



THE UNIVERSITY  
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# MSc Creative Writing

Dr Patrick Errington, MSc Creative Writing Programme Director | November 2024

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# Presentation Plan

- About the MSc in Creative Writing
  - Core Themes
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  - Programme Structure
  - Around the Programme
  - Life Beyond the Programme
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# MSc Creative Writing – Core Themes

- **Reading AND Writing**
  - Students are tasked with reading as a writers, and writing as a readers
- **Collaboration, community, and care**
  - Cohorts are actively engaged in supporting, guiding, and learning from each other, forming and connecting with a writing community, and caring for their peers' work
- **Experimentation, expansion, and exploration**
  - Students are encouraged to experiment, to push the boundaries of their writing, and explore new forms of expression, in addition to honing their specific writerly skills, approaches, themes, and tastes

*'The community has been one of my favourite parts. The department has very warm and encouraging staff. Some of my classmates are now close friends, and we still workshop stories across time zones, and complain to each other about writing - and not writing!'*

*Bhavika Govil, prize-winning fiction writer  
MSc in Creative Writing,  
2020*



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# MSc Creative Writing – Teaching Team

## Fiction

- Jane Alexander
- Lynda Clark
- Kim Sherwood
- Allyson Stack
- Alice Thomson

## Poetry

- Patrick Errington
- Miriam Gamble
- Alan Gillis
- Jane McKie





# MSc Creative Writing – Programme Structure

- 1 (full) year – September to August
- 3 terms (2 teaching terms and 1 dissertation term)
  - Teaching Semester 1 (September–December)
  - Teaching Semester 2 (January–April)
  - Dissertation (April–August)



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# MSc Creative Writing – Teaching Semesters

Creative Writing Core Course		Option Module
Workshops	Seminars	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poetry or Prose</li><li>■ 7–10 students</li><li>■ Multiple instructors</li><li>■ Focus on students' own writing, analysing peer work, sharing feedback</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poetry or Prose</li><li>■ 12-17 students</li><li>■ Multiple Instructors</li><li>■ Focus on writing <b>craft</b> (plot, character, lines, etc.), <b>approaches</b> (historical research, etc.) and <b>forms</b> (sci-fi, ecopoetry, etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Chosen from across the English Literature Dept., wider School (incl. Comparative Literature, Modern Languages, etc.), or University (incl. Edinburgh Futures Institute)</li><li>■ Class size, subject, approach, assessment will vary</li><li>■ Some option modules with dedicated space for Creative Writing MSc students</li></ul>



# MSc Creative Writing – Dissertations

- Final projects are an entirely student-guided creative work of up to 20,000 words (prose) or 30 pages (poetry)
- The writing of these projects usually runs from April to submission date in August
- Students are each assigned a member of the Teaching Team as a supervisor who will advise and help guide the writing of these projects over the summer term



# MSc Creative Writing – Assessment

- Creative Writing Core Courses (workshops and seminars) during the Teaching Semesters are assessed by two Creative Portfolios (submitted in December and April) of approximately 10,000 words / 15 pages
- Option modules will have their own specific forms of assessment
- Final Dissertations make up the last part of the degree assessment





# MSc Creative Writing – Around the Programme

- *From Arthur's Seat* Anthology
  - Annual anthology of MSc CW student work, collected, edited, typeset, printed, promoted by the MSc CW student cohort
- **Writer-in-Residence Events**
  - Our Writer-in-Residence (currently poet/novelist Michael Pedersen) organises 2-3/semester events with renowned visiting writers and literary figures
- **Creative Writing Conference**
  - An annual, end-of-year conference focused on the 'business' of writing, including talks by editors, publishers, writers, agents, as well as chances for 1:1 meetings with agents and publisher



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# MSc Creative Writing – Around the City

## Edinburgh: World's First UNESCO City of Literature

*“Edinburgh isn’t just historic – it’s a modern hub for literature. That’s part of what makes the city great for writing” (Austin Crowley, MSc 2023)*

- Publishers & Presses
  - Canongate, Hachette, Birlinn, Luath, Charco, Stewed Rhubarb...
- Bookshops, Workshops, & Events
  - Lighthouse, Edinburgh Bookshop, Typewronger, Portobello Bookshop, Golden Hare Books, Scottish Poetry Library...
- Festivals
  - Edinburgh International Book Festival, Push the Boat Out Poetry Festival, StAnza Poetry Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Jazz Festival, Film Festival...



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# MSc Creative Writing – & Beyond...

## ■ Publications

- Alumni have gone on to publish books with big international presses (Harper Collins, Canongate, Penguin Random House) and exciting indie presses (Verve, Tapsalteerie, Neem Tree Press, etc.)...

## ■ Prizes

- Alumni have also won several of the top literary prizes, including the Edwin Morgan Award, the Forward Prize, Scottish New Writers Awards, Nebula Award, ALCS Tom-Gallon Trust Award

## ■ Careers

- Alumni have gone on to careers in publishing (including starting their own presses, like Haffme Press), and in other literary magazines, like *The Selkie*, editing, marketing, political speech writing, journalism, arts and creative writing, academia, festival organisation/directing...

**Most of our alumni forge lasting connections, gain first, second, third readers, become creative collaborators, and form lifelong friendships. Most of our alumni are also still writing today!**



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# MSc Creative Writing – Application Process

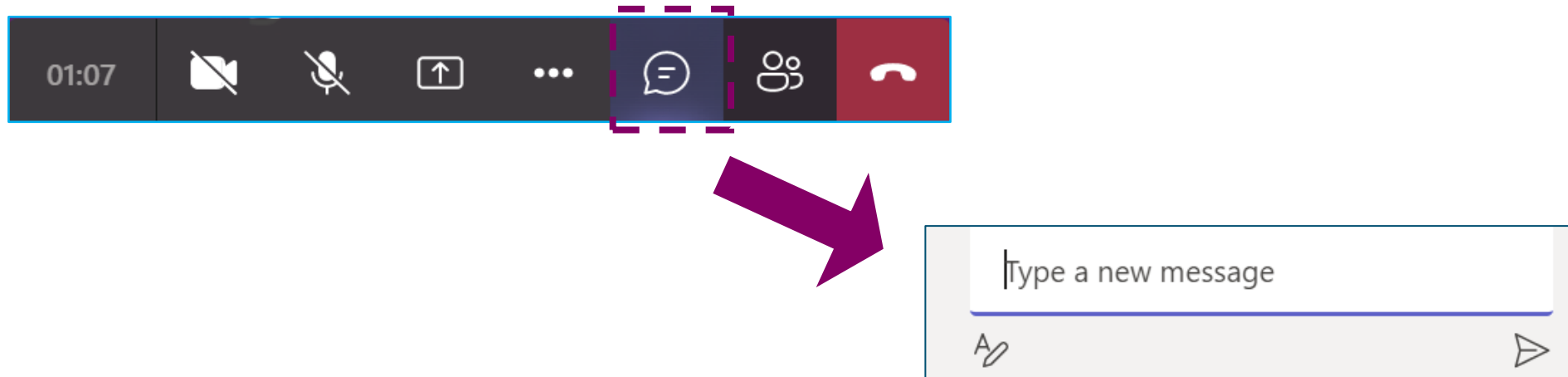
- **Online Form + Supplementary Materials** (letter of reference, academic transcripts, language scores, personal statement, creative portfolio)
- **Personal Statement** (500 words):
  - What do you most hope to learn/gain from a Creative Writing degree, and why is ours the programme for you?
  - Tell us about your writing: what are you interested in and why? Are there aspects of your current practice you're particularly proud of? Things you know you need to work on?
  - What (if any) prior experience do you have of studying Creative Writing?
- **Creative Portfolio:**
  - 2,500-3,500 words (prose fiction)
  - 6 pages (poetry)
- **Selection Deadlines:**

Round	Application deadline	Places awarded by
1	13 January 2025	17 April 2025
2	29 May 2025	30 June 2025



# Asking questions (Microsoft Teams)

- Type your question into the Chat Area



# Next steps...

<https://virtualvisits.ed.ac.uk/pg>



<https://edin.ac/student-chat-pg>



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# Thank you for joining

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