English Literature

lancaster.ac.uk/english-literature
Studying English Literature at Lancaster University is an exciting, varied and stimulating experience. The subject is taught by leading scholars whose research advances knowledge of our culture and heritage.

We offer a firm grounding in all periods of literature from the Middle Ages through to the twenty-first century. Some of our areas of research specialism include literature and science, literature and religion, literature and politics, Gothic literature, science fiction, graphic fiction, literature and maps, literature in performance, and literature’s intersections with other media. Our teaching is shaped by this lively and diverse research culture.

A degree in English Literature from Lancaster prepares you well for a variety of interesting careers: our Department is joint first in the country for careers after six months (Guardian University Guide 2019). The skills that you learn in research, analysing, and interpreting texts, creative problem-solving, presenting your ideas orally and in writing, as well as practical skills developed in our employability modules, are highly sought after by employers, and our graduates go on to careers in teaching, publishing, media, business, and many other fields.

The Department offers a rich creative environment in which to undertake your studies. Members of staff lead reading groups, organise public lectures and special workshops, arrange theatre visits, and ensure that our students make the most of our proximity to the historic city of Lancaster by organising drama productions at venues such as Lancaster Castle. Our students contribute to the lively departmental culture by coordinating writing groups, performing readings, and running the journals *Flash*, *Lux* and *Cake*.

Whether you take English Literature on its own, with Creative Writing or in combination with other subjects, you will benefit from studying in the Department alongside many award-winning writers producing the literature of today, including poets Paul Muldoon and Paul Farley, and novelist Jenn Ashworth.

I hope that you will choose to join us next year.

*Professor Hilary Hinds,*
*Head of Department*
WHY STUDY ENGLISH LITERATURE AT LANCASTER?

You will have many opportunities to take advantage of our strong links to the historic and cultural heritage of the region including our close proximity to the Lake District, inspiration to writers of all genres. We hold workshops in Lancaster Castle as part of our Shakespeare teaching, participate in a wide range of local literary festivals and events, and the Department is home to the world-renowned Wordsworth Centre.
DEGREES AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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<th>Degree title</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>English Literature</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Q300</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Literature, Creative Writing and Practice</td>
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<td>QW38</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Film and English Literature</td>
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<tr>
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<td>RQ13</td>
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<tr>
<td>German Studies and English Literature</td>
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<td>AAB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish Studies and English Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theatre and English Literature</td>
<td>BA (Hons)</td>
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<td>WQ43</td>
<td>AAB</td>
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Placement Year Degrees

All of our degrees can be studied as a four-year long Placement Year degree. You can either apply specifically for a Placement Year variant, or switch on to the programme when you arrive at Lancaster. See page 22 for further details about placements and internship opportunities.

TEACHING

The core of your English Literature teaching will be in seminars where you will discuss the texts and topics under consideration on your module. Seminars are supported by lectures. Typically, each module will have a weekly lecture and seminar, but this may vary for some modules. You will also be invited to meet with your tutors on an individual basis to discuss any questions and receive personal support and guidance to help you get the most from your course. Teaching takes place in small-group seminars averaging 12-14 students.

All of our staff are research-active and renowned in their specialist fields; we all research, write, and publish our work. English Literature staff specialise in areas from medieval literature to contemporary Gothic, from Romantic poetry to postcolonial writing. These research interests shape our teaching.

Distinguished Professor Terry Eagleton visits regularly, offering a range of sessions from public talks to undergraduate lectures to postgraduate seminars.

Lancaster University has been awarded the highest possible score in the UK government’s 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) ratings. Our TEF Gold rating is based on high quality teaching, excellent teaching facilities and the good careers our graduates go into.

CONTACT HOURS

You can expect to be in class for around nine hours a week in your first year, depending on which modules you sign up for. Classroom contact time is similar in your second and third years. You will have set reading for each of these classes, so this results in a full, though flexible, study schedule.

