

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Publishing

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Creative Writing
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2027-28
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Publishing Postgraduate Diploma in Publishing
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	Not Applicable
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for full time / part time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No
<i>Excluding a year-long placement/professional experience, are there placement/field trip/work experience(s) totalling 20 days or more?</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA Publishing is part of a thriving postgraduate writing and creative industries community housed within the York Centre for Writing. MA Publishing offers modules which allow you to develop key skills in publishing, critical reflection and creative practice. Wherever possible, class sizes are kept to small, intimate groups to enable collaborative practice so that you can share and workshop ideas. You are provided with the opportunity to understand, analyse and engage with the world of publishing with a focus on the independent sector. Knowledge, context and skills will be put into practice by working on live projects such as the York Literary Review, taking a publication through the entire process from conception to distribution. You will also have the opportunity to deepen your professional skills through a range of exciting opportunities, including meeting with industry professionals as part of your programme. You will also have the opportunity to engage with literary festivals to further develop skills.

The MA Publishing is further distinguished by the integration of publishing with both creative writing and literature. There is a focus on contemporary independent publishing and emerging themes within both

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated; please refer to the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards <https://www.yorks.ac.uk/policies-and-documents/regulations/> for information on standard periods of study

writing and publishing as an industry. This is enhanced through regular engagement with writers and publishing professionals as guest speakers. Practical publishing experience, such as the publication of the York Literary Review and partnerships with local publishers and literary festivals highlights the focus on experiential learning. The diverse syllabi are also informed by research-led teaching.

As well as the taught modules, you will write a final Portfolio under one-to-one supervision, allowing you to produce a sustained, independent project as part of what will become an extensive portfolio of original work, or analytical work by the end of the MA. Depending on your career aspirations, this project can take the form of a work placement with you producing a final report on your experience. You will have the opportunity to work alongside students who are taking the MA Publishing and Creative Writing and the MA Publishing and Contemporary Literature. This enables students to establish firm connections between the publishing industry, creative practice and literary theory.

In addition, York is a fantastic place to be if you love books and reading. There is a rich literary history in the city, and each year, the city celebrates its literary heritage with the York Literature Festival, for which our department organises several events. In recent years, our students have had the chance to attend talks and readings by Margaret Atwood, Susanna Clarke, Jessica Andrews, Julia Armfield, David Almond, Sarah Hall, Carol Ann Duffy, Mark Gatiss, Andrew McMillan, and Lemn Sissay. As part of the York Centre for Writing, you will have the chance to get involved in a wide range of similar activities, as well as the opportunity to attend free workshops, writing sessions, and readings as part of your postgraduate degree experience.

You will gain:

- Enhanced and developed strategies for creative practice in publishing.
- An introduction to a number of contemporary creative and critical texts in a range of forms to enhance your knowledge of texts suitable for a market.
- Critical skills in relation to both the reading, generation, selection, development and publication of new creative texts.
- Critical awareness of the contexts for the production and reception of creative texts.
- A sense of belonging to a community through the York Centre for Writing.
- Opportunity to meet agents, publishers, editors and published authors.

In addition to working on live projects you will have the flexibility to pursue projects that you are passionate about, and will be supported by the expertise of the staff team; projects will be developed and tailored to your learning needs. The staff team of award-winning writers have an exciting and diverse approach to creative writing, literature and publication and are able to supervise a huge range of proposed projects. Staff members are actively publishing their writing in creative and academic forms. The team have expertise in speculative fiction, historical fiction, scriptwriting, screenwriting, adaptation, poetry, experimental poetry, hybrid forms, horror fiction, literary fiction, creative non-fiction (including memoir and true crime), and are able to support work in a number of genres. In addition, the creative writing and literature teams at YSJ have a strong focus on the relationship between critical theory and creative writing and the intersection of a number of theoretical perspectives with creative practice and publishing, including eco-criticism, psychoanalysis, biopolitics and regionality and the importance of these themes to an audience. Members of the team have undertaken interdisciplinary and collaborative research exploring music, memory, medicine, uncanny landscapes and pollination. There are also members of the team who specialise in teaching and researching publishing as an academic discipline.

You are encouraged to take a professional approach and attend the variety of events provided by the York Centre for Writing and the School of Humanities, which include visits from agents, publishers, editors and writers and fosters an important sense of belonging and community.

Special Features:

- The integration of publishing with literature and creative writing.
- A focus on contemporary publishing and emerging trends and themes within the industry.
- Research-led teaching in diverse and inclusive syllabi.
- Members of staff, who are practicing, published, award-winning writers in a range of forms and genres including: creative non-fiction; fiction (short stories/novels); script (radio, screen, stage), contemporary poetry. Members of staff who have a range of critical interests including contemporary publishing cultures, micropress publishing, climate change, motherhood, body politics, northern writing, experimental poetry, history, science, speculative fiction, and historical fiction.
- Small teaching groups of students wherever possible to allow for in-depth discussion and the development of collaborative practice.
- Working on a live project in the form of the York Literary Review from conception to publication and distribution.
- Modules which develop creative and critical skills but also develop professional skills in terms of publication experience and transferable skills development.
- A focus on the relationship between critical thinking, publication, contemporary literature and creative writing.
- The York Centre for Writing. The Centre acts as a hub for a number of exciting writing events, projects and publications in collaboration with Valley Press, The [York Literature Festival](#), and other community partners. In the past we have welcomed authors such as Juno Dawson, Julia Armfield, Sarah Hall, Michel Faber, Daljit Nagra and Margaret Atwood, who have inspired students and members of the local community alike.
- The Centre curates two print publications, [Beyond the Walls](#), our student anthology, and [The York Literary Review](#), our international creative writing journal, both published by [Valley Press](#) and providing commissioning, editing and publishing experience to undergraduate and postgraduate students. We also manage the [Northern Independent Press Collection](#), supporting independent presses based in the North of England;
- Opportunity for one-to-one meetings with an agent/publisher, alongside regular engagement with visiting speakers from the publishing industry.
- Possible progression to the MFA, taught on a one-to-one supervised basis (low residency) for those wanting to continue to complete a full-length work (novel, collection, script) – only offered at a small number of UK universities.
- Possible progression to PhD in Creative Writing or Literature or Creative Practice if appropriate. PhD study in Publishing is also an option.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage. In addition:

