

2. Curriculum Review

2.1. The Educated Person

Pathways to Employment

What kind of occupations are your graduates prepared to pursue?

As one of the most essential tools a citizen can possess, a foundational degree in the art of writing offers practitioners access to a wide range of disciplines and careers. Graduates of the Creative Writing program have many options open to them following graduation. Their training in Creative Writing prepares them for a variety of positions in the arts sector and elsewhere, including, but not limited to, employment in the broader humanities/social sciences sectors, in business or commerce, and in media arts/arts technology sectors. Our graduates can be found working in the writing and publishing sectors, in libraries, in education, in social service organizations, in the film industry, in bookstores, for arts nonprofits, for newspapers and magazines, at learning centers and student engagement offices at universities, for labor unions, in administrative positions at a variety of businesses, and for literary festivals. Some of our graduates elect to become self-employed doing contract work for arts organizations, or working as freelance editors, or doing blog and article writing to support their own businesses. One graduate, who started a successful kitchen-garden business, frequently gives presentations at large home-and-garden shows incorporating her passion for storytelling and writing into her presentations on kitchen-garden design and eco-practices. Her first literary publication was in an international anthology of travel writing and she continues to write.

Overall, our graduates are well-prepared for any position that involves strong oral and written skills, public speaking, critical thinking, leadership, and advanced interpersonal skills. Many graduates hope, and choose, to continue to work as writers (writing, revising, and submitting work for publication) or in writing organizations – working diligently to acquire publications and literary-world work experience. Several of our former students are involved in the literary community, working for, or having worked for, organizations such as Vancouver’s Growing Room Literary Arts Festival, the Vancouver Writer’s Festival, and the Unbound Poetry Festival, a festival started by a KPU Creative Writing alumnus who is also the president of the Delta Literary Arts Society. Others have organized reading series such as Poetic Justice which is put on by the Royal City Literary Arts Society, or one-off literary events such as ‘All Forms Now,’ a recent poetry reading at the New Westminster Library organized by a Creative Writing graduate who is the British Columbia-Yukon Regional Representative for the League of Canadian Poets. Creative Writing graduates have also worked for magazines such as *Rice Paper* and *Room*, and have published widely in magazines and journals across Canada, including *The Malahat Review*, *CV2*, *Arc*, *The Capilano Review*, *Room Magazine*, *PRISM*, *The Fiddlehead*, *subTerrain*, *Poetry Is Dead*, *Prairie Fire*, *Event*, *Yellow Medicine Review*, *Grain*, and elsewhere. Our graduates have won prizes such as Prism International’s Short Fiction Contest, the Lush Triumphant Poetry Prize (awarded by *subTerrain* magazine) and the Young Bucks Poetry Prize (awarded by *CV2*), the Grand Slam Poetry Championship in Vancouver (twice), and have been short or long-listed for prestigious writing prizes such as the Alfred G. Bailey Poetry

Prize and the CBC Poetry Prize. At least four of our former students/graduates have full-length books published or forthcoming, and another Creative Writing alumna recently published a chapbook with Vancouver's esteemed Rahila's Ghost Press. Two former students now teach creative writing – one at the post-secondary level and one at the secondary school level – and many of our alumni and students have been paid to run workshops and speak on panels, most recently a student who ran a workshop for the Massey Arts Society (an organization dedicated to promoting Indigenous and BIPOC artists) on writing land-based poetry. Several of our graduates have received BC Arts Council Grants or Canada Council grants to fund their post-graduate writing projects.

How are you preparing your graduates for jobs in this field, future changes in this field, and the job market in general?

In terms of preparing our graduates for employment and changes in the industry, the department has started offering strategic courses to further assist students in gaining expertise in a variety of specialized professional skills. While CRWR 3303 (The Business of Writing) is already a required course for the degree (CRWR 3303 often includes grant writing modules as well as information about the publishing industry, agents, self-publishing and creating sustainable writing practices grounded in self-care) we are offering a number of Special Topics classes in 2022/2023 that will further students' professional development, such as CRWR 3400 'Teaching Creative Writing,' CRWR 3400 'Editing for Writers,' and CRWR 3400 'Oral Literature and Performance.'

