

Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026–27

Undergraduate Certificate in English Literature – Option 2

About the course

Please note: this course was previously called the Foundation Certificate in English Literature.

Covering a range of writing from Shakespeare to the twenty-first century, the Undergraduate Certificate in English Literature teaches skills in the analysis of literature, including the ability to read closely and to recognise and apply approaches in contemporary literary theory. Taught part-time over two years, it is equivalent to the first year of a full-time undergraduate English degree. It is modelled on Oxford University's first year programme in English Language and Literature, and is taught mainly by members of the University's English Faculty.

As well as taking part in the tutorials, seminars, and day schools at Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education, you will have free access to English Faculty lectures and the excellent resources of the Bodleian Library.

The course covers a range of English literature from the Early Modern period to the twenty-first century. Among the authors usually studied will be Shakespeare, Marlowe, Donne, Dickens, Tennyson, the Brontës, Seacole, Mansfield, Joyce and Woolf. Close analysis of works by these and other authors, reinforced by general discussion of modern critical theory and practice, and canonicity, will provide the basis for an enhanced appreciation of the pleasures and problems associated with the serious reading of literature. In addition, during year two of the course, students are introduced to the history and varieties of the English language.

The course will consist of three principal elements, each subdivided, to offer a total of six sections over its two-year span. The three elements are:

- i) Approaches to Language and Literature
- ii) Victorian and Modernist Literature
- iii) Early Modern Literature

The course structure can be represented as follows:

	YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO
TERM		
Michaelmas (Autumn)	<i>Section 1: Approaches to Language and Literature I</i>	<i>Section 4: Approaches to Language and Literature II</i>
Hilary (Spring)	<i>Section 2: Victorian Literature</i>	<i>Section 5: Modernist Literature</i>
Trinity (Summer)	<i>Section 3: Early Modern Poetry</i>	<i>Section 6: Early Modern Drama (excluding Shakespeare)</i>
September	Shakespeare Summer School	

Teaching will be delivered online, usually across 10 weeks each term, and will consist of a mixture of live real-time seminars enhanced by recorded lectures and other materials. You will typically have two tutorials per term, with generally no more than two students in each tutorial group.

You will also attend a five-day, in-person, non-residential Shakespeare Summer School in Oxford. This is expected to be held in September between Year 1 and Year 2. There are also six day-schools, typically one per term. Each day school will be connected to the syllabus, generally by its subject matter, with the third day school of each year focusing on exam preparation.

As well as the time spent in teaching sessions, you will need to spend at least 15 hours a week studying in term-time. This might include reading, preparing course work, and using libraries. The summer school is usually held in-person, but may be moved online, rescheduled or revised, if necessary, e.g. as a result of a pandemic.

Assessment

Assessment for the award is through coursework, portfolios and examinations. Candidates are required to submit each of the assessment items below:

Year 1

- Two formative assignments, each of not more than 2000 words. Marks for these do not count to the final award.
- Four coursework assignments, each of not more than 2000 words.
- One portfolio of written work demonstrating critical approaches to language and literature, of not more than 3,000 words.
- Two written examinations.

Year 2

- Seven coursework assignments, each of not more than 2000 words.
- One portfolio of written work demonstrating critical approaches to language and literature, of not more than 5,000 words.
- Two written examinations.

Attendance

Candidates are expected to attend a minimum of:

- 80% of the teaching sessions each year;
- Four of the six one-hour tutorials each year; and
- 80% of the summer school at the end of the first year.

Changes to courses

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out in this course information sheet. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. The safety of students, staff and visitors is paramount and major changes to delivery or services may have to be made in circumstances of a pandemic (including Covid-19), epidemic or local health emergency. In

addition, in certain circumstances, for example due to visa difficulties or because the health needs of students cannot be met, it may be necessary to make adjustments to course requirements for international study.

You can find full information under “Changes to Courses” (sections 33 to 39) in the [Terms and Conditions for non-matriculated students](#)

Expected length of course

2 years

Annual fees for entry in 2026–27

Fee Status	Annual Course Fees
Home	£4,095
Overseas	£7,025

Course fees are payable each year, for the duration of your fee liability (your fee liability is the length of time for which you are required to pay course fees). For courses lasting longer than one year, please be aware that fees will usually increase annually. For details, please see [Changes to fees and charges | University of Oxford](#)

Course fees cover your teaching as well as other academic services and facilities provided to support your studies. Unless specified in the additional cost information (below), course fees do not cover accommodation, residential costs or other living costs. They also do not cover any additional costs and charges that are outlined in the additional cost information.

Fee status

Broadly speaking, your fee status depends on your nationality, your immigration status in the UK, where you have been living and what you have been doing for the three years prior to the start of your course. Please refer to the [Undergraduate fee status](#) pages for more information.

Information for applicants from the EU, EEA and Switzerland

On 11 May 2021 the UK Council for International Student Affairs published [new regulations and guidance](#) to be used in assessing the fee status of students commencing courses in August 2021 and later. We will be using this guidance to carry out fee status assessments for students commencing courses in 2026-27 and later, including students from the EU, EEA and Switzerland.

If you are an EU national and do not live in the UK then you are likely to be charged Overseas fees. Students with settled and pre-settled status in the UK and some other categories of students who work in the UK can qualify for Home fee status as long as they meet the residence criteria.

Additional cost information

This course has a study week in Oxford so you will need to meet any travel, accommodation and other costs you may incur in attending this week.

You will also need a computer which meets our minimum specification, with access to the internet and various other software programmes. Please see the [system requirements webpage](#) for full details.

For most Oxford students and alumni, the [eDocuments](#) service provides electronic versions of your academic documents. These can be downloaded in support of employment or further study applications and shared via with third parties (e.g. verification companies, prospective employers, and other Higher Education Institutions). You will need to register for this service to access your final transcript

- The **eDocuments registration fee for students completing in 2025-26 is £17**. Please be aware that this fee will usually increase annually.
- This fee provides unlimited access to all available documents, and will include any further documents that are issued to you in the future. The service can also be used to print copies of documents at home. Please note that available documents depend on when you commenced your studies and/or your course progression. Please visit the “For Students/Alumni” tab for further guidance.

Please note, your award certificate will be sent to you by post, usually in the January following the ratification of your results. It is your responsibility to ensure that your address is correctly recorded in Student Self-Service when you finish your course, as this is where we will send your certificate. If you have not received your certificate by the end of the April following ratification (for example, April 2027 if you complete in 2026), you must notify undergraduate@conted.ox.ac.uk within this timeframe. Failure to do so may result in a charge for a replacement certificate.

Living costs (online courses and blended courses)

In addition to your course fees and any additional course-specific costs, you will need to ensure that you have adequate funds to support your living costs for the duration of your course.

As a student on an online course, it is likely that you won't be based in Oxford during your studies. However, you will still need to cover your cost of living on a full-time basis. You should calculate your living costs to be sure that you have sufficient funding to meet these costs for the duration of your course. If your course requires a period of study in Oxford (e.g. a Summer School or Study Week) you will also need to ensure you have adequate funds to cover your travel, accommodation and subsistence costs for this period.

If your course has a duration of longer than one year, you should allow for an estimated increase in living expenses of 5% or more each year, although this rate may vary significantly depending on where you are based and changes in the worldwide economic situation.

Document accessibility

If you require an accessible version of this document please contact undergraduate@conted.ox.ac.uk.