 2008

This Programme Specification was updated in November 2013.

Approved by minor change 12/11/14
Programme specification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Award title</th>
<th>M.Res English – for students who achieve 180 M-level credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Award title(s)</td>
<td>PGCert English Research – for students who achieve 60 M-level credits from within this programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awarding Institution</td>
<td>University of Plymouth</td>
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<td>Teaching Institution</td>
<td>University of Plymouth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of production</td>
<td>10 July 2006 (first draft for informal review)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9th February 2007 (final revised documentation)</td>
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<td>Updated March 2011 following permitted changes</td>
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<td>Updated November 2013 following permitted changes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Updated November 2014 following change of module codes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of approval</td>
<td>22 November 2006</td>
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Brief description of programme

This programme provides an exciting opportunity for students to pursue an individual research project of their choice with guidance and personal supervision from members of the University English team.

Between them, the team members have a wide range of interests spanning literatures from Elizabethan to contemporary writing. Students may wish to draw upon particular staff expertise in areas such as, for example, the history of the book and reading, political satire, national and cultural identity in the British Isles, Arthurian literature, the interface between late-Victorian aesthetics, gender and science, war writing, American literature, culture and politics, modernism and modernity, English and American contemporary poetry, film and drama. There is also scope for interdisciplinary work across traditional subject boundaries involving cultural history and theory, such as for example, visual technologies, psychology and psychoanalysis, representations of childhood and children’s literature, gender studies.

Students will receive training in research skills as an integral component of the degree and will join a thriving research community which aims to foster the sharing of knowledge and academic enquiry through staff/student research seminars, visits from well-known critics and writers and conferences.

The programme also provides high quality preparation for doctoral research through a focused and manageable project defined by the student. The course consists of:

- a theoretical and conceptual grounding in approaches to postgraduate research in the arts and humanities in general;
- the theoretical and conceptual location of a specific project within English, or a set of disciplines that includes and preferably coalesces around English;
- practical training in appropriate research skills (e.g. in the definition of a project and appropriate methodologies; the identification and analysis of textual, visual and oral sources; the application of new technologies; the location of research material in relevant libraries and archives; ways of designing a project methodology; etc.)
Distinctive features

The MRes English programme offers:

- the opportunity to focus on a short-term English research project within a vibrant and growing interdisciplinary research community.
- a means for students who do not wish to take a taught M.A. to pursue a specific research project in English with the guidance of an individual supervisor.
- a route from undergraduate level to Mphil/PhD.
- full access to the University's libraries and electronic resources.
- a means to acquire a sophisticated range of subject specific and interdisciplinary research skills through tutorials, seminars and workshops.

Students who are awarded a Distinction in this programme will be automatically offered a place on a University of Plymouth MPhil/PhD programme in the Faculty of Arts and will be allowed to 'fast track' to transfer stage (i.e. may apply to transfer from MPhil to PhD status prior to the usual 12 month full-time guidelines)

Entry requirements for the programme and transfer between programmes

Application is by project proposal, which should be suitable for a written submission of 25000 words and a recent sample of critical writing. The proposal should be (max.) 500 words and accompanied by a recent sample of critical writing (max. 3000 words), which may be from a recent course of study. These will be read to determine the applicant's aptitude for the programme; the suitability of the proposal in relation to the level, interest and the ability of course staff to supervise it; and the ability of the department to support the research with appropriate resources.

Applicants should normally provide satisfactory references and hold, or be in the process of gaining, at least an upper second class honours degree in the study of English (or related subject), or a degree of a comparable standard from a university or recognized degree awarding body in another country

In exceptional circumstances candidates may be considered under APEL/APCL provisions. These provisions will be applied on an individual case-by-case basis and will relate explicitly to specific module learning outcomes. That such provisions exist will be clearly stated in the recruitment literature.

Students for whom English is not their first language must have proficiency in
written and spoken English. Normally applicants should attain minimum test scores of 7.0 for IELTS (International English Language Testing Scheme), or the equivalent. This is a higher expectation than the standard University requirements for postgraduate entry (which is an IELTS score of 6.5). This is because, given the nature of the programme, students will be expected to read and engage with complex theoretical texts and debates for which fluency in English is essential.

Programme aims

All MRes programmes within the School of Humanities and Performing Arts share common aims. These assume that the rigours of subject-specificity (aim 2 below) will be addressed and developed through the subject-specific taught module as well as the student’s own programme of work.

1. to offer students grounding in research methods and skills in the arts, humanities, creative and cultural industries, and related fields;
2. to introduce students to the critical theories and approaches relevant to the area of study;
3. to develop the skills and understandings necessary to pursue a career in research;
4. to prepare graduates for MPhil/PhD programmes, at the University of Plymouth or elsewhere;
5. to enable and facilitate the planning and completion of defined research projects in the arts, humanities, cultural industries and/or related fields within a specified timeframe.

Intended programme learning outcomes

Upon completion of any MRes programme in the School of Humanities and Performing Arts students will be able to:

1. negotiate a programme of study at master’s level, focusing on the reflective development of their own research practice;
2. summarise, document, report and reflect on research progress and findings through appropriate modes of communication;
3. establish originality, innovation and creative independence in the realisation and evaluation of their own research.

Upon successful completion of MRes English, students will

4. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate research methods and their application to English as a field of study.

Link to subject benchmark(s)

There are currently no QAA M-level benchmarks for any Arts & Humanities subject (see http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/masters/MlevelEventfeb2006.asp).

It is assumed that students will continue to develop, refine and apply the skills gained at Honours degree level in English or a related subject (see QAA Subject Benchmark statement for English: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/honours/english.asp)
Assessment Modes

Assessment will take via the following tasks:
- project proposal (including outline of aims, research questions, and methodology); schedule of work/GANTT chart;
- Research methodology portfolio which includes specific entries and tasks;
- work-in-progress research presentation (oral presentations, sample chapters, performance presentation, exhibitions, etc.);
- review of sources /literature review, small scale research project, contextual essay; and/or other negotiated tasks dependent on project.
- Dissertation of 25000 words (specified in proposal approval, based on discipline-specific expectation.

Students will receive written formative feedback on each of the assessed tasks leading to the submission of the thesis.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The programme comprises three modules focusing on the following:

1) **English Research Methods & Debates in Literary and Cultural Studies** (MAEL700) – 30 credits.
   - delivered via the module leader(s), who may or may not be the Subject Co-ordinator.
   - delivered weekly(or equivalent number of sessions) over one term.
   - focus is on enabling the student to gain discipline specific skills and understanding current debates within the field of study.
   - the assessed tasks revolve around contextual study or literature review, communication skills and subject-specific frameworks.
   - This module is shared with MA English and Culture.

2) **Research in the Arts & Humanities** (MARE 700) – 30 credits
   - module is compulsory for all MRes students in the School of Humanities and Performing Arts and ResM students in the Arts & Humanities DTC.
   - the delivery takes place over two terms (1 and 2) in a variety of ways:
     i. One-to-one research tutorials with the student’s project supervisor
     ii. Participation in research seminar groups. Although students will be expected to attend a nominated research seminar series, they are also encouraged to attend others of interest
iii. Skills training and research methods workshops run by the Doctoral Training Centre in the Arts & Humanities, in conjunction (when appropriate) with ILS. Most elements of these workshops are also open to MPhil/PhD students in the DTC

- the latter is supported through the use of the ‘student portal’ pages for this module
- assessment is via Research Methodology Portfolio, and Work-in-Progress Research Presentation to a ‘live’ audience

3) Masters Thesis in the Humanities & Performing Arts (MARE701) – 120 credits

- assessed via Project Proposal and thesis on a negotiated topic (EITHER written text OR writing plus other form of critical/creative practice that responds to a defined research enquiry)
- taught via one-on-one supervision.
- students encouraged to attend seminar groups and training opportunities in term 3 (and in year 2 for part-time students)
- module is compulsory for all MRes students in the School of Humanities & Performing Arts.

Assessment and Quality Assurance Strategies:

A carefully constructed balance of formative and summative assessments are deployed across this Programme. Wherever appropriate and possible informal feedback will be provided for ongoing projects and work in progress.

1) Research Methods & Debates in Literary and Cultural Studies (MAEL700)

   a. assessed by the module leader.
   b. a representative sample of coursework (at least 25% or 3 pieces of work, whichever is greater) must be second-marked by an internal examiner.
   c. monitored by the external examiner for MA English: Literature, Culture & Modernity, who will see a negotiated sample of coursework and who will comment on this module within both Programme Award Panels (via the MRes Award External Examiner, if necessary).

