Programme and assessment design in graduate outcomes
City’s BA English

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The ‘how’ of employability in the undergraduate curriculum

Case study: BA English, City, University of London

Concluding points
City’s BA English

- City’s mission: ‘Academic excellence for business and the professions’
- Launched 2016-17, first cohort graduated 2018-19
- City’s second Arts & Humanities UG award (BMus)
- Drew on MAs in Creative Writing and Publishing, and adjoining BAs in Journalism and Sociology/Media
What do publishing employers want…?

- collaborative skills
- hybrid skills
- multi-skilling
- self-directed learning
- personal attributes:
  
  ‘flair, confidence, capability, ambition and vision.’

(Skillset, 2009, pp.77-78)
Publishing MAs

Industry/alum project sponsors

Reflective practice

Group marks/feedback
Part 1 (core)

EN1001 Fundamentals of Analysis and Criticism
EN1002 Literature in Historical Context
EN1004 Forms and Performances of Creative Writing
EN1005 Developing Creative and Professional Narratives
EN1006 The Novel, Authorship and Creativity
EN1007 Postcolonialism

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Part 2 (core + electives)

EN2001 Shakespeare: Authorship, dramatic texts and audiences
EN2002 21st Century English and Digital Writing
EN2003 Creative Writing Workshop
EN2004 Contemporary Genre Fictions
EN2005 Romanticism
EN2006/7 Reading London 1 & 2
EN2008 Web Creation and Digital Storytelling
CC2007 Work Placement + 4 Journalism / Music electives
### Part 3 (core and elective)

- EN3001/2/3 Major Project: Dissertation/Professional Portfolio/Creative Writing
- EN3005 Literary Journalism
- EN3006 Publishing in the Digital Age
- EN3007 Global English and English Language Teaching
- EN3008 Intercultural Studies: Writing the Global City
- EN3009 American Screenwriters
- EN3010 Writing Women
- EN3011 Place and Space + 1 Journalism and 1 Music options

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- EN3001 EN3002 EN3003 EN3005 EN3006 EN3007 EN3008 EN3009 EN3010 EN3011
Modules with direct reference to writing, publishing / digital media and work-related projects or experience:

- Creative and professional **writing**, including journalism, publishing and writing reviews
- **Digital** writing and website prototyping
- **Publishing** and **journalism** projects
- Preparation for an **ELT** teaching qualification
- A **placement** or **professional project**
‘Employability’ assessments in academic modules:

■ **Level 4:**
  - Write + perform a **play**
  - **Diary + group project** / presentation
  - **Podcast**

■ **Level 5:**
  - Group **presentations**; creative + analytical **writing**
  - **Portfolio: book reviews** + materials for a **publisher’s book launch**
  - **Portfolio: blog**, newspaper/magazine **article**, literary **guide**; **podcast**

■ **Level 6:**
  - Analytical essay or creative **writing**
  - **Poster + oral presentation**
What did the students say?

‘100% satisfaction, joint top in UK NSS:

BA English at City is ranked joint 1st in the UK, and ahead of any other English programme in London, for student satisfaction.

100% of our graduates are satisfied with their degree
100% of our graduates think we make the subject interesting
100% agree that we value their views about the course
100% agree that academic staff are good at explaining things
100% agree it is easy to contact academic staff.

Source: National Student Survey 2019’

(City website, October 2019)
My experience at City, University of London is one I will never forget.

If you had told me when I first came to City what I would go on to achieve throughout the course, I would have laughed at you.

I graduated from the BA (Hons) English course in 2019 with a 2:1, my own children’s picture book series, a successful blog, friends for life and a job working in a children’s publishing company.

City gave me the stepping stones to my first job, in an industry I have long since dreamed of working in, and my experience working as a Student Ambassador was invaluable and boosted my confidence greatly.

I wholeheartedly believe that I would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for the incredible support of the BA English team. They helped me believe in myself, my abilities and gave me every opportunity to succeed, even at times when it did not seem possible.

- Imogen Marshall
Conclusions for discussion

- Satisfaction + Employability impact ✓
- Largely WP, BAME and female students ✓
- Pre-dated TEF but aligns to aims ✓

Some reflections:
- disciplinary assumptions / interdisciplinarity
- ‘research v teaching’? → responsibility for employability?
- assessment: habits / workloads / scale → impact
- legacy courses/cultures…?
- scaleability?