

Institution: Bath Spa University

Unit of assessment: UoA29 English Language and Literature

a. Overview

English and Creative Writing at Bath Spa University consists of the internationally-renowned Department of Creative Writing, one of the largest such departments in the United Kingdom, and the Department of English, which also produces world-leading research. While the submission includes academics working on a wide range of literary periods and areas of creative writing, there is a conscious concentration here on three major areas of research in which researchers at Bath Spa have made a pioneering, internationally-recognised contribution over the last ten years and in which PhD student recruitment has been especially strong. These areas are: **contemporary writing** (the production of it and the critical study of it), **ecocriticism and environmental writing**, and **early modern studies**. The first two areas include researchers in both literary studies and creative writing (some individuals contributing both kinds of research), and have supported work between the two disciplines. Each of these areas has a Research Centre devoted to it, with central funding, to support cohesive and collaborative research, host conferences and seminars, and to organise research grant applications. The establishment of these centres in May 2008 provided a foundation for Bath Spa's research strategy for the census period and beyond. English and Creative Writing also has significant areas of strength in *writing for young people*, *literary modernism* and *nineteenth-Century literature*. In all of these fields, researchers have made significant contributions to scholarship and creative work.

Research Groupings

The three Research Centres discussed below have made leading and at times defining contributions in contemporary writing, environmental criticism and the history of textual production in Britain between 1500 and 1750.

1. Contemporary Writing

Members: Alderman, Almond, Brain, Brayfield, Christopher, Cologne-Brookes, Edwards, English, Etter, Evans, Forna, Garrard, Gee, Green, Hadley, Harvey, Jose, Kerridge, Liardet, May, Neale, Peters, Pullinger, Reeve, Stamp, Thebo, Voake, Weldon, Wright and Woodward. PGR students: Barnes, Bentham, Borodale, Bush, Carr, Fitzpatrick, Hanel, Herve, Hudson, Joakim, Johncox, Kelby, Lackie, Lalwani, McMillan, Militello, Scarpino, Sharfeddin, Smith, Storey, Stuart, Turner, Wolf, Yun.

Bath Spa is at the forefront of the research field of Creative Writing in the UK, not only because of its distinguished team of teachers and researchers, many of whom are world-renowned authors, but also in terms of enhancing the quality of students' published writing, opening new directions in literary work and participating in debates about how academic and professional values interrelate.

The Contemporary Writing Research Group includes leading novelists, poets, story-writers, dramatists, nature writers and writers for the digital media; many are also published critics and scholars. Contemporary Writing's contribution to the research area and to British cultural life is discussed in section 5 below, but the excellence of its members might be signified here by awards received during the census period: the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Hans Christian Anderson Award, Le Prix Sorcier, the Literaturpries for Fiction, the Governor-General's Literary Award for Fiction, the Roger Deakin Award from the Society of Authors, and the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize. Shortlistings and longlistings include the Man Booker Prize, the Commonwealth Prize, the Orange Prize, the IMPAC Award, the Warwick Prize, the BBC National Short Story Awards,

and the *Sunday Times* Short Story Prize.

Recent activity in the Centre for Contemporary Writing includes the organisation of a series of public poetry readings in Bath each year since 2008, a conference exploring 'Transmedia Writing' (2012 and 2013), the organisation of 'Other Voices/Other Times', a symposium on historical and fantasy fiction (2012), a one-day symposium on 'Subjectivity in Creative Writing' (2012), video-link seminars with Columbia College, Chicago and the J M Coetzee Centre (University of Adelaide) (2013), sponsoring Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy as keynote speaker at the 2011 NAWA conference, and sponsorship of the 2013 Association of Writers and Writing Programs conference keynote presentation in Boston featuring Nobel Laureates Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott.

2. Writing and the Environment

Members: Christopher, Evans, Etter, Garrard, Kerridge, Neale, Gee. PGR students: Borodale, Gabriel, Rivett-Carnac, White.

