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RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

APPLICATION INFORMATION & FORMS

MA in Creative Writing

Rhodes University

Rhodes University's MA programme in Creative Writing is committed to innovative approaches to literary production that expand the possibilities of writing. At once critical and creative, the programme emphasises the essential relationship between reading and writing. There are full time and part time study options. The full time, full residency option runs for one year every year, and the part time, low residency option over two years every second year.

Admission requirements: Students need an Honours degree in any discipline or the equivalent (e.g. a 4-year B. Journ degree). If a candidate lacks the necessary formal qualifications but has an extensive publication record or outstanding potential as a writer, admission as an *ad eundem gradum* candidate may be possible.

Applications: Application should be made on the standard MA application form at the end of this document or downloadable from the Rhodes University website here. A 25-page portfolio of creative writing must accompany the application and the combined forms can be emailed to registrar@ru.ac.za or posted via Registered or Insured Mail to: The Registrar, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140, South Africa.

The application fee is R100 (one hundred South African Rand). Closing date for applications is the end of October.

Course fees: The course fee changes every year, and can be found at www.ru.ac.za/applying/fees/ under the first general heading of "All Faculties other than as specified below". Part time students pay the full fee for each of the two years. If a student drops out or fails to fulfil the programme requirements, fees are not refundable.

Course Materials: There is a non-refundable fee of R300 for course materials payable directly to the MACW during your orientation week. This is a token payment for photocopied materials you will receive during the course of your study. It is also a contribution to maintaining the MACW library of books that will be made available to you during the course of your study.

Bursaries and funding: There are a limited number of scholarships for full time students covering both fees and living expenses, provided by the Mellon Foundation. Contact the Rhodes office of Postgraduate Funding (pgfunding@ru.ac.za) for an application form. The closing date for these scholarships is the end of October, the same closing date as applications to the course itself

Postgraduate bursaries in creative fields including creative writing are offered by the National Arts Council, www.nac.org.za or 011 8381383. These are offered for a brief period in September (best to check by phone exactly when this will be) before anyone knows if they have been accepted to the course. However the NAC allows bursary applications to be submitted followed by later confirmation of acceptance.

The Rhodes Postgraduate Funding office provides loans, normally covering fees only, and only for full time students. Contact as above.

Course structure (full time): The seminar programme is structured by each teacher's own creative interests and expertise. Each weekly cycle starts with a Monday seminar and culminates in an assignment set for Friday peer feedback sessions where drafts are discussed. The student has the weekend to re-write the piece in response to the feedback, and hand it in.

The full time course is divided into two semesters. In the first semester the emphasis is on exploration through various coursework assignments, on intensive creative reading, and finding a

writing discipline and rhythm that works for each student. There is one on one supervision every week as well as a weekly reading group. Halfway through the first semester students choose the coursework stream in their preferred genre, and begin to work on their theses.

In the second semester students continue their theses without coursework but with regular meetings with their supervisors. The thesis has to be a minimum of 30 000 words for a prose project, 40 poems for a poetry project. No thesis may exceed 80 000 words.

Course requirements: Students are required to record their ongoing experience as writers in a reflective journal, which is sent regularly to their supervisors as part of the supervision dialogue. In the journal they reflect critically on their learning experiences, comment on the coursework assignments, and discuss their reading.

Upon acceptance to the course in early December, students are provided with a short reading list which they have to investigate over the two months before the course begins. At the start of the course proper, students are then given an extensive modular reading list which they will adapt to their needs in close consultation with the course coordinators. They are given assignments to write creative reviews of various books read during the year, which are incorporated into their reflective journal. A related assignment requires students to research contemporary South African writing via literary journals, using the unique resources of the National English Literary Museum in Grahamstown.

Students are encouraged to submit work to external journals and magazines for publication during the course so as to learn how to deal with the range of responses typically expected from editors. The course magazine, Tyhini, is published every year, featuring a selection of work produced by students. There are readings at schools and other public venues during the course, as well as during the National Arts Festival and at the launch of the student magazine.

Course structure (part time): [Please note that applications for part time study are not open this year].

The part time course accepts candidates in even years with applications taken in October of the preceding (odd-numbered) year. The part time course follows the same curriculum as the full time course, split into four semesters:

Year 1 first semester: the same coursework structure of the full timers is run over 16 teaching weeks – that is, a seminar and assignment every two weeks. The seminar consists of an audio recording of the full time seminar and its assignment, uploaded on Mondays as an mp3 file via Rhodes University's online learning portal, RUconnected. Students have the rest of the week to engage with the seminar and to produce a first draft of their assignment which is then discussed in small groups of 4 or 5 using a combination of written comments and an audio group feedback session. After the comments they submit a final version. Reading groups are held every second week when students read published fiction or poetry texts in an online audio group and respond.

Year 1 second semester: coursework continues, but in addition, as with the full time course, students choose a genre stream and begin their thesis. The seminar-assignment cycle focuses on the thesis with its assignments feeding into aspects of the project.

Year 2: students continue their thesis with their supervisors. A draft is handed in at the end of August and the final version in November.

Intensive weeks in Grahamstown: Part time students are required to spend three separate weeks in Grahamstown in February and July of their first year, and one week during their second year (usually April), and arrange to cover their own accommodation and travel. In these intensive weeks, they meet each other, teachers and potential supervisors, and the full time students. They participate in writing, reading and feedback sessions, and take part in a writing excursion.

Assessment: Final assessment to award the degree is done by two external examiners per student. The weighting of the assessment is 70% for the thesis and 30% for the portfolio of excerpts from their reflective journals, coursework assignments, essays and book reviews. The MA final mark is awarded in three categories: pass, fail, or pass with distinction.

Course dates: The MA course dates do not coincide with the university terms and holidays. Exact dates supplied closer to the time.

Full time course starts: First or second week of February.

First intensive week: for all students, part time and full time, as well as all teachers. This is usually held in the last week of February. Students are required to attend from Monday 9am to Friday night, that is, to be in Grahamstown by Sunday night and to leave on Saturday.

Full timers Easter break: April.

National Arts Festival: July.

Second intensive week: July.

Third intensive week (part timers' second year): April

Full timers draft thesis + portfolio deadline: 15 September.

Full timers final (examination) thesis + portfolio submission: 15 November.

Part timers draft thesis + portfolio deadline: 31 August

Part timers final (examination) thesis + portfolio submission: 15 November.

Staff:

Programme Coordinator: Paul Wessels

Staff: Stacy Hardy, Mxolisi Nyezwa, Lesego Rampolokeng, Mangaliso Buzani, Robert Berold, Paul Mason, Marike Beyers.

MACW enquiries: macw@ru.ac.za

<http://www.ru.ac.za/isea/macw/>

ISEA office administrator: Carol Leff (isea@ru.ac.za)

ISEA secretary: Nomangesi Kelemi (Tel 046 603 8565)

I think I am the doppelgänger whom, until I appeared, African literature had not yet met. And in some sense I would question anyone calling me an African writer. Either you are a writer or you are not. If you are a writer for a specific nation or a specific race, then fuck you. In other words, the direct international experience of every single living entity is, for me, the inspiration to write.

—Dambudzo Marechera

I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm frightened of the old ones.

—John Cage

There's many a best-seller that could have been prevented by a good teacher.

—Flannery O'Connor

FAQ

What does “innovative” mean?

innovative adj. /'ɪn-əˌveɪ-tɪv/ 1. being or producing something like nothing done or experienced or created before. 2. ahead of the times. 3. (of ideas and methods) new and different; fresh, clever, having/using or showing new methods or ideas; original, modern, new, novel, innovational

مبتكرة مبتكر؛ إبداعي؛ كاري؛ إبتد

What is the application deadline?

The application deadline is the end of October of the year before the course starts.

Where can I find an application form?

At the end of this document.

When will I know whether or not my application was successful?

You will be informed by email or phone by mid-November.

Do you accept emailed applications?

Yes. These must be sent to registrar@ru.ac.za before the end of October, together with your writing portfolio and scanned certified copies of your academic certificates (as well as a copy of your marriage certificate if your maiden name was different).

What must I pay?

You must pay a registration fee of R100 to Rhodes University; your course fees, also to Rhodes University; and a course materials fee of R300 directly to the MACW when you arrive in February.

Can my portfolio be a combination of different genres, say prose and poetry? Is there a minimum or maximum length?

Yes, it can be a combination, but you should weight it in favour of your preferred genre. Minimum length 20 pages and maximum 30 pages.

Is there a preferred style (font and spacing) for the portfolio?

For readability, we prefer a 12 point font and single spacing. Preferably start each piece of writing on a new page.

I have written a 25 page short story. Can I send this as my full portfolio?