2) Research in the Arts & Humanities (MARE 700)

   a. There are two elements of assessment: a research methodology portfolio and a work-in-progress presentation.
   b. The Research Methodology Proposal is assessed by the MRes programme leader with at least 25% of assignments second marked by another internal examiner.
   c. The Work in Progress Research Presentation is assessed by the student’s supervisor and at least one other internal examiner who negotiate and agree a final grade.
d. Internal examiners may be the Programme Manager (if not the supervisor) or any other person within the University who is qualified to comment on the student’s coursework through subject expertise.

e. All student achievement is monitored and confirmed by the module leader.

f. Student achievement is monitored by the MRes External Examiner who comments upon the standards of the module as a whole. S/he will see a negotiated sample of assessed work and feedback (via video if necessary).

3) Masters Thesis in the Humanities and/or Performing Arts (MARE701)

a. There are two assessed elements for this module: a project proposal and a thesis.

b. The Project Proposal is assessed by the supervisor and another internal examiner on a pass/fail basis. This is negotiated between both examiners. Students must pass this task in order to pass the module but it carries no assessment weighting. If a student does not pass on first attempt, then s/he will be given at least one subsequent opportunity, following the receipt of feedback, within the module to pass this task if necessary.

c. The examination of the thesis will be conducted by two internal examiners (blind marked first, followed by negotiated agreement)

d. All student achievement is monitored and confirmed by the module leader.

e. The MRes Arts External Examiner comments upon the standards of the module as a whole, having seen a negotiated sample of theses.

Programme structure and pathways
Note that ALL modules are core modules and ALL are M-level.
Please note that from October 2014, this programme is available to study on a full time basis only. We recommend the ResM English programme for part-time students.

Exemptions/ special academic regulations
In addition to offering MA awards ‘with distinction’, students within this programme will be offered the opportunity to achieve an MA award ‘with merit’.

That is,
Students who achieve 180 credits may be eligible for the following named awards:

- MRes English
  - To be eligible for this award, students must gain 180 credits by passing all three modules.

- MRes English with Merit
  - To be eligible for this award, students must be awarded a Merit
grade (i.e. between 60-69%) for MARE701 (120 credits) as well as an aggregate average above 60% for all modules.

- **MRes English with Distinction**
  - To be eligible for this award, students must be awarded a Distinction grade (i.e. over 70%) for MARE701 (120 credits) as well as an aggregate average above 70% for all modules.

**Notes about modules:**

MAEL500 is shared with the MA English and Culture programme.

MARE 700 and MARE701 are shared with all other MRes programmes in the School of Humanities and Performing Arts. MARE700 is shared with all ResM programmes in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
Faculty of Arts: MRes English
Programme Structure Diagram

total 180 credits

Full time (12 months)

Semester 1 (15 wk)    semester 2 (15 wk)    summer

Research Methods & Debates in Literary and Cultural Studies (MAEL 700): 30 credits

Research in the Arts & Humanities (MARE 700): 30 credits

Masters Thesis in the Humanities and / or Performing Arts (MARE701): 120 credits
(taught via one on one supervision in subject area during term time)
submission in September
### Aims & Learning Outcomes Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQ M-level descriptor</th>
<th>Programme Aims</th>
<th>Programme Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Relevant Module</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masters degrees are awarded to students who have:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrated a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice</td>
<td>Aims 1&amp;2</td>
<td>Outcome 4</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship</td>
<td>Aims 1,2,3,4&amp;5</td>
<td>Outcomes 1&amp;4</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrated originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline</td>
<td>Aims 1,2,3&amp;4</td>
<td>Outcomes 3&amp;4</td>
<td>MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrated conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline</td>
<td>Aims 2,3&amp;4</td>
<td>Outcomes 3&amp;4</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrated conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses</td>
<td>Aims 2,3,4</td>
<td>Outcomes 3&amp;4</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:</strong></td>
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<td>deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences</td>
<td>Aims 2,3,4&amp;5</td>
<td>Outcomes 2,3&amp;4</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level</td>
<td>Aim 5</td>
<td>Outcomes 1&amp;3</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop</td>
<td>Aims 3&amp;4</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700;</td>
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new skills to a high level

and will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility</th>
<th>Aims 3&amp;5</th>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations</td>
<td>Aims 3&amp;5</td>
<td>Outcomes 1&amp;3</td>
<td>MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development</td>
<td>Aims 3,4&amp;5</td>
<td>Outcomes 1&amp;2</td>
<td>MAEL700; MARE700; MARE701</td>
</tr>
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