

5 October 2020



# **English Literature**

# **Year-Abroad Long**

# **Essay Handbook**

## **2020-21**

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# THE LONG ESSAY

[English Literature Long Essay (Modern European Languages)  
ENL110265]

## *INTRODUCTION*

The Long Essay is a piece of independent research scholarship completed for the English Literature part of your degree during the time you spend abroad as a Modern Languages student.

At 40 credits, the Long Essay is the equivalent of two Honours courses and a significant element of your overall final assessment for the English Literature element of your degree. It is therefore a substantial piece of work which should be given care and consideration, and ought to demonstrate an ability to work at the appropriate level for Honours. Although this can initially seem like a daunting and unfamiliar task, in writing your Long Essay, you will draw upon all the skills you have been developing since you started studying English Literature – reading critically, analysing arguments, assessing evidence, and writing effectively.

The topic you choose to focus on is up to you, and you are encouraged to explore not just material that you have studied in the past but any topics, texts and ideas relevant to English Literature that you find exciting (though see Parts 2 and 3 for some more details and advice about how to go about deciding what your focus might be). In consultation with a Supervisor, and with the support of a small Autonomous Learning Group, you will identify a topic, begin your reading, develop a bibliography of secondary sources and get the research underway during the first semester; and, during the second and over the course of the summer, you will continue that research and write a 6000-word assignment that is presented in scholarly form with appropriate notes and bibliography.

This course is similar to the English Literature Dissertation course as it offers you the opportunity to undertake sustained, independent work on material of your choosing, albeit at a slightly earlier stage of their degree. Of course, we recognise that you will not be working on this piece under the same conditions, or at the same point in your degree, as students writing a fourth-year Dissertation, and our expectations and marking of the essay will be shaped by this recognition. It is, though, an opportunity to focus on a topic or texts that you find fascinating and want to explore in depth.

The word limit is 6,000 words, based on the main body of your essay, including all notes but excluding your Works Cited list. For English Literature essays, we do expect you to write as close to that stipulated word count as you can. We do not allow for any built-in margin. Writing to a specific word limit is a very useful skill in later life and this is a really good time to learn it. If your essay falls substantially short of the word length required, it is unlikely to be of the required standard, which will be reflected in the mark.

## ***Part 1: Deadlines and details***

### **1.1 Important deadlines.**

#### **Semester 1: Planning and Researching the Long Essay**

##### **Semester 1, Week 1**

Welcome Session: Course Organiser and all students  
(If possible, this will be synchronous but also recorded for those unable to participate ‘live’, and will be accompanied by written material).

##### **Semester 1, Week 3-4**

*Workshop 1:* meeting between small group of students and an assigned supervisor to discuss proposed topics and set up working relationships.

##### **Semester 1, Week 5**

Submit a 500-word outline of proposed topic and texts to group + adviser.

##### **Semester 1, Week 6-7**

*Workshop 2:* Peer evaluation of proposals: small-group meeting chaired by adviser to discuss projects and proposal ideas.  
(If possible, synchronous via Blackboard Collaborate, but if that isn't suitable for everyone then using the discussion forum on Learn).

##### **Semester 1, Week 8**

ALG meeting between students to discuss progress on and share ‘how-to’ tips for the researching and presenting the annotated bibliography.

##### **Semester 1, Week 9**

Submit an annotated bibliography of up to 8 secondary sources to the group and supervisor.

##### **Semester 1, Week 10**

ALG meeting to feedback on annotated bibliography and discuss plans for developing the work they have done further and begin writing the essay next semester.

##### **Semester 1, Week 10-11**

Optional Individual Advice: students may request short one-to-one meetings with their supervisor to discuss progress and how to approach work in the second semester (especially if their study circumstances will be changing). If there were specific problems with the annotated bibliography that became apparent either during the research or as a result of the ALG meeting, these can also be discussed.

#### **Semester 2: Writing the Long Essay**

##### **Semester 2, Week 1**

Submit an updated plan/outline of topic and a draft Sample of Work or Introduction (1000 words) to small group and supervisor via Learn.

### **Semester 2, Week 3-4**

*Workshop 3:* Peer evaluation of proposals: meeting between small group of students chaired by adviser to discuss the updated material and plan the completion of the essay. (As some students may have travelled abroad, this might not be possible as a synchronous session; written responses and questions submitted via a Learn discussion forum might be a more suitable alternative.)