Yes, but it would improve your chances if you demonstrated some variety. Rather send an excerpt from your story together with other pieces of writing.

Is the course for writers in English only?

The 16 week coursework section is taught in English, and the assignments must be written in English. However the extended creative writing project can be written in either English, Afrikaans or isiXhosa and will be supervised in that language.

Can I send in writing in different languages in my portfolio?

Yes, English or isiXhosa or Afrikaans or a combination.

I have not done any “creative writing”, but would my journalistic writing be eligible for the portfolio?

Creative non-fiction or narrative journalism is considered creative, i.e. writing which incorporates the techniques of fiction such as character, dialogue, description, narrative. If you are going to include journalistic pieces, best to send those that demonstrate these features. Please note that we prefer not to focus on non-fiction unless it forms part of a hybrid approach to genre.

I have been working on a novel for the past two years. Would I be able to get guidance on it from my supervisors and finish it as my thesis project?

No. All writing submitted for the course must be written while on the course. We would expect you to write a new work as your thesis project. When the course is over, we would advise you to go back to your earlier manuscript and apply the new skills and insights you have learned on the course.

I have taken some creative writing courses in the past and I have written and published two books. Could these be considered as credits so that I do not have to do the coursework part of the MA?

No. We consider the coursework to be absolutely essential, even for experienced writers. Every teacher brings a different approach and at least some of these approaches will be new to you. The coursework assignments will bring you feedback from your teachers and fellow students which will give you fresh insights into your writing.

What does 'full time' actually mean? Would I be able to do the full time course if I lived in Pretoria?

No, full-time means studying full time and based in Grahamstown (February to November). You will have to attend seminars and feedback groups and meetings with teachers and supervisors every week.

What does 'part time' actually mean?

Part time students complete the programme over two years, working mainly from home. They attend two week-long contact sessions in Grahamstown in the first year (February and July), and one in the second year (April). Teaching is done through audio recordings, and course assignments are submitted electronically, followed by online comments and audio interaction in small groups.

Are there any conditions attached to part time study?

Yes. In addition to the above, if you are accepted onto the part-time course you agree to the following: that you will connect to the internet via an ADSL or better connection; that you will make use of a headset with microphone; and that you will participate in the online sessions from a quiet environment.

What bursaries or financial assistance is offered?

We have a limited number of full scholarships courtesy of the Mellon Foundation. Mellon MA in Creative Writing Scholarships are limited to full time study by South African applicants only. They are awarded on the basis of financial need, creative writing ability, and equity considerations. Contact the Rhodes office of Postgraduate Funding (pgfunding@ru.ac.za) for an application form. Your writing ability will be assessed from the writing portfolio that you send with your application. The value of each scholarship is approx. R90,000. See info about loans and NAC bursaries on p1.

If I am a part time student, what happens if I cannot attend the intensive writing weeks in Grahamstown?

The contact weeks in Grahamstown are compulsory. Besides the teaching done in those weeks, they are essential for meeting and engaging with your teachers and fellow students, and potential supervisors. Students are required to attend from Monday 9am to Friday night, that is, to be in Grahamstown by Sunday and to leave on Saturday.

If I am a part time student, will the course pay for my accommodation and travel for the Grahamstown intensive weeks?

No. We will try to help you to find reasonably priced accommodation and transport, but you will have to organise and pay for accommodation and travel yourself.

Is there anywhere I can see the work produced by previous students?

Yes, you can buy past editions of our magazine Tyhini, which features work from all students taking the course in any particular year. Available from the course administrator (macw@ru.ac.za) for R200 (price may vary, and will include postage).

Are any of your **immediate** family Old Rhodians?
(e.g. mother, father, siblings etc)

Please ✓ *where relevant*

Yes	No
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NAME: _____ Student No:

NAME: _____ Student No:

Are any of your **immediate** family currently registered at Rhodes? ✓

Yes	No
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If "YES" please give their student number(s)

Please indicate any disability: ✓

A	Diabetic	B	Blind	C	Cerebral Palsy
D	Deafness	E	Behavioural/Psychological	H	Partial Hearing
I	Partially Sighted	L	Intellectual (Learning Difficulty)	P	Paraplegic
Q	Quadriplegic	S	Speech Defect	T	Communication (Talking/Listening)
W	Wheelchair	Y	Dyslexia	Z	Physcial (Moving/Standing/Grasping)
U	Unspecified	M	More than one disability		

You are required to provide this information about your disability at the time of your application.
If you do not, the University cannot undertake to provide reasonable assistance.

PROPOSED REGISTRATION

Full-time ✓ Part-time

In attendance? ✓ Yes No

Choice of degree (e.g. MA) _____ in the Department of _____

Subject _____

(Applications for MA in Creative Writing should be accompanied by a 20-page portfolio of creative work)

Degree by ✓ Research thesis Coursework and thesis/research project Coursework only

Proposed supervisor (if you have one): _____

Proposed field of research or thesis title: _____

(For MA in Creative Writing please indicate the genre of writing, e.g. novel, poetry book or play)

All postgraduate applicants are required to submit with the application form a full official academic transcript reflecting the detailed results, including percentage marks, of all previous qualifications and the award of degree(s). Copies of degree certificates do not constitute an academic transcript.

Applicants who at the time of application are completing a degree requisite for admission, should submit all available academic results on application, with submission of the full/final academic transcript as soon as this is available. Rhodes students do not need to submit Rhodes transcripts.

Married women: where your previous qualifications are in your maiden name, please supply a copy of your marriage certificate for record purposes.

Have you attached your academic transcripts? ✓ Yes (if not your application cannot be considered.) Have you attached your deposit slip or proof of payment of the application fee? ✓ Yes

No

**NB: DO NOT NEGLECT TO SIGN THE DECLARATION AND AGREEMENT ON THE NEXT PAGE
THE FORM WILL BE RETURNED IF IT IS NOT SIGNED.**

BANKING DETAILS FOR RHODES UNIVERSITY

FNB Bank Grahamstown
Account Name: Rhodes University
Account Number: 62145504553
Branch Code: 210-717
Swift Code: FIRNZAJJ

Attach a copy of the Deposit Slip to this Application Form.

OFFICE USE ONLY		
	DATE	SIGN
1. Captured		
2. Form Checked		

DECLARATION AND AGREEMENT

I/We, the undersigned, hereby declare that:

To the best of my/our knowledge and belief the information furnished in this application is true and correct and that if it be found to be false, and misleading in any respect, this application may be invalidated and the applicant's registration terminated; and further agree:

That I/We accept liability for damage to University property howsoever caused by the Applicant and indemnify the University against any loss or damage howsoever caused in respect of property left at the University by the Applicant. I/we also indemnify the University against any claim whatsoever for damages howsoever caused or arising which the Applicant may sustain whilst registered as a student at the University, acknowledging that the Applicant's participation in any sporting or other activity at the University or conveyance of the Applicant in any University vehicle, shall be at the Applicant's sole and absolute risk. This indemnity shall be binding on the Applicant's Executors and Heirs:

That I/We acknowledge that a Minimum Initial Payment (MIP) is required by mid-January each year, including the first year of study, unless satisfactory arrangements have been made with the University. Details of the MIP amount will be included in future correspondence with the applicant:

That a statement signed by the Registrar (Finance) shall represent the amount owing to the University by me/us, and further that in the event of such amount being handed over for collection I/we shall pay all legal charges incurred on the attorney and client scale:

That I/We will pay interest on all overdue fees, and disbursements at the rate of 2% per month compounded monthly and calculated from the first day of each month following the date by which final payment of all fees and disbursements must have been made:

That I/We shall abide by all regulations of the University - and further that the applicant shall, if accepted, be under the disciplinary control of the University as from the date on which he/she takes up residence at the University or the day on which he/she commences studies or attends an orientation week or summer school or similar function or registers as a student, whichever is earliest, until the University accepts a notice of withdrawal from me/us or the applicant fails to renew his/her registration on the due date, whichever is the later:

That I/we accept and understand that the University keeps documents, including this Declaration and Agreement, electronically and distributes them as such. The University shall at all times be entitled to utilise such documents in electronic format for whatever purpose required and I/We agree that the electronically generated documents shall replace the originals signed by me:

That although the University does not take any responsibility for informing parents or guardian or major fee contributor of disciplinary action against a student (whether pending or finalized), academic performance or any other matters relating to the student, the University may in its discretion report to the parents or guardian or major fee contributor such breaches of the rules by the applicant as the University deems necessary and further to report on any matter concerning progress, conduct, well-being or health of the applicant, and further that the University may take all such steps as it considers reasonable in the event of the applicant becoming ill or requiring medical attention without the University undertaking any legal obligation to do so.

Signature _____ of _____ applicant: _____

Signature of person responsible for fees (if not applicant: _____

Date: _____