As our faculty predominantly identify as working and publishing authors, Creative Writing course content and pedagogy keeps pace with current developments in writing and publishing. Active writers and creators are aware of national trends in publishing and in book buying and often incorporate those trends (the current interest in decolonizing the expected structure of the short story, for example) into craft discourse and lessons. Assigning texts and readings by contemporary writers also helps our students to become, and stay current in the culture, as do discussions and lessons on engaging in new media (and literary social media) platforms creatively and ethically.

Pathways to Future Study

Preparation for Graduate School / Graduate-level Training

Although preparing students for graduate studies in Creative Writing is something the original curriculum was designed to support (ensuring, for example, that students had enough upper-level experience across a range of genres to be able to submit a diverse cross-genre portfolio as required by most MFA programs), the curriculum is also designed to support those students wanting to leverage their undergraduate degree into Masters degrees in other areas. Our majors, double majors and minors have predominantly gone on to graduate-level study in one of four fields: Creative Writing, Education, Library Sciences, or English (usually in programs that support interdisciplinary creative work or literary practitioner perspectives such as UBCO's MFA or SFU's MA in English). Students minoring in Creative Writing and majoring in other programs often state that they hope to develop their writing skills (with publication as a possible goal) alongside their chosen discipline/educational pathway through developing a sustainable writing practice even as they

pursue other careers. As routes to publication continue to shift (and, arguably, widen) in the digital age, students seem to feel less need or pressure to do an MFA in order to secure a career as a writer or creator. Other post-BA education pathways, including certificate courses (such as SFU's Writer's Studio), workshops (more widely available nationally after the move online during the pandemic), mentorships (such as those offered by the Vancouver Manuscript Intensive) and so on, have become a medium through which our graduating writers can continue to develop their art. Many of our students have participated in professional development activities / forms of certification after graduation including studying at SFU's Writer's Studio, undertaking SFU's Editing diploma program, attending Banff's workshops and residencies, participating in Audible's Indigenous Writer's Circle mentorship program, or in Chelene Knight's Breathing Space Creative program, as well as undertaking mentorships at the Humber School for Writers, at Banff, Sage Hill, and online through Flying Books in Toronto. One of the benefits of these practitioner-based forms of post-BA study is the ability to choose one's mentor (an Indigenous writer, for example, choosing an Indigenous mentor, or a writer working on the poetics of place choosing a workshop on writing about the land) and to complete the undertaking in a shorter period of time.

Is your program intended to be, in most cases, the terminal program in a student's educational experience, or do you typically expect them to take another program of study?

The BA in Creative Writing prepares students to move past their initial literary apprenticeship stage and to become better writers and self-editors/editors – ideally moving into publishing or into the production of creative writing in magazines/performance/media or other relevant venues – without further study. That said, a writing apprenticeship in terms of learning the craft of writing is lifelong, and most writing students don't publish books without further apprenticeship, sometimes in the form of an MFA. A number of our graduates have gone on to attend MFA and MA programs at UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan, Simon Fraser University, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and elsewhere. Some graduates have gone on to pursue postgraduate degrees in English, some have received Masters of Library Science degrees and now work professionally as librarians. Some of our graduates have double majored in Counselling and Creative Writing, and have gone on to receive Masters degrees in Social Work or Psychology. Several of our graduates have enrolled in Teacher's Education programs after graduating from KPU and are now teaching in elementary and high schools in BC.

Appendix C, The Career Pathways Map, outlines some of the traditional pathways for writing students.

Pathways to an Enriched Civic and Personal Life

How well does your program curriculum develop skills an educated citizen should have?

Our learning environment encourages lifelong learning. In the KPU Creative Writing department, learner engagement extends beyond the classroom to encompass relationships with community and industry partners and peers. Learners are encouraged to engage in the relevant issues of the day, their own stories and histories, and the broader literary community through building

relationships with our visiting authors, publishers, and festival partners, and producing and attending writing and performance events. Through offering educational training that combines creative expression, academic rigor, and critical thinking the department prepares learners for a range of future undertakings. Required courses include content that examines the creative writer's responsibility to our social/political context including our responsibilities as citizens to our shared histories and to creating a more equitable, diverse and inclusive culture. As stated above, some of our CRWR major and minor alumni have published books or have gone on to graduate-level studies. Students who have taken courses with us without majoring in the program have gone on to study and work in fields ranging from neuroscience to law. It is our belief that every Creative Writing course is an opportunity to connect a student to vital forms of expression, inquiry, and creativity which can benefit them no matter where their educational pathway ultimately takes them.

Does your program help students to make more informed decisions in their personal and civic lives?

Graduates of the Creative Writing program are well-prepared to take part in civic life and to continue to develop a rewarding personal life. Many Creative Writing students are already involved in meaningful ways in multiple communities even before they graduate, such as religious, queer, racialized, and immigrant communities. The personal and civic lives of writers are often very intertwined with their professional lives. True acts of creation and revision are almost always borne from a desire to communicate and share with an audience the sustained thinking, and exploration of, a topic (or topics) of concern to the writer undertaking the project. Unlike many kinds of jobs which can form – and inform – a 'part' of an individual's life and reality, many forms of writing work more like a vocation, informing (and emerging out of) one's personal life even as the public domain of the work is professional.

Because the professional and personal aspects of writing are often intertwined, Creative Writing classes also focus on wellness and on work/life balance issues. Attention to the processes of creativity includes developing a conscious relationship to personal values, patience, curiosity and self-inquiry. Many Creative Writing instructors practice mindfulness in their classes, and a significant number of students have shared that they greatly value this practice and have taken it up in their personal lives as well.

Does your program equip students with new, or deepened literacies – be they digital, oral, written, etc.

The Creative Writing program is, in part, about looking at the work of other successful and engaged writers to see how they've developed their ideas, art, and craft and then assisting learners in developing those skills and technologies (where relevant) in order to enable them to use their imaginations to speak to the issues and themes that matter to them. Learning to read *as a writer* is a unique form of literacy.

Digital literacy is developed through our new media stream and includes education in becoming an informed and critical digital citizen, creating works with design software as well as engaging creatively, and publishing on online platforms. There are also classes which touch on oral stories

and which engage in performance work. Often these literacies are combined and developed in tandem as evidenced by an example of a recent 4th year student's capstone work in CRWR 4150: an audio autoethnography about immigration and intergenerational trauma which involved interviews with family members, script-writing, digital/technological production skills, interpersonal sensitivity, and genre/form literacy.

2.2. Program Learning Outcomes

The Creative Writing department revised some of our Program Learning Outcomes in 2021, amalgamating and revising some of the outcomes which were listed in our 2012 Program Review to better align with the evolution and purpose of KPU's 2023 Vision and our program. Our current Program Learning Outcomes are listed below:

1. Develop one's creative imagination and process, authoring a project from idea generation to polished completion
2. Demonstrate a solid grounding in critical thinking skills and research methods in relation to creative work
3. Identify the literary and/or cultural lineage one is working in and the associated literary principles and techniques
4. Communicate clearly in both writing and speech and demonstrate an ability to effectively use a wide range of creative writing and presentation techniques
5. Communicate a critical understanding of civic responsibility and socio-cultural issues alongside national, international, and global issues in relation to creative work and representation
6. Cultivate an inclusive community of writers; practice empathy and respect across differences and engage in group work in a constructive, ethical, and empathic manner
7. Consider and apply constructive feedback when making edits of one's creative work; articulate constructive, nuanced feedback on others' creative work
8. Demonstrate an awareness of one's biases, skills, habits, and abilities; be accountable for one's actions