ASSESSMENT

Most year-long modules are assessed by a combination of coursework and end-of-year examinations, although some modules have no examinations. When you submit a piece of coursework, we will get it back to you, graded and with comments from your tutor, within four weeks. Some modules include innovative assessment methods; the second-year Literature and Film course, for example, includes a creative project as part of its final assessment.

DISCUSSION

In your final year you will work one-to-one with a supervisor, planning, researching and writing a dissertation on a topic of your choice.

STUDY ABROAD

The study of English Literature can be enhanced by examining literatures in English produced in other national contexts, such as the USA, Canada and Australia, or by learning how other Europeans view the English literary tradition. You will have the opportunity to study abroad for a year at a partner university including the USA (Colorado, Iowa, Boston), in Canada (Toronto), Switzerland (Lausanne) and Australia (Macquarie). Living in another country and studying English Literature from a different perspective benefits you, both in terms of enhancing your understanding of the subject and preparing you for life after university.

There are also opportunities for short vacation travel with previous groups going to the US, China, Malaysia, India and Europe.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/english-literature

BEYOND THE COURSE CURRICULUM

There is an extensive range of extracurricular activities and field trips. Some are organised by staff, such as public lectures, reading groups, or visits to the theatre; others are organised by students, such as open mic nights on campus. See page 20 for details.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/english-literature
The study of English Literature at Lancaster gives you a broad engagement with the English literary tradition and the chance to experience some of the latest research in new topics and innovative approaches to study. From the outset, you will study literature from a range of different historical periods, both pre- and post-1800, from different literary movements and different national and cultural contexts. We also help you to think more systematically about different ways of approaching the reading of these texts.

Experiencing a wide range of different kinds of writing in your first year – drama, fiction, poetry and film, contemporary as well as historical – allows you to make informed choices about the direction you want to take in your second and third years.

**YEAR 1**

**CORE**

**English Literature**

A broad range of literature is addressed, from the Middle Ages to the 21st century, from Geoffrey Chaucer to Angela Carter. This module is a taster of famous and less well known texts through the Renaissance, Victorian, Romantic, and modern periods, and of the many and varied possible approaches to reading literature. You will be introduced to the key debates in literary study and given a foundation in the skills, tools, and knowledge that can open up new and exciting ways of reading.

**ELECTIVE**

**World Literature**

You will explore a wide and exciting range of texts from world literatures in English that have influenced the development of English Literature, including the Bible and classical writers such as Ovid, Homer, and Dante. You’ll look at modern world authors in translation, like Kafka, and at today’s culture through contemporary authors such as Salman Rushdie and Mariama Ba, as well as new media writing and the graphic novel.

**ELECTIVE**

**Creative Writing**

The basic techniques of prose and poetry will be examined. Divided into two parts, ‘Approaching Writing’ and ‘Putting it into Practice’, each is assessed by a portfolio of your work.

**ELECTIVE**

**Flexible Subject Option**

Select a module from another department in the University. This could be something closely related to your study of literature, such as English Language, Theatre or Film, or you could choose to branch out with a subject like History, Sociology, Marketing, Criminology, Gender and Women’s Studies, or Psychology. The full list of first-year options can be found in our Flexible Subject Options booklet.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass-flexible-learning/
FULL-UNIT MODULES

Modernism towards Post-modernism
You will look at a range of experimental Anglo-American writing from the early twentieth century – the period of modernism proper – to the emergent post-modernism of the 1960s. Through close examination of path-breaking works from T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Wallace Stevens through to Samuel Beckett and Thomas Pynchon, you will examine the meaning and usefulness of two of the most powerful aesthetic concepts of the last century.

Shakespeare
This module examines Shakespearean drama in its own time, as a platform on which early modern debates about agency and government, family, and national identity were put into play. By examining texts from across Shakespeare’s career, we will explore their power to shape thoughts and feelings in their own age but also in ours. Texts might include Julius Caesar, Twelfth Night, Henry IV Part I, King Lear, and The Tempest.