- MA candidates have usually already excelled at BA study; we therefore normally require a BA degree at 2:2 grade or higher (or equivalent). We are open to considering previous degrees in the Humanities, Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences or other related subjects

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aim(s)

- To empower students to conceive, create, and deliver innovative publishing projects from idea to distribution.
- To cultivate connections with publishers, agents, editors, and authors shaping the future of the industry.
- To develop the creative, technical, and strategic skills essential to thrive in a rapidly evolving publishing landscape.
- To foster a critical and theoretical understanding of publishing as a dynamic cultural, economic, and intellectual practice.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 Critically reflect on the nature of the literary text and its production in relation to wider political, social and cultural contexts.
- 7.2 Deal with complex issues, creatively and systematically, through collaboration on a publication from conception to distribution,
- 7.3 Proactively formulate employability skills through the effective communication of original ideas to appropriate audiences.
- 7.4 Demonstrate specialist, in-depth knowledge of contemporary publishing with an emphasis on the independent publishing sector
- 7.5 Critically analyse the worlds of contemporary publishing
- 7.6 Exhibit originality and independent scholarship in the development of an independent research project
- 7.7 Advance their knowledge and understanding of the contemporary publishing landscape in relation to its historical development.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Term	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
CRW7040M	7	1	The Journey of the Book: the Publishing Process	30	C	X
CRW7041M	7	1	Publishing Then and Now	30	C	X
CRW7042M	7	2	The Business of Publishing	30	C	X
CRW7043M	7	3	Publishing Project*	30	C	X
CRW7045M	7	2&3	Practical Publishing	60	C	NC

*Placement/Internship or project work can take place at any point within the academic year. Semester 3 is allocated as the module assessment period.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

You will be taught via peer workshops aimed at supporting collaborative practice. The nature of the workshops will vary by module. *Practical Publishing* will be driven by you with tutors facilitating and advising you about your decisions and the application of skills developed in concurrent modules. Publishing modules will be delivered by a combination of practitioners and York St John staff to impart current knowledge and practice in publishing. The modules are portfolio-based and involve aspects of practice and reflection on practice.

The *Journey of the Book* examines the practical process of publishing from conception to distribution; as part of this module you will learn about the production of a book and key roles in the process. This module is followed by *Publishing Then and Now* which examines the changing nature of the publishing industry, examining key moments historically that have shaped the world of publishing as it is now. This is followed by *The Business of Publishing*, which examines fundamental issues such as intellectual property and copyright. Alongside this and running throughout the year is the 60-credit module *Practical Publishing* which will focus on the publication of the York Literary Review (YLR) in addition to creative industries activities. The module will be timetabled in relation to the natural points in the publishing process. The project will start in October with the *Practical Publishing* module being completed in June. This module will equip you in practical skills in publishing, such as the use of software, as well as collaborative skills in commissioning, editing, typesetting, etc. Those of you undertaking the degree part-time will have the opportunity to work on a variety of publishing projects with full time students and second-year part-time students taking more substantive roles.

In the third semester you will undertake a project module which can take the form of, for example, collaboration with a writer, a critical research paper or a work placement. This project is introduced early in the programme to give you maximum time to prepare and negotiate with a supervising tutor.

Assessment balances the acquisition of skills essential to the world of publishing whilst offering flexibility in the choice of (for example) publishers for analysis and the form of final project undertaken. We provide the opportunity for you to reflect in a written form and a verbal form on the progress and development of a practical project. Our reading lists are diverse and innovative, often promoting the work of authors who have been marginalised and the publishers who champion them. This is an important element of our ongoing work to decolonise the curriculum. The contemporary focus of the MA encourages this approach, given that both texts and approaches to writing and discussion ask students to situate their practice and study within wider political, environmental and cultural contexts. There are no specific set assessment questions, so students are free to create their own central thesis questions in line with the brief. This encourages students to develop their own paths of interest.

The School's inclusive learning policy asks that all teaching materials are made available to you 48 hours in advance of class, and this approach is central to our teaching on the MA. Reading lists are usually available several months in advance and the programme team ensures that all assessment types and tasks are accessible to all students. The MA has a special induction event each year to welcome all new students and explain the general approach to inclusivity and diversity, and what this means in terms of contemporary literary cultures.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [regulations](#) for postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section

as non-compensable.

In addition, the following programme-specific regulations apply in respect of progression and graduation:

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: