Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	English Language and Literature
2	Programme Code	ELLU14
3	JACS Code	Q304
4	Level of Study	Undergraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA Hons)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	Honours
6	Intermediate Qualifications	None
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Arts
9	Department	School of English
10	Other Departments involved in teaching the programme	Not applicable
11	Mode of Attendance	Full-time
12	Duration of the Programme	3 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	March 2019

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The Sheffield degree in English Language and Literature is unique within Britain because of the emphasis it places on interdisciplinary inquiry. Language and literature complement each other perfectly as areas of study: to investigate language is to explore the medium in which literature is written and to study literature is to develop an understanding of cultural context that is invaluable in understanding language. All the core compulsory modules on this degree bring language and literature together in order to investigate the ways in which the two subjects are related. This means that, although the programme is broad, it is also integrated and from Level 1 onwards students are able to see the connections between the different kinds of work they are doing. Five members of staff have particular responsibility for this degree and all five work in interdisciplinary areas involving the study of both language and literature. Students will work particularly closely with this programme team but will also take modules with members of staff from all sections of the School during their time at Sheffield.

The School of English at Sheffield is a large and diverse community and as such it is an exciting place in which to explore the ways in which the different areas of English Studies relate to each other. Alongside the core literary-linguistic modules, our degree offers students the opportunity to choose from a diverse array of modules ranging from sociolinguistics to satire, from language change to the contemporary novel, and from Middle English to film studies. In this way they can experience a rich curriculum and benefit from the insights that both subject areas can provide.

The breadth of the programme means that students of language and literature are attractive to employers when they leave university. Students taking this programme develop a particularly wide range of skills and this stands them in good stead when they enter the job market. Like other students of literature, they are independent and imaginative in their response to problems of interpretation, and sensitive to the contexts in which texts of all kinds are written and read. Like other students of language, they have experience in collecting data, employing technical methods to analyse it, and evaluating alternative forms of explanation. In addition, the interdisciplinary elements of the programme give them experience in drawing together and reconciling different perspectives on issues of various kinds.

The option of studying abroad for a semester provides further opportunities to develop independence and initiative. As with all students graduating from the School of English, graduates in English Language and Literature have excellent communication skills.

| For further details, see the School of English website: http://www.shef.ac.uk/english/ |

16. Programme aims

The following aims of the BA in English Language and Literature are in line with the Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield.

1. To give students opportunities to explore the nature of human language and investigate the different ways in which it can be studied.

2. To encourage students in their enjoyment of and commitment to literature and to enable them both to understand and apply the tools of analysis used in studying it.

3. To explore the interface between literary and linguistic study from a variety of different perspectives.

4. To provide an engaging and stimulating learning environment with a curriculum that is closely connected with the on-going research of those who teach it.

5. To equip students with a range of transferable skills that will prepare them for employment in a wide range of careers with particular emphasis on communication, problem-solving, flexibility, creativity, and self-reliance.

6. To develop students' intellectual curiosity and build confidence in their ability to learn and to resolve intellectual problems for themselves.

7. To enable students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired and to do so using a variety of forms of assessment.

8. To provide a basis for the further study of language, literature, and interdisciplinary approaches involving both subjects at all levels.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding - Upon successful completion of the programme, students will have gained:	
K1	An understanding of the nature of linguistics as a scientific discipline, of the characteristic tools of analysis used within the discipline, and of how those tools can be applied to the English language;
K2	An understanding of language as an aspect of human behaviour that changes, interacts with context, and elicits attitudes and judgements from others;
K3	A critical understanding of a range of literary texts from different periods and in different forms, as well as a knowledge of other kinds of writing and communication (film and theatre, for example);
K4	An understanding of the historical and cultural traditions and contexts in which literature is or was written and read;
K5	A knowledge of how linguistic analysis can be applied to texts, both literary and non-literary, and to other genres (film and theatre, for example);
K6	An understanding of a range of literary and linguistic theory and an awareness of how theorisations of language and literature interact with each other and relate to their historical contexts.

Skills and other attributes - Upon successful completion of the programme, students will have gained:	
S1	The ability to use the tools provided by the discipline of linguistics for the analysis of language structure and use;
S2	The ability to use appropriate methods to gather, record, and analyse linguistic data from live informants, electronic resources, and primary texts;
S3	The ability to employ a range of critical approaches in exploring literary and non-literary texts of different genres and periods;
S4	The ability to apply knowledge of language structure, variation, and use to the investigation of stylistic choice in literary and non-literary texts;
S5	The ability to reflect critically upon literary and linguistic theory, both in terms of its application to texts and data, and in relation to its historical context;

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S6	The ability to analyse, evaluate and formulate critical opinions and arguments, to provide appropriate evidence in support of them, and to reference the sources of evidence that are used;
S7	The ability to communicate effectively in speech and writing and to make appropriate judgements about the style of communication used;
S8	The ability to think analytically and independently, to develop a cogent line of argument, and to reflect critically upon one's own opinions;
S9	Increasing independence, self-direction, and self-management in formulating, investigating, and resolving intellectual problems.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

1. **Seminars and Workshops:** Teaching and learning take place in a range of different contexts but small-group work is at the heart of the undergraduate experience and within this context student develop their knowledge and skills through a wide range of different activities, all of which require their active participation and develop both their skills of oral communication and their ability to work co-operatively with others. The activities that take place in seminars depend upon the disciplinary area that students are exploring and, in some cases, on the optional modules that they choose.

   In the interdisciplinary classes the emphasis is on: applying techniques of stylistic analysis to short texts and film clips, either supplied by the tutor or located by students themselves; discussing linguistic issues in relation to longer texts including novels and films; examining secondary material both critical or theoretical; giving presentations on material prepared during independent study; learning specialist techniques such as the use of IT in textual analysis; reflecting upon the knowledge and skills acquired during the course of the programme. (K1-6; S1-8).

   In language classes the emphasis is on: working through exercises in order to practise techniques of linguistic analysis and responding to data sets provided by the tutor; undergoing practical training in areas such as phonetics; presenting primary data collected by students themselves; comparing and contrasting different theoretical positions; reflecting upon the experience of undertaking research; analysing and interpreting primary texts; giving presentations on research undertaken outside class. (K1-2; S1-2, 5-8).

   In literature the emphasis is on: discussing texts or films experienced during independent study; exploring the philosophical underpinnings of both critical practice and literary theory; examining the application of particular critical practices or theoretical models to the analysis of literature and film; experiencing practical training in areas such as research skills (effective use of the library and of electronic resources) or drama skills (performance, improvisation); presenting research undertaken during private study either in groups or individually (K3-4; S3, 5-9).

2. **Lectures**: Large-group lectures support seminar activities by providing the information and conceptual frameworks necessary for the successful completion of those activities. They also provide a context in which both the skills of the various disciplinary areas and more general skills of argumentation and analysis can be modelled for students. Lecturers may offer discussion of texts or images, work through example problems, or examine the relative merits of different interpretations, theories, or research methods. Other large-group events include screenings of films, often in conjunction with an introductory talk, and attendance at theatre productions. In the lectures that contribute to the interdisciplinary core modules we maintain a high level of interactivity in line with our aim that the core curriculum of this degree should allow students to reflect upon and organise their overall experience of English Studies. We also invite guest lecturers, including graduate students who are undertaking research in related areas and also careers advisors, to contribute to lecture series. (K1-6; S1-6).

3. **Independent Study**: The programme requires students to undertake substantial amounts of independent study and again, much of this work is in preparation for seminar activities. Sometimes students may be required to engage in collaborative preparation, developing skills of negotiation and team-working. They may also make use of electronic resources including module websites providing links to appropriate digital materials and electronic bulletin boards allowing interaction between tutor and students beyond the walls of the seminar room. Our emphasis on independent study is crucial to students' developing autonomy both in relation to the various areas of English Studies and to learning in general. (K1-6; S1-9).

4. **One-to-one Consultations**: Students review completed activities and discuss their plans in one-to-one consultations with members of the teaching staff. Students meet with their personal tutors at least once a semester to review the work of the previous semester and discuss the feedback given by tutors of individual modules. This makes it possible for students to take a more holistic view of their work and review general

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problems arising across modules. (K1-6; S1-9).

5. **Dissertation Seminars**: Students have the option of writing a dissertation in their third year. Those who choose to do so receive training in research skills in order to develop their ability to work autonomously. They also receive training in the communication of research findings in speech and writing. This training is delivered in regular seminars, and students will also consult with their supervisors throughout the semester. They participate in a one-day conference at which they present their work and listen to talks by other students. (S6-9).

6. **Study abroad**: In the second year of the programme, students can opt to spend a semester studying in another country. This presents opportunities to learn about a new culture, to experience valuable new perspectives on the study of English, and to develop independence and self-reliance.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

The wide-ranging nature of the programme is reflected in the diversity of our assessment methods. This diversity ensures that students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate a broad base of knowledge and skills.

1. **Writing**: Every module requires that students produce a written submission and in many cases this written work takes the form of a discursive essay produced over a number of weeks. However, some modules require students to produce other kinds of texts – project reports, learning journals, commentaries, or portfolios of work – and to use the conventions appropriate to these genres. In some modules they may also be asked to produce written work in the context of a formal examination or in response to a twenty-four hour 'take-home' paper. The tasks that they tackle in their written work vary considerably depending upon the module and may include (K1-6; S1-9):

   - Providing a detailed stylistic analysis of a text or group of texts;

   - Writing up practical research projects involving the collection and interpretation of data;

   - Analysing contemporary or historical linguistic data;

   - Interpreting and commenting on primary texts;

   - Evaluating secondary sources;

   - Comparing different theoretical positions;

   - Reflecting upon their own practice.

2. **Speaking**: In some modules there is an oral component to the assessment. Frequently this takes the form of a presentation prepared either individually or in groups, but in areas like phonetics it involves a test in the production and perception of speech sounds. The activities carried out in presentations may include:

   - Presenting research into historical and contextual issues relevant to the texts being studied;

   - Presenting a close analysis of one or more pieces of primary material;

   - Presenting the findings of an empirical research project;

   - Summarising and evaluating secondary material. (K1-6; S1-8 and especially S2).

3. **Developing Independence**: Students are given support and guidance on these various kinds of assessed activity. As the degree progresses they are given more opportunity to choose topics and formulate questions for their assessed work in consultation with the members of staff that teach them. This trend culminates in the opportunity to write a dissertation (10,000 words). (S8-9).

The Department also subscribes to the following statement taken from the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Philosophy and endorsed by the Faculty of Arts and the University: 'Not everything that is valuable can be separately tested, measured or quantified' and 'one of the distinctive benefits of a university education is the development of qualities of personal organisation and time-management which follow from the attribution to students of considerable responsibility in directing their own learning. Independence and self-motivation can be fostered but not taught in academic departments. The depth or extent of such personal qualities cannot be directly examined, though successful acquisition of them is expected to show through in the application of other skills which are explicitly assessed. Difficulties such as these should not inhibit attempts to inculcate or formatively assess such skills as part of a degree programme. (S1-9).

19. Reference points

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The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx

University Strategic Plan
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2011-16)
http://www.shef.ac.uk/lets/staff/lts

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20. Programme structure and regulations

In a degree offering such a broad experience of English Studies it is important that students develop a sense of how the various areas in which they work relate to one another. This kind of coherence is achieved through a sequence of progressively developing core modules, all of which are centrally concerned with relating the disciplines of language and literature to each other, at first at a practical level, and later, as students' progress through the degree structure, at an increasingly philosophical level as well. The 'core' modules which form this sequence focus on (i) the application of linguistic concepts to the analysis of texts, both literary and non-literary and (ii) the ways in which ideas about language relate to ideas about literature and how both kinds of theory relate to their historical contexts. Students are encouraged to draw explicit connections between the material covered in these modules and work that they are doing elsewhere within the School.