Bath Spa University is the foremost research centre for environmental criticism in the UK and has made pioneering contributions to the emergence of the Environmental Humanities. As well as editing *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism*, the journal of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE), staff from the Writing and the Environment Research Centre serve on the advisory panels of the *European Journal of Literature, Culture and the Environment* and *Studies in the Environmental Humanities*. Two are founding editors of a new Continuum/Bloomsbury book series, *Environmental Cultures*. Members of the Centre have also served as Chair and Treasurer of ASLE-UKI; one serves on the Executive Council of ASLE-US. As well as the scholarly research outputs listed in the submission, the Centre has been highly influential in the teaching of ecocriticism in British and North American universities through such work as Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2nd edition, 2011).

Recent activity in the Centre for Writing and the Environment includes co-hosting an AHRC-funded multidisciplinary research network entitled 'Cultural Framing of Environmental Discourse' (part of AHRC's strategic programme on 'Landscape & Environment'; 2010-2011), a 2011 symposium on 'Culture and Climate Change' with Mike Hulme, a symposium on 'The New Nature Writing' (2012), featuring John Vidal (*The Guardian*), poet and science writer Melanie Challenger, Brett Westwood (BBC), and Carol Farmer, Commissioning Editor, Chatto & Windus. The centre has recently organised a Leverhulme network funding application on Environmental Humanities in partnership with Utrecht University and the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies at Uppsala University.

3. Book, Text and Place, 1500-1750

Members: Gadd, Gregg, Hill, Ivic; PGR students: Drake, Howe.

This Centre is devoted to the study of material culture and textual production in Britain between 1500 and 1750, paying particular attention to how these intersect with broader questions of politics, gender, race, nation, and religion. The Centre also has a specific interest in book history and in editorial theory and practice, and includes advisory board members for the *New Oxford Shakespeare*, and the JISC Collection *Historic Books*. Its members have produced distinguished work in this field: Gadd is editor of the first volume of *The History of Oxford University Press* (2013) and Hill's monograph *Pageantry and Power* was awarded the 2011 David Bevington Prize for the Best New Book in Early Drama Studies.

Recent activity in the Centre for Book, Text and Place includes two international conferences, 'Book Encounters 1500-1750' (2011) and 'Transitions 1500-1750' (2013), a panel at the Society of

Renaissance Studies conference in Manchester (2012). Plans are underway to develop an MA in Book History and Digital Humanities with partners at the Bodleian and Folger Shakespeare Libraries (Gadd was Charlton Himan Research Fellow at the Folger in 2011).

b) Research strategy

Since 2008, the research strategy for English and Creative Writing subject areas has been:

- To consolidate Bath Spa's position as one of the leading UK research institutions in the field of Creative Writing.
- To consolidate Bath Spa's reputation as the leading UK university in the field of Ecocriticism and Environmental Writing.
- To establish Bath Spa as a significant research institution in early modern studies and book history.
- To use Bath Spa's research base in Creative Writing to make public interventions that enhance the quality of published creative writing and literary debate.
- To make leading contributions to these fields in the form of publications, conference papers, media appearances, involvement in the award of major prizes, the editing of journals, the leadership of academic associations, the organisation of conferences and symposia, and the convening of national and international networks.
- To make significant scholarly contributions in other areas of English Literature such as Gothic studies, Modernist literature, writing for young people, and Irish Studies.
- To use QR funding to support the above activities by providing targeted relief from teaching and other responsibilities, and by supporting conferences, symposia, networks and publications.
- To encourage external funding bids, especially collaborative bids in areas of strength, and use QR funding to provide teaching relief to support bid-preparation
- To provide research-active staff with advice on prioritising and developing their research in line with Bath Spa research strategy.
- To provide early career researchers with mentoring, networking, advice on research planning and opportunities to take part in collaborative projects and funding applications.
- To provide a professional environment in which colleagues' research is communicated, discussed and encouraged.
- To expand recruitment of PhD students, especially in areas of strength, and to provide PhD students with a supportive and stimulating research community.