Contemporary Literature in English
You will encounter the explosion of new literatures from the decolonising/newly post-colonial world and the rise of new literary forms in the post-war period. The course foregrounds literature in English in its international dimensions, from South Asia and the Caribbean, as well as from multicultural and devolved Britain. Recurrent themes include margins, haunting, migration, and metamorphosis. Texts include Achebe, Things Fall Apart; Selvon, The Lonely Londoners; Atwood, Oryx and Crake; Coupland, Hey Nostradamus!

YEAR 3

You can choose to study:
- 1 full-unit module + 4 half-unit modules
- 2 full-unit modules + 2 half-unit modules
Half-unit modules are typically designed around the current research of members of staff, and so are subject to frequent changes. This list, therefore, is offered as a snapshot of some of our current courses rather than as an indication of what will be running in future years.

21st-Century World Literature
This module takes ‘world literature’ as a question rather than a stable category. Instead of simply naming a range of literary works produced around the globe, it considers ‘world’ as an unfolding historical and imaginative creation, and asks about the relationship of literature to this process in the contemporary moment. We’ll be particularly interested in the ‘return’ of history in our present, and will consider new frontiers of war, resurgent forms of environmental violence and the chronic emergency of the refugee crisis.

The Byron-Shelley Circle
You will examine the work of three of the great Romantic writers: the poets Lord Byron and Percy Shelley and the novelist Mary Shelley. Their work produced two of the dominant myths of modern literature – Frankenstein (in Mary Shelley’s novel) and the vampire, both of which we will examine. Throughout their careers these writers were engaged in a creative and critical conversation addressing major themes, including the possibilities of political change; literary, scientific and biological creation; transgressive love; gender roles; and the Gothic.

Performing Death, Desire and Gender
This module looks at how acts of desire, murder, fake and ‘real’ deaths are represented on stage in early modern drama. It explores how experiences of death and desire are always gendered. In early modern theatres, the playing of female roles by boy actors demonstrated the performativity of gender for all – on stage and beyond. The module will explore how the bodies of boy actors dramatized a range of sexual orientations, representing female desire and staging same-sex desire at the same time.

Victorian Gothic
In the Victorian period, the decaying castles, corrupt priests, and ancestral curses that were so prominent in the first phase of the Gothic novel gave way to an increased emphasis on spectral and monstrous others: ghosts, werewolves, vampires, mummies, and other creatures of the night. You will explore these phenomena in their historical, cultural and literary contexts, with particular focus on emerging discourses of gender, sexuality, colonialism and class.

Women Writers
Virginia Woolf famously asked ‘what would have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister?’ and went on to explore the obstacles to literary success encountered by women writers. This module follows Woolf’s lead by seeking to redress the historical marginalisation of women writers in the English literary canon through an exploration of how women have come to writing at different historical moments, what they have chosen to write, and how.

Schools Volunteering Module
Experience teaching and classroom practice first-hand, at either primary or secondary level, in a local school during the Lent Term. The 10-week part-time placement will involve classroom observation and teacher assistance, and, in most cases, an opportunity to teach the class or to work with a designated group of pupils. Students will also develop skills around a special project or activity carried out in the school related to the teaching of English. The module is assessed by an end-of-term essay.
JOINT DEGREES WITH ENGLISH LITERATURE

In addition to combining English Literature with Creative Writing (see Creative Writing booklet), you can study English Literature as part of a joint major degree with the following subjects:

- English Language
- Film
- French Studies
- German Studies
- History
- Linguistics
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Spanish Studies
- Theatre

YEAR 1

CORE
English Literature

YEAR 2

CORE
The Theory and Practice of Criticism

ELECTIVE
Select 1 module from:
- English Literature module
- World Literature
- Joint major department module
- Minor subject in another department

YEAR 3

ELECTIVE
Select modules in English Literature

ELECTIVE
Joint major core and elective modules

See pages 12-15 for module listings.

