English

Degree options in the Faculty of Arts

MA (Single Honours degree)
English

BA (International Honours degree)
English (See page 20)

MA (Joint Honours degrees)
English and one of:

- Arabic
- Art History
- Biblical Studies
- Classical Studies
- Classics
- Comparative Literature
- Economics
- Film Studies
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hebrew
- Italian
- Latin
- Management
- Mathematics
- Medieval History
- Middle East Studies
- Modern History
- Modern Languages
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Russian
- Social Anthropology
- Spanish
- Theological Studies
- Theory

English and two Modern Languages

Combinations are available in Arabic, French, German, Italian, Persian, Russian or Spanish (5 Modern Language modules (150 credits) and 3 English modules (90 credits) at Honours). See page 130.

Why study English here?

- In the UK Research Excellence Framework 2014, the School is rated top in Scotland and sixth in the UK.
- In our most recent teaching review, the curriculum was rated ‘broad, well balanced and notable for its generous range of options covering all periods of literary writing in English from Anglo-Saxon times to the present. Students benefit from engagement with enthusiastic, highly regarded research-active staff who are also dedicated to teaching and ensuring students have the best possible experience at St Andrews.
- Members of the School include winners of the Queen’s Gold Medal, the Forward Prize, the Whitbread Prize and the T S Eliot Prize for poetry, the Jerwood Fiction Prize, the Saltire Scottish Book of the Year Award, the Somerset Maugham Award, and a Commonwealth Writers Prize for fiction.
- Varied programme of published authors as visiting speakers, giving students the chance to discuss contemporary literature and criticism with leading modern writers.

 Likely grades considered for an offer

We consider all aspects of every application, including context, equivalent qualifications and the Personal Statement and offers may be higher or lower than the grades stated here.

SQA Highers and GCE A-Levels must include English, English Language, English Literature or Drama.

SQA Highers: AAAB (see specific subject footnotes above)

GCE A-Levels: AAA (see specific subject footnotes above)

International Baccalaureate Points: 38 including HL6 in English (see specific subject footnotes above)

For full Faculty entrance requirements, see page 53.

For degrees combining more than one subject, the subject with the higher likely grades determines the grades you need. You will also need to meet any further subject-specific requirements as outlined on their pages.

For further country-specific qualifications and pre-degree foundation programmes see:
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/international

Do I need previous knowledge of this subject?

- Yes, see above.

What will I study?

St Andrews has a long and illustrious history of teaching literature in English. The School combines expertise in research with a dedication to teaching in a caring and friendly environment. Special research strengths include mediaeval language and literature, the Renaissance, the Romantic and Modern periods, Scottish literature, Creative Writing, and Women’s Writing. Studying English develops techniques that enable you to read with close attention and to consider the ideas, human values, and historical forces that have helped to form our literature. The opportunity to read, to discuss, and to reflect with clarity on a wide variety of texts develops analytical, descriptive, and evaluative skills. You learn to communicate more fluently, lucidly, economically, and persuasively. These skills are both intrinsically enriching and eminently transferable.

In your first and second years the modules in English will take up one third of your time. At Honours, in the third and fourth years, you can do all your work in English or, if you choose to take a Joint Honours degree, you can divide your time between English and another subject. In all four years you will be assessed partly on your coursework, submitted during the semester, and partly on your performance in examinations at the end of the semester. The emphasis in our first- and second-year modules is on introducing texts from the full range of English literary history and methods for interpreting them. At Honours you are able to make choices from the wide range of modules taught by specialists in the School, on subjects ranging from Beowulf to science fiction.
“Having originally applied to read English Literature, the chance to take Philosophy modules at sub-honours ignited an interest in that subject and therefore I am now studying for a Joint Honours degree. I feel that the flexibility of the degree programmes, and the support for any difficulties you may have along the way, is what makes a degree at St Andrews unlike many others. Students are encouraged to embark on an independent journey of academic and self-discovery whilst having access to a network of academic, social and welfare support.”

Francesca (Tadworth, Surrey, England)

English element of your Honours degree

First year (2 x 20-credit modules required)
Culture and Conflict: An Introduction to Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature explores texts in prose and verse, ranging from Wuthering Heights and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde to contemporary Scottish writing. Emphasis is on practical criticism, close reading and the importance of literary/historical contexts.

Explorers and Revolutionaries: Literature 1680-1830 covers, among other works, Gulliver's Travels, Frankenstein, Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads, and looks at travel, colonialism, the Gothic and the Romantic.

Second year (2 x 20-credit modules required)
Mediaeval and Renaissance Texts provides an introduction to the earliest literature in English and the language in which it is composed. The mediaeval element draws on editions prepared by scholars in the School of English, designed to make early texts readily accessible. The Renaissance element focuses on Donne's Songs and Sonnets and Milton's Paradise Lost.

The second year programme concludes with Drama: Reading and Performance, a module that concentrates on the special characteristics of drama as an art form that crosses the boundaries of written text and public performance. The module covers a wide range of plays from the Renaissance to the present, including figures like William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Gregory Burke.

Honours – third and fourth years

There is an exciting range of some 40-45 modules from which to choose, and options may include Chaucer, Scottish Literature, Jane Austen, T S Eliot, Creative Writing, Shakespeare and Film, Beowulf and a wide variety of other topics and approaches to the study of literature written in English. Single Honours students normally take eight modules in the two Honours years. You must include at least one module on mediaeval literature, one module on early modern literature and one other module on eighteenth-century, Romantic or nineteenth-century literature. Joint Honours students normally take four modules in English (including one on pre-twentieth-century literature), and four in another subject. The dissertation, which is compulsory for Single Honours students, allows you to write an extended essay on a literary topic of your own choice.

Several other modules involve creative coursework which – as well as the traditional essay – may involve literary journal-keeping (Literature and Ecology); writing a short play in its entirety (Playwriting); or the opportunity to try a bit of mediaeval forgery (Courtly Literature in Middle English). We aim to provide a range of topics and approaches that allow you to follow your own interests, whether towards specialising in particular authors or periods, or towards wide-ranging exploration in a variety of areas.

Typical class sizes and teaching information

First year: lectures – 240, tutorials – 5-9
Second year: lectures – 150, tutorials – 5-9
Honours: classes generally have no more than 20

Most modules at all levels are taught by a combination of whole-class lectures and small discussion groups, either tutorials or seminars. We aim to give all students in English the chance to discuss their work in tutorials or seminars, since we think that is the best way of teaching and learning. Prospective students should note that candidates who are allowed to write their exams on a computer are not permitted to use Spellcheck.

Typical methods of assessment

Almost all our modules are assessed by a balanced mixture of coursework and written examinations.

Extra-curricular events

The School of English also offers a lively and enriching programme of events open to undergraduate students, ranging from workshops, where creative writers meet to share their work and exchange ideas, to readings and discussions with leading poets, novelists, critics and scholars. Many students become involved in the Literary Society, student drama, or debating.

Study abroad

You may apply to the University's St Andrews Abroad programme. See page 22.

In 2017-2018 Honours students in the School of English may partipate in our Erasmus+ exchange with Trinity College Dublin.

For options available during your intended period of study, as well as information about eligibility, the application and selection process, and costs involved, please see: www.st-andrews.ac.uk/studyabroad

Careers

Recent graduates in English have entered a wide variety of professions and career paths. They have taken up internships with the United Nations, become writers and editors for Penguin Books, Harper Collins, The Times, Country Life magazine, and The Field magazine. They have gone into sales in a number of spheres such as books and music, e.g. Waterstones, W H Smith, and work for charitable organisations (Save the Children), into public policy (Scottish Executive, British Council), and into arts administration (the Barbican Centre, Sotheby’s). A couple of graduates have gone into the financial sector – KPMG and Santander, and one is a head-hunter for a small film company.

A large number of our graduates go into postgraduate study, some to other universities but many remaining with us in St Andrews, especially as the University offers a Recent Graduate Discount. A considerable number of graduates follow careers in teaching in a wide variety of school environments.

See also page 46 for details of the University’s Careers Centre.