The Research Centres organise events in which research students work alongside academic staff. PhD students in Creative Writing are often taught by researchers in both disciplines, since that PhD includes a component of contextual study.

The English and Creative Writing Unit of Assessment is the largest in the University, and Bath Spa has invested heavily in developing it since 2008, implementing a successful policy of growth in the period under assessment. In 2012 16 new professorships were funded across the University as part of the Vice-Chancellor's drive to move the institution in a more research intensive direction; ten of those chairs were appointed in Creative Writing and one in English. Four members of staff who were submitted in RAE 2008 have since been promoted to professors. Since RAE 2008, the Unit has developed both in terms of quality of research activity and staff numbers, submitting 23 people in 2008, and 30 people in this round.

Two priorities for the immediate future and in the period leading up to REF 2020 are to develop grant bidding activity in Creative Writing, and to produce ground-breaking research in the new field

of Writing for the Digital Media. The latter has been supported by the organisation of two major international conferences, in 2012 and 2013, and the creation of four fee-waiver PhD studentships in this field, the recipients of which began their programmes of doctoral study in 2013.

In English Literature the emphasis will be upon developing a greater volume of large external funding bids, as per the Leverhulme International Network bid on 'Environmental Humanities' and a European COST consortium, led by Utrecht and Bath Spa, on the same theme. English has been successful in achieving some external funding (see REF5 d. below), but aims to develop this aspect of its work very significantly. Much of this development will involve the existing Research Centres which are the focus of a large proportion of staff research and assist in the development of research students, and Bath Spa will also establish a Research Centre for Nineteenth-Century Literature, following academic appointments in this area. English will further develop its existing links with external bodies such as the Department of Culture, City of London Heritage and Libraries, Thomas Hardy Country, New Networks for Nature, the Wordsworth Trust and Literary Agencies such as Janklow and Nesbit, Greene & Heaton, Curtis Brown and United Agents.

c) People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Bath Spa University has a commitment to developing the research careers of all staff and offers schemes such as Promising Researcher Fellowships and occasionally Sabbaticals. The University's staff development strategy sets out the ways in which building research capacity forms a key part of induction, probation and annual review. Early career researchers – particularly those undertaking doctorates - are allocated lighter teaching loads and there is an annual round of competitive application for periods of research leave/sabbatical leave, open to all staff at all stages of their careers. Teaching timetables are adjusted to take account of the needs of particular research projects or writing activities. External research income is used (where applicable) to buy in hourly-paid lecturing staff to release principal and other investigators. Every member of academic staff has a contractual entitlement to 35 days per annum (pro rata) for research and scholarly activity, whilst the University maintains a research-based career route through Readerships and Professorships by application. A Bath Spa University professorial lecture series was launched in 2013, to celebrate the talent and expertise of new and established professors across all the Schools of study.

Role profiles for each of the researcher grades are published on the web so that research staff can ascertain the expectations for grades above and seek to develop these skills as their career progresses, and these have been mapped against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) phases to create a career progression framework and a research staff development programme, which is available to all academic staff and postgraduate research students. Evidence of commitment to equal opportunities in the recruitment and support of research staff and can be evidenced by our status as a Stonewall diversity champion and our Investors in People badge.

In English and Creative Writing, the strategic aim is to maintain and enhance the University's status as a leading UK research centre for contemporary writing, ecocriticism and environmental writing, and early modern studies while developing the other identified areas of research strength such as digital media, writing for children and nineteenth-century studies (following Strachan's appointment as professor). The aim is to support excellent research in these fields, and to attract leading researchers in these fields to join Bath Spa or collaborate with the University's researchers. The recent Professorship appointments are an example of this strategy in operation. Professors were recruited in the fields of Digital Writing (Alderman, Pullinger), Contemporary Writing (Forna, Hadley, Hensher, Jose and Weldon), and environmental writing (Gee). Research

strength is an essential criterion in all academic staffing appointments.