### **Semester 2, Week 7-9**

*Workshop 4:* final group progress and question session in which students will be able to post and respond to queries about the development of their work amongst their ALG on Discussion Board; the adviser will oversee this and participate as well if they have helpful comments to contribute.

During Semester 2 and over the Summer, supervisors will be available to answer occasional questions should difficulties arise. However, this is the student's project, and they are expected to demonstrate levels of self-motivation and self-organisation commensurate with independent research.

## DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Your Long Essay should be submitted by **2pm on Friday 24 September 2021** electronically to a Turnitin dropbox on the Long Essay Learn page.

## EXTENSIONS FOR THE LONG ESSAY

If you are seriously unwell or suffering serious personal difficulties and unable to finish your Long Essay by the deadline after which late penalties are applied, you must apply for an extension in advance of the deadline. Your application(s) will now be processed by a dedicated Extensions and Special Circumstances Team. See the guidance and the link to the online extension request form here:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/extensions-special-circumstances/continuing-students/extensions-explained>

Extensions of longer than 7 days are **not permitted**. If you are unable to submit work within the extended deadline, it is vital you contact your Personal Tutor immediately with a view to completing a Special Circumstances form. The LLC Student Support team can also help.

For more details about applying for Special Circumstances, see the following link:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/extensions-special-circumstances/continuing-students/special-circumstances-explained>

## PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION OF THE LONG ESSAY

It is University policy to penalise late work.

You must submit your work in advance of the deadline. Penalties are exacted for late submission using the following scale:

after 2 pm on Friday 24 September but before 2 pm on Saturday 25 September	- 5
after 2 pm on Saturday 25 September, but before 2 pm on Sunday 26 September	- 10
after 2 pm on Sunday 26 September, but before 2 pm on Monday 27 September	- 15
after 2 pm on Monday 27 September, but before 2 pm on Tuesday 28 September	- 20
after 2 pm on Tuesday 28 September, but before 2 pm on Wednesday 29 September	- 25
after 2 pm on Wednesday 29 September, but before 2 pm on Thursday 30 September	- 30
after 2 pm on Thursday 30 September, but before 2 pm on Friday 1 October	- 35
after 2 pm on Friday 1 October	zero

## 1.2 Supervision and Support

### The role of Supervisors:

Though the Long Essay is fundamentally an independent piece of work, students are supported by a member of academic faculty who acts as supervisor. Supervisors will be able to give **advice** on practical issues such as: the subject and title of the Long Essay, its organisation and structure, and on source material and a bibliography. Supervisors are not expected to be expert in the specific subject area of the Long Essay, nor to advise about its content or judgements. For advice of this kind, see 2.6 below

Supervisors can be expected to comment upon Long Essay outlines and to offer advice about the bibliography and sample of work in good time (normally within two weeks of receipt). However, a Long Essay is intended to demonstrate students' ability to **work on their own**, and supervisors are **not** expected to direct your work or to comment on any draft of it except the draft sample of work submitted in the first week of semester 2.

(NB Academic faculty will not normally be available to provide supervision outwith the timetable specified above (1.1)).

### Students' responsibilities:

It is up to you to make arrangements to meet your supervisor – within the guidelines provided in 1.1 -- and to submit work no later than the deadlines noted on 1.1. ***If you do not submit material by the stated deadline, your supervisor will not comment on it.***

- You should read the general guidelines on the research and writing process of the Long Essay included in this booklet carefully.
- You should consider further advice about each part of the exercise which will be posted at appropriate times on LEARN and/or by email.

- Specific advice may be sought from fellow students, academic faculty, and, where not available from other sources, the Long Essay Convener.
- You may also wish briefly to contact a member of academic faculty who is **not** your supervisor for specific advice. See section **2.6** below

### 1.3 Submitting your Long Essay

**Copies:** You must submit an **electronic copy** to the appropriate Turnitin drop box on the LEARN site for the course.

**Font:** For legibility, we prefer you to use Arial or Times New Roman or a similar font in 12-point.

**Spacing:** You should use double-spacing and leave ample margins (we suggest 1” or 2.54cm for all margins).

**Page numbers:** Pages should be numbered.

**Length:**

The maximum length of the Long Essay is **6,000 words**.

This total includes the main body of the Long Essay (that is, introduction, chapters, and conclusion) as well as any footnotes and/or the list of abbreviations.

It is also worth noting that Long Essays which fall substantially short of the maximum length are unlikely to have fulfilled the required criteria and may be penalised accordingly.

**NB. The department does NOT operate a plus or minus 10% rule of any kind, at any time. The word limit of 10,000 is precise and definitive.**

The information provided in the para-textual materials (that is, the title and cover pages, abstract, acknowledgements, table of contents/list of illustrations, bibliography/works cited, and any appendices) are **not included** in this 6,000 words; see ‘Presentation and Contents’ below for details on word count limitations for these areas. If citing material in other languages, the translation into English does not count in the final word count either.

**Presentation and Contents:**

The Long Essay should be presented as follows. A ‘Template’ MS Word document, illustrating these presentational requirements, will be available for you to consult/download from LEARN.

- **Title Page.** This should include: Title of Long Essay, Examination number, Name of Degree, Name of supervisor, total word count (according to the rules on calculating word count set out above). **Your name should not appear anywhere on your Long Essay.**

- **Abstract** – a summary statement of not more than 200 words. State the problem or issue or topic being addressed, the key questions examined in the Long Essay and the central claims.<sup>1</sup>
- **Acknowledgments** – if you need to thank any organization or individuals who contributed to your Long Essay.<sup>2</sup>
- **Table of Contents** – listing any chapters/subdivisions in your Long Essay, with their titles and page numbers.
- **List of Tables or Illustrations**, if required. This should correspond to the table or illustration number and give the page number on which these appear.
- **Abbreviations** – if necessary, list any you have used **in references** throughout your Long Essay.
- The main body of the Long Essay
- **Bibliography/Works Cited**

This Bibliography/Works Cited should follow MLA style, as summarised on the Department's 'Stylesheet', to be found in the *English Literature Writing Guide* available on a link from this web page:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/undergraduate/current/handbooks>

Your primary texts (i.e. the literature you discuss) should be listed first, then secondary texts (i.e. critical/background material). If you wish, you may include books you have found useful but not cited in your text, in which case your list should be headed 'Bibliography and Works Cited'. A straightforward listing of Works Cited, though, can be provided if preferred.

Note that the Department's Stylesheet is a deliberately basic guide. If you find that you need further advice on eventualities it does not cover (referencing interviews, or material from other media, for example) the Stylesheet offers a web address from which such advice should be available.

- **Appendices**, if needed.

**When you submit the electronic copy of your Long Essay you MUST:**

- Identify your Long Essay on the Title Page only by your Exam Number (to be found on your student card) NOT by your Name. The Title Page should also mention the Long Essay title, the name of your Degree, the name of your Supervisor and total word count (excluding abstract, bibliography, any appendix).
- Include your Exam Number (but NOT your Name) in the 'Submission title' field which you are asked to complete as you upload your Long Essay to Turnitin. The preferred format is <YourExamNumber>-Long EssayTitle e.g. B012345-HamletLong Essay (It is fine to abbreviate a long Long Essay title.)

<sup>1</sup> NB. The abstract has a *separate* limit of 200 words.

<sup>2</sup> The acknowledgements do not need to be included in the overall word count; however, these should not extend to more than one, short paragraph.

- Please make sure that your name does NOT appear anywhere on the Long Essay itself, so that this electronic copy can be marked anonymously.

Please be especially careful to click on the button to CONFIRM your upload to Turnitin and wait to make sure that you receive a Digital Receipt. You should see the following appear on the screen: "*Congratulations - your submission is complete! This is your digital receipt. You can print a copy of this receipt from within the Document Viewer*". You should also receive an email from TurnitinUK with the subject "This is your TurnitinUK Digital Receipt". If you do not, log back in to View/Complete on the Turnitin dropbox right away and check your Long Essay is there. If it is not, you will be able to upload it. If you have any problems, please contact the Fourth-Year course administrator.

## **1.4 Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:**

Plagiarism is the use of material taken from another writer's work without proper acknowledgement, presenting it as if it were your own. While it is perfectly proper in academic study to make use of another person's ideas, to do so under the pretence that they are your own is deceitful. It is theft of intellectual property. Plagiarism, whether in coursework or examinations, is always taken extremely seriously within the university as it is a form of cheating. Work found to be plagiarised may be penalised, assessed at zero, or not accepted, and may lead to disciplinary action being initiated.

Work undertaken for our courses is designed to help you develop your knowledge and understanding, and your own powers of analysis and argument. Essays, exams and exam essays assess these skills. Plagiarism therefore undermines the whole purpose of the academic study of literature. For all work for the department's courses, it is important to be aware of, and to acknowledge the sources of arguments and words. This applies to material drawn from critical books and lectures, but also from the work of other students (including tutorial or seminar discussions) and from the internet and other electronic sources. Tutors will check web-based material, as well as other sources, where they have reason to suspect that the writing a student submits does not represent their own ideas, words and arguments.

While deliberate plagiarism involves an intention to deceive and is easy to avoid, it is possible to fall unawares into practices which could constitute plagiarism if you are not familiar with the proper means of using and acknowledging material from other writers. Inadequate referencing and inappropriate use of others' material could inadvertently lay you open to charges of plagiarism. You should also be aware that the resubmission of previously submitted work is classed as misconduct, just like plagiarism, and will be treated as such. You can refer to work that you've previously submitted in a new submission, but you need to cite clearly this pre-existing material in your new submission.

Since different subjects involve different uses of material, and may have different conventions about how it should be acknowledged, it is important that in each of their subjects students consult departmental guidelines about the purpose and presentation of written work in that discipline.

Aside from plagiarism, you must also avoid all other forms of academic misconduct. These include **collusion**, the unauthorised and unattributed collaboration of students in a piece of assessed work; **falsification**, the attempt to present fictitious or distorted data, evidence, references, citations, or experimental results, and/or to knowingly make use of such material; **cheating**, the attempt to obtain or to give assistance in an examination or an assessment without due acknowledgement. This includes submitting work which is not one's own; **deceit**, the use of dishonesty to gain an advantage; and **personation**, the assumption of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or gain unfair advantage.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/undergraduate/current/academic-matters/plagiarism>

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct>

## Part 2: Getting started

### 2.1 What is a Long Essay?

Your Long Essay should be an independent piece of work. An undergraduate Long Essay is **not expected to be an original contribution to knowledge**, but it must be original in the sense of being an independent piece of writing, based on wide reading, and giving evidence of your own understanding and analysis of your subject. It usually covers a narrower field than a course based on lectures and seminars, and requires more thorough reading. Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to engage critically and analytically with primary texts and literary criticism. While the Long Essay topic may vary in scope between individual submissions, all Long Essays must have a clear focus with definable boundaries. You will therefore need to find a research question, engage with relevant literature, and plan a schedule.

Assessment is based upon a 6,000-word written paper, which involves an in-depth exploration of a particular topic. ***Remember that a Long Essay carries a 40-credit weighting: this means it is equivalent to TWO of your Core or Option courses.***

### 2.2 General Advice

- On any topic, there are huge numbers of books and articles—both contextual and critical—which you could be reading. Remember that you don't have to read everything. You need to be self-disciplined and know when to stop.
- In guiding your time- and task-management, draw up a list of tasks that you have to do, and draw up a realistic timetable in which to fulfil them. (You should use the deadlines for submission of different elements outlined in 1.1 to help here.)

- Remember that you can't expect to hand in a piece of work and get it back from your supervisor or others in your ALG the next day. Make sure you check the guidelines in 1.1 on this.
- In the first semester, your main aim will be to establish a topic, read your primary texts and explore existing criticism in your chosen field. You should take notes and begin to formulate your argument. (It might help to begin writing at this stage.)
- In the second semester and during the summer, you should have a clear idea of the structure of your Long Essay and set yourself deadlines for covering the necessary materials. Be realistic. There is no point in setting goals that you will never attain. However, you should build in time for slippage as it may take longer to do a particular piece of work than you planned.
- You also need to make sure that you leave enough time for completion of a final draft, and for editing/polishing it. You should aim to complete a final draft at least two weeks before the deadline, leaving the remaining time for editing and for checking – including ensuring that quotations you've used exactly match the original text in the source from which you've taken them. ***Editing and polishing is as important as writing: be sure to leave enough time for this.***

## 2.3 Choosing a topic

This will be discussed in outline in the introductory lecture, and in detail in your first small-group meeting with your supervisor (week 2 or 3, Semester One). You will also find useful advice on different ways of approaching your chosen material in 'Devising your own topic' (Fabb and Durant, 2005; see also 3.1 and 3.3 below). In terms of form, content and structure, the closest model for your consideration might be journal articles or essays in collections.

## 2.4 Further Recommended Reading:

A very useful text on how to go about researching and writing your Long Essay is:

**Nigel Fabb and Alan Durant. *How to Write Essays and Dissertations: A Guide for English Literature Students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Longman, 2005.**

As well as this, the following may also contain helpful material:

Fowler, Alastair. *How to Write*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 2018).

Greetham, Bryan. *How to Write Better Essays*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Taylor, Gordon. *A Student's Writing Guide: How to Plan and Write Successful Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

## 2.5 Contacting Members of Academic Faculty besides your Supervisor

In addition to working with your supervisor, you may wish to seek **specific** advice from another member of academic faculty whose interests align with your topic. You may do so on no more than **two** occasions, either by e-mail or in a 15-minute session during an Office Hour. An up-to-date list of staff interests, contact details, and office hours is maintained at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/staff>. Note that as some academic staff will be on leave for part or all of the year, not all of those listed will be available throughout both semesters.

## *Part 3: Some Frequently Asked Questions*

### 3.1 Range of Material

In terms of scope there is no simple rule for the number of texts to be included, but a study of a single text is **not likely to be appropriate**. If you specify as few as two primary texts, you would need to ensure that there is an engagement with historical, theoretical or cultural contexts sufficient for the essay to constitute a substantial and challenging piece of work. Only in some exceptional cases (such as, perhaps, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Paradise Lost*, or *Ulysses*) would the study of one or two texts alone be sufficient.

Equally, you should be careful to establish the kind of focus within your chosen field that will make the project manageable. You should not attempt a Long Essay that is too ambitious or which cannot be delimited in a way that is appropriate to a 6,000 word exercise in independent study.

Most of all, the Long Essay needs a clearly-signposted argument/case and a sense of direction and purpose. It should combine some close textual analysis with an engagement with broader historical contexts or conceptual ideas. Although your final title might not be phrased as a question, you should nevertheless ask yourself tacitly: ‘what question is it that I am seeking to ask and/or to answer?’ ‘What am I trying to show here, and why does it matter?’ This last point is of particular importance.

### 3.2 Originality

See 2.1.

### 3.3 Use of translated texts and other media

Because your Long Essay is being written for the Department of English Literature, it must be at least 51% on English Literature. In turn, it cannot be entirely on primary works in translation (for example, the plays of Ibsen or the novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez). However, you may include some work in translation in comparison to works in English (to continue the above examples, say, Ibsen and Shaw or Marquez and Rushdie) though translated material should occupy less than 50% of your attention. There are some exceptions to this: for instance, W.G. Sebald, who was an active collaborator in the English versions of

books he wrote in German, or Samuel Beckett, who translated some of his own works from French into English.

Likewise, though you may wish to include analysis of other media, such as film, television, or fine art, any such material should occupy less than 50% of your attention. Again, there are some borderline cases, such as graphic novels or rap lyrics, which might be suitable for study from a literary point of view. If you're unsure whether the material you wish to make a focus of your study is eligible, you should raise this matter with your supervisor at an early stage.

It is general practice in English literature not to put foreign language material into italics in indented quotations but, usually, to do so in in-text references (e.g., 'This line reminds the reader of Virgil's *sunt lacrimae rerum*').

#### 4. Some Final Reminders

*In writing your Long Essay, you will draw upon all the skills you have been developing since you started studying English Literature at University – reading critically, analysing arguments, assessing evidence, and writing effectively and elegantly.*

*The Long Essay requires you to develop your own arguments, focusing on a topic of interest to you.*

*See your supervisor as a resource: their job is not to tell you what to do, or to say 'that's good enough' but to help you make your work better – by helping you focus your question, balance your argument, and write more effectively. It is up to you to raise questions with them, and to obtain from them any advice you need. Always think in advance of any session what questions you would like to be considered.*

*Writing a Long Essay can be challenging, but also very rewarding, and thoroughly deserving of the time and effort.*