As an English Literature student at Lancaster I have gained valuable skills to take into the workforce. In 2017, I secured an internship at the BBC, working on the Sports Personality of the Year Awards. My degree helped to secure the internship as it demonstrated that I was from a “story telling” or “story analysis” background and essentially producing is a way of telling stories through different media lenses. Performing well in my internship led to me being offered a job in BBC Sport.

I currently work as a BBC Sport Freelancer, I was offered this a couple of weeks after finishing my placement, and have since been combining work and my degree. I have been able to work on big sporting events, including the Winter Olympics and the Commonwealths.

Lancaster’s teaching staff have been great at inspiring and enthusing both my academic and my creative work. The skills I have learnt through seminars, essays and presentation work are all vital for careers and life outside this degree.

Samia Durrani
Current student, BA Hons English Literature
Brian Baker - Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing

I’ve always been a reader of popular genres: Stephen King’s horror novels (the ones my Mum didn’t drop in the bath, that is), crime thrillers and police procedurals, spy novels, and science fiction, of course, always science fiction. Literatures of the imagination have been my thing since my Dad and I read 2000AD comic together. Future cities, weird goings on, robots, alternative histories, secrets, worlds within worlds within worlds. You might want to call it escapist, but I would prefer ‘seeing things differently’, off-kilter, if you like. All kinds of imaginative literature is about understanding the world not as it is presented to us, but as how it might be, in terms of dreams, fears, or hopes. Whatever I teach here at Lancaster, and whatever students study, thinking differently is always vital.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: American Literature to 1900; Year 3: Science Fiction

Sally Bushell - Professor of Romantic and Victorian Literature

When I was at school I was never top of my class or even a good “all-rounder” but I was nearly always top in English. Back then it seemed like a disadvantage to only be really good at one thing but in the long run it turned out pretty well. So for me this subject always called me to it, right from the start. I first realised I was a Romanticist and a Wordsworthian when I visited the Lake District aged 17 whilst I was studying The Prelude at A Level and had the same kind of feelings all over again about a landscape that is also a deeply literary place. Lancaster is the perfect place for me because of its location so close to the Lake District and to The Wordsworth Trust where most of the manuscripts are held. I love my job, my subject and communicating it to others. Every day I know that I am doing exactly what I was born to do and that is an extraordinary privilege.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: British Romanticism; Year 3: Victorian Popular Fiction

Michael Greaney - Senior Lecturer in English

My research is on modern fiction, a field that I define, very broadly, as anything from 1800 to the present day. I feel lucky to work on what I would do anyway for pleasure – read novels – but equally lucky to be doing this work in such a stimulating intellectual context as Lancaster. I’ve written two books, one on Joseph Conrad, and one on contemporary fiction; and I’m currently working on a third, on sleep and sleepers in the novel, from Gothic sleepwalkers to twenty-first-century insomnia(s). The origins of this latest book are in my response to Jonathan Coe’s The House of Sleep, a wonderful comic novel that got me thinking about when, where and how fictional characters sleep – and about the meanings that they attach both to their sleep and to the sleep of others. It was one of our own students who tipped me off about Coe’s novel, some years ago; I’m still grateful for his recommendation.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: The Theory and Practice of Criticism; Year 3: Modernism towards Postmodernism

Liz Oakley-Brown - Senior Lecturer in Shakespeare and Renaissance Writing

Nearly all of my childhood adventures took place via the written word. Saturday afternoons were often spent with the boarders at Elnor Brent-Dyer’s Chalet School series and I was inspired by Jo’s witty ambitions in Louisa May Alcott’s novels. My one act of rebellion at school involved the confiscation of The Man Who Fell to Earth when I should have been reading Great Expectations. My teenage passion for Thomas Hardy’s writing underpinned my desire to study for a degree in English literature. However, as a second-year undergraduate at Cardiff University I took a course which included Edmund Spenser’s The Faerie Queene and I was immediately fascinated by the Elizabethan epic. Almost all of my subsequent research – which includes English translations of Ovid, embodiment, outlawry and queership – can be linked to this compelling poem and I remain completely captivated by Tudor writing and its particular examination of what it is to be human.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: Renaissance to Restoration: English Literature 1580–1688; Year 3: Shakespeare
- Publications include: Shakespeare and the Translation of Identity in Early Modern England (2011); The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship: Medieval to Early Modern (with Louise Wilkinson, 2009)

