



Press Release

National Association for Writers in Education
www.nawe.co.uk

The National Association for Writers in Education is very disappointed at the government's decision to axe the A level and AS level in Creative Writing this week. The DfE justified this decision by arguing that there is too much overlap with English and English Language A levels and that the subject is too skills based rather than knowledge based.

NAWE is the Subject Association for Creative Writing and was delighted to see the new A level rolled out over the last few years across the country and flourish since its introduction in 2013.

Many teachers of the subject said it was a pleasure to teach and very rigorous in its approach. The take up by students was tremendous and growing in popularity. It is not a soft option and is demanding in its content as any writer worth their salt will tell you about their own creative practice. The subject is very well established at university and the new A level provided a stepping stone for students wanting to study the subject in Higher Education. To argue that studying creative writing is the same as studying English is misguided. At a time when students with good communication skills, flexibility and creativity are in high demand in the workplace, this decision does not seem to make any sense at all.

Creative Writing is firmly recognised within Higher Education as a discipline in its own right, which requires proper preparation at GCSE A level. Creative Writing is not English. English Literature studies extant texts. Creative writing develops individuals to produce writing of their own, across a range of genres and forms. We are convinced that Creative Writing is capable of securing a comparable level

of take-up to other A level subjects. This is based on the exponential growth of the subject at undergraduate and postgraduate level over the last 25 years. NAWE's database of HE creative writing courses lists over 141 providers and a total of 504 degree programmes including combined degrees where Creative Writing is a significant element. In 2013/14, 6,990 students enrolled in courses defined as imaginative writing and this number is growing. The level of take-up in the first two years of the 'A' level is Creative Writing was already robust, and the response from current teachers and students was positive. The subject was already recruiting further teachers in year two of its introduction.

Creative Writing is the art of writing. This is not part of other A Levels. Although there is some 'writing' as part of the assessment of English Language this is from the perspective of the creation of texts as product for specific audience and purpose. There is no requirement for reflection or understanding of the writing process. In English Language students will encounter a limited range of texts and use them as models to emulate technique as a means to understanding how texts work. The focus is clearly 'product' not 'process'. English Language A Level is not an 'art'.

NAWE's membership of over 1700 writers, teachers, academics and literature professionals strongly condemn this decision which may result in a whole generate of young people having less access to a subject that would enhance their development and ignite a passion for both reading and writing.

Further information:

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