Staff development for individuals in English and Creative Writing takes the following forms:

- Regular staff seminars in which research is presented and discussed, some organised by the School, some by the Research Centres and some by the Graduate School.
- Annual staff development review interviews with line managers in which research achievements and targets are discussed.
- Advice on plans, priorities and funding opportunities provided by the School's Research Coordinator.
- Annual teaching-relief bidding procedure, in the course of which applicants are given advance advice and subsequent feedback by the Research Coordinator.
- Regular application rounds for Professorships, Readerships and Early Career Researcher Awards, involving advance guidance and subsequent feedback.

ii. Research students

As required by the QAA, research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for conducting research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees. A one-stop shop for PGR support is available at the Postgraduate Centre at Corsham Court and additional support for international postgraduates through a dedicated international student office. The Graduate School provides training and development for students and staff through development workshops, online resources and termly Graduate Forums. It also provides financial support for PGR students wishing to present at conferences or undertake archive or fieldwork.

The University is part of the successful South, Wales and West AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership, led by the University of Bristol, which was awarded £14.2M (equating to 200 studentships) for five years from 2014/15. The partnership was commended for its consistent and convincing strategy for the provision of a very high quality training environment for postgraduates; its vision and strategy for arts and humanities research training; the proposed training (generic and subject specific); support and monitoring arrangements for postgraduate researchers and supervisors during the lifetime of the BGP2 award; the spread/subject areas to be supported; the range of external partners engaged; and the governance and management of the award within and across the ROs involved.

PhD students in English and Creative Writing are supported by the School's Higher Degrees Co-ordinator and the Graduate School. PGR study in the department tends to follow its areas of research strength. Research students are members of the relevant Research Centres, participating in symposia and other activities run by those centres. The PhD programme in Creative Writing is one of the largest and most successful in the country. When AHRC doctoral studentships were allocated by an open application system, Bath Spa was consistently successful in obtaining them, sometimes gaining a majority of the small number awarded nationally, and when the first block allocations were made, Bath Spa was given a dedicated annual studentship in Creative Writing, a very rare award. The PhD in Creative Writing recruits nationally and internationally, and is supported by a suite of outstandingly successful Masters programmes in this subject. A taught MA in Literature, Landscape and the Environment provides a route to PGR level in English Literature, and MA programmes in Ecocriticism and Book History and the Digital Humanities are planned. At present there are 33 enrolled PhD students in Creative Writing, including seven on a new low-residency version taught online and in short residential schools, and four fee-waiver students in Digital Writing, one of whom is undertaking a new joint PhD in a

partnership between Bath Spa and Queensland University of Technology, Australia. There are nine PhD students in English Literature. Since 2008, enrolled PhD students in Creative Writing have obtained publishing contracts for eight novels and three poetry collections.

The quality of Bath Spa's PG students in Creative Writing is demonstrated by the awards their work has received during the census period. These include the Betty Trask Prize, the American Library Association Book award, the Southern Schools Book Award, the American Library Association Award for best Fiction for Young Adults, the Die Eule des Monats Award, the Branford Boase Award, the Parents' Choice Award, and the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year. Shortlistings and longlistings include the Man Booker Prize, the Orange Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize, the Guardian First Book Award, the Costa Book Awards, the Prime Minister's Literary Award (Australia), the Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year for Older Readers, the American Library Association Best Fiction Title, the Waterstones Prize, and the Carnegie Medal. Current PhD students are represented by the literary agents Janklow & Nesbit, United Agents, and Andrew Wylie among others. Several PhD students in Creative Writing have secured permanent academic posts.