Catherine Spooner - Professor of Literature and Culture

I discovered Gothic aged fourteen via The Cure, and scandalised my parents by dyeing my hair black and smothering myself in eyeliner. Then at A-level I studied Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, and realised there was a whole world of Gothic literature out there to enjoy – from Ann Radcliffe to Angela Carter. But I never quite lost sight of the music and fashion that had drawn me to Gothic in the first place. I remain fascinated with the intersections between Gothic literature and film, fashion and popular culture. A typical research day for me might involve close-reading Victorian novels, or scrutinising the imagery used by fashion shoots in Vogue. What I love about Lancaster is that its open-minded, cutting-edge approach allows me to combine both – and share them with my students in classes like ‘Victorian Gothic’, where we use nineteenth-century painting and photography to contextualise fictions of vampires, werewolves and ghosts.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: Victorian Literature; Year 3: Victorian Gothic
- Publications include: Post-Millennial Gothic: Comedy, Romance and the Rise of Happy Gothic (2017); Fashioning Gothic Bodies (2004)

Drivetime: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness (2016); Romance Writing (2007)

Lynne Pearce - Professor of Literary Theory and Women’s Writing

I grew up in a home where there were no books but a compulsive work ethic. My family ran its own business, worked long hours and rarely took a day off. From a young age, reading, writing and art became my alternative industry and, once I started at the Grammar School, ‘book learning’ became my own compulsion. All my A-level subjects – English, History (including Art History) and Geography – have continued to feed into my research and writing, which is very interdisciplinary. This is one of the reasons why Lancaster University, which has always fostered a culture of intellectual enquiry that crosses disciplines, has been such a good home for me. As a hill-walker, I also consider it to have the best location of any university in England.

- Teaching includes: Year 2: Film and Literature; Year 3: Women Writers of Britain and America
- Publications include: Drive Time: Literary Excursions in Automotive Consciousness (2016); Romance Writing (2007)

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- Teaching includes: Year 2: British Romanticism; Year 3: Victorian Popular Fiction
Student-run journals

We have three in-house, student-run, creative writing journals. The print publication Cake publishes poetry, flash fiction, and reviews of work from established poets and newcomers alike. Flash is an undergraduate-run journal which publishes fiction, poetry, critical and hybrid work by current Lancaster undergraduates. Lux is an interdisciplinary journal that seeks to showcase incisive and original work from students across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

OTHER STUDENTS HAVE:

- Set up reading and writing groups exploring a wide range of creative and critical interests; check out the departmental website for examples of these
- Taken a student production of the Canterbury Tales to the Edinburgh Festival
- Made major contributions to the volunteering programmes of the Student Union
- Made a short promotional film about life in the Department

Volunteering and the Lancaster Award

The Lancaster Award is a non-academic certificate developed in partnership with employers to help you make the most of your time at Lancaster and to demonstrate the skills you have developed along the way. It is designed to reward the wide range of volunteering activities and placements undertaken by many of our undergraduates. Potential employers increasingly value a profile that includes more than just strong academic results; and the Lancaster Award recognises and validates this. You can find more details about the scheme on the University website: just search for ‘Lancaster Award’.

LIFE ON THE DEGREE

After a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences placement helped me to gain an internship in two northern publishing houses, I am now Sales & Production Manager at Comma Press. In my role at Comma, I oversee the entire production process of our books, liaising with printers and designers, proofreading, copy-editing and converting all titles into eBooks.

In my sales role I deal with distributors, wholesalers, booksellers and so on, and produce sales material such as catalogues and presentations. My role also includes planning and overseeing all live events, book launches and author appearances. I have co-edited two collections of stories in translation, The Book of Tbilisi and The Book of Riga.

Having such an active literary scene within the English Department at Lancaster definitely helped me build up my CV, and by becoming an editor of both Cake magazine and Flash journal, I learned skills that were massively helpful in my current role. I also can’t commend enough the guidance of my tutors, for helping me gain confidence in myself and my skills and giving me one-to-one time to talk.

I took part in the Lancaster Career Mentoring Scheme, and having someone in the industry helping me tailor my CV and applications for different job descriptions really helped me when interviewing for the internships I was later offered.

I’m so lucky because I have such a varied role. Working in a small, dedicated team at an indie press in the North was my dream graduate job and now, happily, is my actual job!

Becca Parkinson
Sales and Production Manager, Comma Press, Manchester
BA Hons English Literature, graduated in 2016
CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Throughout your degree we will support you in developing skills and gaining experience that will give you a head start in your chosen career.

Placement and internship opportunities
Placements and internships are great ways to gain work experience, make professional contacts and help you decide your career path. A wide range of opportunities is available, most are paid, and some provide credit towards your degree. Places are not usually guaranteed and we will help you prepare for the competitive application process.

- Creative and heritage organisation placement module - these short, paid placements count towards your degree and provide valuable experience working in roles that are relevant to your degree or your future career aspirations, for example with a publisher, museum, newspaper, heritage site or art venue.

- School volunteering placement module – if you are thinking of training to be a teacher, this optional module gives you invaluable hands-on experience of working alongside a teacher in the classroom for half a day a week over the course of a term. You would devise a special activity to do with some of the class and reflect on the experience in an end-of-placement essay that counts towards your degree.

- Placement year degrees – a year of paid, professional work experience between your second and final year of study. Lancaster University students have worked with companies as diverse as Johnson + Johnson, Warner Bros, Microsoft, Marks & Spencer, and Walt Disney. Typically placements are for between 9-12 months.

- Short internships – these short paid placements take place during the university summer vacation and part-time during term time. They provide work experience in small and medium sized businesses as well as third sector and not-for-profit organisations. Past employers have included Carnegie Publishing, The Dukes Theatre, and the Ethical Consumer Research Association, with roles ranging from marketing and PR to specific research projects.

Preparing you for your career
A degree including English Literature can underpin many careers and we recognise the need to think ahead to life after graduation. ‘Beyond Undergraduate English Literature’ is a careers-focused module that provides a rolling programme of events designed to enhance your knowledge of careers, employability and graduate research possibilities. It offers professional development workshops on employability-related matters, including bespoke talks by the University’s Careers Department, as well as visits from potential employers and alumni of the Department.

Careers Service
Both during your degree and after your graduate we provide dedicated, specialist support. The University Careers Service has connections with some of the world’s top graduate recruiters, high growth businesses and employers across every sector, and organises careers fairs, workshops, and networking opportunities throughout the year. You can be matched with an employer or a previous graduate for one-to-one advice and take part in a range of workshops such as writing a brilliant CV, developing a LinkedIn profile or succeeding at psychometric testing. We also have a vast range of online resources as well as an exclusive job search portal.

Where will your degree take you?
Employers have always valued the critical and analytical skills that students develop when they study English, as well as their ability to write in a lucid and focused manner. Even in the current economic climate, this continues to be the case, as can be seen in the excellent employment record of graduates of this department.

Our recent graduates are working in an exciting range of jobs:

- Public Relations Executive
- English as a Foreign Language Teacher
- Digital Marketing Executive
- Bid Writer for a Charity
- Publishing House Sales and Production Manager
- Marketing Co-ordinator
- Copywriter
- Social Media Officer
- Teacher Training – English

A degree from Lancaster will equip you to pursue your academic studies further. Every year a number of our graduates elect to continue their studies with us, choosing from a range of Masters degrees in English literary studies.

www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers