

Periodic Review Report Template

Department and Faculty	Humanities (English Subject Area) Faculty of Arts, Design and Social Sciences
Date of Review	23/24 January 2018
Review Panel (approved by Academic Registry)	Dr. Ann Macfadyen, Acting Faculty Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Faculty of Engineering and Environment (Chair) Dr. Sue Mathieson; Academic Development Officer, Academic Registry (Deputy Chair) Dr Rebecca Mitchell, Senior Lecturer in Victorian Literature and Culture, University of Birmingham Dr. Steve Jones, Senior Lecturer, Arts Design and Social Sciences (Faculty Internal) Dr. Mark Moss, Head of Department, Health and Life Sciences (Non Faculty Internal) Kristy Weegram, Vice President Activities, Students' Union (Students' Union Representative)
Method of Review	This review was conducted using the periodic review procedure defined in Northumbria's Review Framework available from https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/reviewframework/

Notes:

- Review reports are expected to be short and succinct, typically 3 to 4 sides of A4
- Sections highlighted in blue below, together with the header above, make up the published summary of this review. This will be published on the University's Teaching Quality Information web pages (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/ar/qualitysupport/PQI/>)

Section 1	Department Context
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short summary of scope of review – programmes or programme areas included, total student and staff numbers • Short statement of the main aims of the department • Short statement of any necessary contextual information (e.g. physical and organisational location, any recent restructuring etc.) <p>The programmes in the scope of the review take in the English subject area, within the Department of Humanities. The Department includes a new Foundation Year that has been running since 2016/17 that feeds into English and History degree programmes, with 89 currently enrolled students. Undergraduate BA (Hons) degree programmes within the scope of the review consist single honours in English Language Studies, and in English Literature, and several joint programmes (English Literature and Creative Writing, English Language and Literature). They are 256 students, with most students taking single honours. In addition, there are 24 students across other joint programmes within the faculty, BA (Hons) History and English Literature, and BA (Hons) Journalism and English Literature outside the scope of the review.</p> <p>The subject delivers postgraduate programmes in MA English Literature, MA Creative Writing, MA TESOL and MA Applied Linguistics framework and MRes in English Literature. There number of 66 full time students and 25 part-time students currently enrolled.</p> <p>Following progressive increases in academic staffing, at the time of the review the staff numbers stand at 39.5 fte staff (12 fte English Language + 21.5 fte Literature and 4 fte Creative Writing, plus a Leverhulme Fellow), with plans to recruit a further member of staff to the English language team. 93% of teaching staff hold PhDs and 95% are eligible for REF2021 submission, with an ambition for reach 100%. The discipline has demonstrable expertise through its established research groups in Early Modern literature, the Long</p>

Eighteenth Century, Modern and Contemporary literature and culture, Creative Writing and Linguistics. Within these groupings particular areas of strength include Medical Humanities, American literature, Gender Studies, Literary Heritage, Mobility and Transnationalism, and Popular Culture.

All programmes within the discipline were revalidated against the Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards in 2015, hence students are running out on the pre-PFNA version, with undergraduate programmes currently in their final year, with the PFNA version to have its first delivery in 2018/19.

The main aim of programmes within the English subject group is to produce graduates capable of independent critical thinking and who are equipped with excellent practical, communication, research, and transferable skills. Study in literary and linguistic enquiry and creative practice aims to equip students with a deep understanding of the ethics and aesthetics of verbal communication.

Teaching accommodation is based in Lipman Building, where single occupancy offices facilitate one-to-one tutorial teaching. Programmes delivery is predominantly based in Lipman and Squires Annex, Lipman also accommodates a student hub, in addition to student open-access areas in Squires Building and the library.

Section 2	Judgement Criteria	
Focus of judgements	Judgements	Outcome
The setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards	• meets UK and NU expectations,	X
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations,	
	• does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
The quality of students' learning opportunities	• commended,	
	• meets UK and NU expectations,	X
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or, • does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
Information about higher education provision	• commended,	
	• meets UK and NU expectations,	X
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or, • does not meet UK and NU expectations.	
The enhancement of students' learning opportunities	• commended,	
	• meets UK and NU expectations,	X
	• requires improvement to meet UK and NU expectations or, • does not meet UK and NU expectations.	

Section 3	The setting and maintenance of threshold academic standards
<p>The Panel identified the following strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong academic collegiality across the subject area. • Clear commitment to research. • Sustained strategic relationships with cultural partners. • Excellent feedback from external examiners. • Favourable staff-student ratios which allow staff to take part in the institutional sabbatical scheme. <p>The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No recommendations. 	

The Panel made the following observations:

It would be beneficial to clarify the rationale for the proposed single honours in creative writing.

Section 4

The quality of students' learning opportunities

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- Breadth of option modules available.
- The research feeding into the curricula.
- The approach to individualised student guidance, and the strategic investment and dedicated staff hours to underpin this activity.
- The individual support and nurturing of students through an open door approach, which is facilitated by single occupancy offices.
- Recent improvement in levels of student satisfaction within English Literature and in Creative Writing as reflected in NSS scores.

The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:

- To develop a plan to further implement Electronic Management of Assessment of written assessments which ensures consistency across the subject area. As part of this, written assessments should be **submitted** electronically by start of 2018/19 academic year.
- Develop a strategy to raise students' awareness of on-going research and the staff research profile, e.g. promote visibility of staff research profiles within the department, and extend initiatives which already exist within the department such as the "meet your researcher" initiative, and the undergraduate research conference, to further develop student research identities and transferrable skills. Timeframe for this is over 2018/19.

The Panel made the following observations:

- There was no formal recording of student guidance meetings taking place. This type of information could be integrated into learning analytics processes in future
- The value of American exchange programme and Erasmus which enhance the student learning experience, and would encourage further development of international recruitment.

Section 5

Information about higher education provision

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The investment in the Foundation Year course, with collaborative working across the department.

The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:

- No recommendations.

The Panel made the following observations:

- The department has a clear strategy for widening participation.
- The department is developing a holistic recruitment strategy in partnership with schools

Section 6

The enhancement of students' learning opportunities

The Panel identified the following strengths:

- The partnership with New Writing North in the MA Creative Writing programme.

The Panel made the following recommendations and timescales for further development:

- The subject area should make more use of university initiatives to develop learning and teaching,

such as TQEF.

- The department should increase engagement with the HEA fellowship scheme with a view to more fellows and senior fellows within the subject to align with institutional targets. Timeframe for this is over 2018/19
- Develop a plan to further develop Technology Enhanced Learning across the subject area.
- The discipline should revisit the way it is implementing the University Student Engagement Plan.

Timeframe for the above within the next academic year.

The Panel made the following observations:

- Students would appreciate the re-introduction of scriptwriting within the undergraduate creative writing course.
- Students identified survey fatigue and information overload in communications from the University
- The subject has a commitment to embed employability within programmes across the subject area.

Section 7	Further Quality Assurance Monitoring	
	<i>This section is copied from the self-evaluation document to acknowledge actions which the Department/Faculty has already identified and is already actioning.</i>	
Affirmations ¹	Please list any affirmations identified and accompanying actions (<i>add extra rows as needed</i>)	
	Issue	Action
	Responding to new A level curriculum	Redesign of level 4&5 core modules in Literature
	Improving reputation to boost recruitment	Collaborating with Education on Teacher CPD programme
	Supporting students into employment	In conversation with faculty Employability lead to develop bespoke careers support for Humanities programmes
Audit Trails	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MA English Literature – introduction of Distance Learning delivery 2. MA Creative Writing – introduction of research pathway 3. EL5019 Critical Approaches to Language Study 4. AD3015 Exploring the History and Culture of the North East 	
Compliance Checks	Compliance Checks Report submitted confirms programme documentation up to date and quality assurance processes are in place and evidenced against monitoring compliance.	

Section 8	Department Response to Report
Short summary response by Department on follow up action for inclusion in published report:	

¹ examples of developments, planned or in train which seek to address issues previously identified