In English Literature, several students have secured academic posts and published their theses in monograph form. One current student, awarded an AHRC studentship in 2010, has since received awards from the Bibliographical Society and Malone Society, was accepted onto two research-skills courses at the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, and has acted as research assistant for the *History of Oxford University Press* and on the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift*.

d) Income, infrastructure and facilities

The University has a Research Office under the leadership of the Vice-Provost (Research & Graduate Affairs) which gives support through experienced professional staff for research grant applications knowledge exchange and researcher development, advice on calls for bids, and advice on alternative funding sources (e.g. industry/charity funding) in collaboration with the Development and Alumni Relations and Business Support offices. The University has also invested in an Institutional Repository – ResearchSPAcE (<http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>) to maximise access to research outputs. The Research Support office offers an annual knowledge exchange project development bidding round for the pump priming of knowledge exchange/transfer or the development of collaborative doctoral awards, and an annual Early Career Researcher bid development funding round which ECRs can use to buy out their time, or to buy in research assistance to help move a project forward and build towards funded activity.

The unit attracted QR funding totalling £778,872 during the REF period. External funders include the following: JISC (£75,000); AHRC (£70K, including £24K for knowledge exchange projects); British Academy (£11K); Paul Mellon Fund (£5K); HEA (£5K); Moore Institute (£2K); Leverhulme (£15K). Total external income awarded over REF period: £162.4K.

External funding awards for specific projects have included a Fulbright Scholarship, a Katharine F. Pantzer Jr Research Fellowship in the History of the Book, a Charlton Himan Research Fellowship, an AHRC/British Library sponsorship to speak at a conference at the Science Institute in Bangalore, a British Academy Small Research Grant and research grants from Culture Ireland, Oxford University Press and the Bibliographical Society. The Unit has enjoyed considerable success in obtaining small to medium sized grants and it now aims to build upon this success to put together collaborative project-based bids in partnership with leading universities in the UK, the EU and overseas (the Leverhulme and COST bids involving the Writing and the Environment Centre are examples, but there will also be major bids to the Wellcome Trust and the AHRC).

Substantial QR funding is being spent in 2013 on new Research Office appointments which will provide further expert advice in support of these large bids.

Researchers in these subjects make use of the library facilities at the Newton Park and Corsham Court campuses, including online facilities, inter-library loans and arranged membership of other academic libraries. Quiet study areas are available at Corsham Court. Staff research is facilitated by the Bath Spa Library, which has specialist holdings in the Research Centre fields and extensive digital collections (including subscriptions to EEBO, ECCO, JSTOR, MUSE, ODNB, OED and the Brotherton and Perdita MSS).

e) Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

As well as developing the discipline as an area of academic enquiry, researchers in Creative Writing have played a leading role in establishing national and international research networks, notably through participation in the National Association of Writers in Education and the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (USA; see c. above), and in founding and editing *New Writing*, the first UK journal of academic theory and practice in Creative Writing. Creative writers in the department have contributed critical, scholarly and theoretical papers to journals and conferences in the fields of writing for young people, writing and the environment, women's writing, and creative writing pedagogy, including plenary addresses and lectures at universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, Utrecht, East Anglia, SOAS, Newcastle, London (King's and Birkbeck), Warwick, Sarajevo, Istanbul, Kingston, Northumbria, Goldsmiths, and Thessaloniki.

Members of the Creative Writing staff are themselves the subject of academic enquiry. An international conference on the work of Gee was held at St Andrews University in 2013, and an academic monograph on her work has been published. The work of Almond, Hensher, Liardet and Weldon, especially, has also been the subject of much critical publication. Bath Spa's staff are also visible in other media: Hadley and Woodward have been profiled in *The Guardian* and Alderman, Almond, Etter, Evans, Forna, Gee, Hadley, Hensher, Liardet, Pullinger, Weldon and Woodward write articles and reviews regularly for prestigious publications including the *London Review of Books*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The New Statesman*, *The Spectator*, *Poetry Review*, *Poem*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*, and have made many contributions to literature coverage on BBC national radio.