In addition to the interdisciplinary 'core' modules, students select further options from the total list of modules available within the School of English. They can take roughly equal numbers of modules in language and literature, or it is possible for them to 'tip' the balance slightly in one direction or another. At Level 1 they follow the foundational modules taken by all students of language and all students of literature. At Levels 2 and 3 there is a 'language short-list' and a 'literature short-list' and at both Levels students are encouraged to choose at least one module from each list. This ensures that all students have the opportunity to engage with central areas of linguistic and literary study as they are conceptualised within the School of English at Sheffield: period study and/or theory in the case of literature, and language structure and/or variation in the case of language. Students also have the opportunity to take unrestricted modules from outside the School (two at Level 1 and one each at Levels 2 and 3).

A rich array of optional modules are offered across the School of English and students can choose broadly from them or they may opt to focus on an area such as film, drama, literature from a particular period, medieval studies, language variation, or language structure. Students may develop their studies in any area by writing a dissertation at Level 3 and in recent years students have often opted to write dissertations in the interdisciplinary area between language and literature.

Please refer to the General University Regulations and the On-line Directory of Modules for detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules.

21. Student development over the course of study

At Level 1 students take foundational modules in both language and literature. In the language modules, 'Sounds of English' and 'Structures of English', they acquire important basic skills and knowledge about the sound system and grammar of the English Language. In the literature module, 'Studying Prose' they acquire a grounding in literary study in terms of author, mode, genre, and history. Having completed these two modules, students take the first of the interdisciplinary 'core' modules, 'Practical Stylistics', which encourages them to develop an understanding of one way in which literary and linguistic study are related in the application of tools of linguistic analysis to literary texts. By the end of the module students have acquired an understanding of basic techniques of stylistic analysis and are able to apply them confidently to a range of contemporary material.

At Level 2 the 'core' modules, 'Writing the Real' and 'History of Persuasion' consolidate work undertaken at Level 1 by encouraging students to apply the tools of analysis acquired in 'Practical Stylistics' to a wide range of textual material. At the same time they require students to develop a more sophisticated understanding of context as a factor in the production and consumption of texts. 'Writing the Real' achieves this by focusing on the often problematic relationship between literature and 'the real world', using a range of theoretical and stylistic approaches,

and 'History of Persuasion' through the comparison of texts that are generically similar but historically distant – Victorian and Contemporary advertisements, for example. In both cases, students develop an understanding of the ways in which ideas about language and textuality themselves form part of the context in which texts are written and read. Students experience material of all periods from the 16th century to the present and from a wide range of genres including novels, advertising, drama, journalism, poetry, scientific writing, and film.

At Level 3 the interdisciplinary core modules require students to develop a more philosophical perspective on the relationship between language and literature. Staff members from the language-literature team offer a range of options, each of them closely related to the research interests of the team member who teaches it. Students take one option per semester. All of these options offer the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between theories of language and literature and the contexts in which both kinds of theory have been explored. In their final semester, students may opt to take a Language and Literature dissertation in place of one of the taught options. By the end of Level 3, students are expected to have developed a reflective position on the nature of interdisciplinarity itself.

Throughout the degree students can also choose modules from both sides of the curriculum, language and literature. Their choices are structured in such a way that they acquire an understanding of linguistic inquiry which becomes progressively both more detailed and more integrated and an increasingly sophisticated understanding of literary analysis. The programme specifications for English Language and Linguistics and English Literature provide further information about the way in which progression is conceptualised in relation to the two disciplines.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available in the University's On-Line Prospectus at http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/

23. Additional information

As with all Sheffield's modular degrees, students may also study in other departments for a limited proportion of their time and regularly take complementary modules in a range of other subjects, including journalism, languages, psychology, sociology, philosophy, human communication sciences, and history. Many students take advantage of this flexible structure to devise programmes that are tailored to their own interests and needs.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.

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