Creative Writing staff also participate in the discipline in a variety of collaborative ways. Forna and Hensher have been members of the judging panels for the Man Booker Prize; Hensher for the Whitbread Prize; Alderman for the BBC National Short Story Award. Forna sits on the Board of the National Theatre of Great Britain, on the Advisory Committee of the Royal Literary Fund, and the Board of the Caine Prize for African Writing. Gee, OBE for 'Services to Literature', was the first female Chair of Council of the Royal Society of Literature and is currently a Vice-President of the Society. Pullinger is a founding member of the Transliteracy Research Group (www.transliteracy.com), a Board Member of the Asham Trust and of the transdisciplinary network MaMSIE, advising on the peer-reviewed journal 'Studies in the Maternal'.

Members of the English Department are heavily involved in collaborative activities which contribute to the research base of English Literature, including membership of editorial boards and advisory groups for prestigious books, journals and research organisations. It is represented on the editorial boards of *The History of Oxford University Press*, the *Cambridge Edition of the Novels of Thomas Love Peacock* and the *Cambridge Works of Jonathan Swift* (providing the General Editor). The unit also includes an Associate Editor of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, an Associate Editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *Oxford Handbooks Online*. The Department has many links with international scholarly journals, housing two journals, *Green*

Letters and Irish Studies Review (both of which were acquired by Taylor & Francis Ltd while based at Bath Spa). Hughes is the editor of *Gothic Studies*, published by Manchester University Press, and Co-President of the International Gothic Association, and other staff are on the advisory boards of the *Charles Lamb Bulletin*, *International Journal of Literature and Psychology*, *London Journal*, *Map of Early Modern Europe*, *Keats-Shelley Review*, *Ecozona* and the University Press of Virginia's *Under the Sign of Nature* series. The Department also includes committee members of the Defoe Society, the Joseph Conrad Society, the Thomas Hardy Country Steering Group, the Oxford Bibliographical Society, Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP), and the Wordsworth Foundation.

English staff organise conferences at Bath Spa and regularly act as plenary speakers outside the University. Other events organised or co-organised by members of the Department since 2008 include the SHARP Annual Conference (2008), and the seminar series for the South West Early Modern Research Network (2008-9). English staff have been plenaries or invited speakers at conferences in Canada, China, India, South Africa, Turkey, the Netherlands, South Korea, Germany, Sweden and the United States. Plenaries include presentations at the National Steinbeck Centre, the ASLE Biennial Conference at Victoria University, Canada, the Sylvia Plath Symposium at Indiana University, the EASCLE conference at Nijmegen University, Bram Stoker centenary events at Trinity College Dublin, the Keats House, Hampstead, the Novel in the Twenty-First Century (Allahabad), the Hazlitt Day School, the Sports History Ireland Annual Conference, and the Wordsworth Summer Conference at Grasmere.

The English Department has close links with many libraries and archives of national importance, such as the Guildhall Library in the City and the London Metropolitan Archive, as well as with more local bodies such as the Holburne and American Museums in Bath. It is developing literary heritage projects with the National Trust relating to Thomas Hardy's homes in Dorset and Coleridge's Cottage in Somerset. There are close links with the Wordsworth Trust and several staff contributed to an exhibition of artists' responses to the poetry (co-curated by Strachan), at the Wordsworth Museum in 2012. This is part of a multidisciplinary artistic approach in the Department, as reflected in Edwards's curation of Wyndham Lewis exhibitions in London and Madrid, and several successful productions of Wright's play *Vanessa and Virginia* between 2010 and 2013.

As plenary speakers, conference organisers, guest lecturers, curators, editors, editorial board advisors, board members of scholarly societies, charities and arts organisations, as the subject of critical enquiry, in media appearances, in interviews and profiles, in contributions to the literary press and national newspapers, in collaboration with researchers in other UK and international HEIs; staff in English and Creative Writing continue to develop the subject base and represent Bath Spa University in British cultural life. Such activities complement the academic excellence demonstrated in the unit, in its three Research Centres and throughout English and Creative Writing.