

# Tuning

Tuning  
Educational  
Structures  
in Europe

Reference  
Points for the  
Design and  
Delivery  
of Degree  
Programmes  
in **Literary  
Studies**



Education and Culture DG

Life Long Learning

Reference Points for the Design and  
Delivery of Degree Programmes in  
**LITERARY STUDIES**

### **Tuning Educational Structures in Europe**

The name *Tuning* was chosen for the project to reflect the idea that universities do not look for uniformity in their degree programmes or any sort of unified, prescriptive or definitive European curricula but simply for points of reference, convergence and common understanding. The protection of the rich diversity of European education has been paramount in the Tuning Project from the start and the project in no way seeks to restrict the independence of academic and subject specialists, or undermine local and national academic authority.

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## INTRODUCTION

Before outlining the results of the work carried out by the working group focusing on literary studies in the European SQF HUMART project, a few methodological premises must be established, including how the members of the group, which has been working over the last two years, were chosen. The choice of representatives arises from the work that the group's coordinator, Professor Vita Fortunati, carried out in the preceding years in thematic European ETN projects, whose aim was to update academic teaching through inter- and transdisciplinary themes such as *Cultural Memory* (ACUME 1), and the relationship between literature and science in *Interfacing Science and Literature* (ACUME 2). The experience of this work has produced a wide European network of scholars with a common interest in renovating literary and comparative studies at university level. Traditional teaching materials such as monographs, manuals, and readers were developed and published, together with more innovative e-learning modules, which were then circulated and disseminated throughout Europe.

The work of the HUMART project sets off from this experience and has enhanced our reflection on the state of the art in comparative and literary studies. Although the working group adopted the convenient label of Literary Studies, it did so in the knowledge that in the last twenty years or so, literary studies in Europe had branched out into areas such cultural studies, gender studies, film studies, and other areas with a strong interdisciplinary imprint. The scholars who constitute the group come from different geographical areas: the Mediterranean (Cyprus, Italy, Spain), Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, the Czech Republic, Georgia and Romania), and Northern Europe (the United Kingdom, Denmark), and have different areas of competence in the various sub-disciplines of literary studies (among others, gender studies, film studies, Romantic studies, translation studies, post-colonial Studies, media studies). The choice of experts belonging to different geographical areas was dictated by the need to map the current state of the field in different contexts, and to focus on both similarities and differences while working toward common goals.

This diversity of competences has given a sense of the complexity of literary studies in today's Europe, marked by deep changes due to the difficult economic and financial situation that is seriously impacting on the teaching of the humanities, and Literary and comparative studies in particular. The deep crisis in the study of the humanities has been brought about by financial problems, but also by the awareness that the complexity of the world surrounding us needs new approaches and new methods. The two above-mentioned European ETN projects, ACUME 1 and ACUME 2, were conceptualised with the awareness that in order to investigate complex problems we need integrated studies that will enhance a robust dialogue across different domains of knowledge and across different academic organisations. Such an approach is urgently needed at the current stage of the progress of knowledge, characterised as it is by ever-narrowing specialisation and by a prohibitive use of discipline-specific jargons, which hampers even a simple exchange of ideas between scholars bringing into the debate different kinds of expertise and background.

Moreover, the reflection the experts have undertaken begins with the awareness that teaching and learning at university level involve tackling the issue of students from different ethnic groups, which must be reflected in the content of the syllabi. The very concept of national literature, and of the 'mother tongue', must be reconsidered in the light of the emerging concept of transnational literatures. Another widely discussed issue has been the revision of Goethe's concept of world literature in the current global market. This reflection on the concept of world literature has not only meant a new re-conceptualisation of the literary canon, but also the awareness that literary studies must be connected to translation studies. Translation, in the broad sense, becomes a heuristic category of primary importance in the configuration of a world literature focused on inter-/transcultural exchanges. Literary studies in Europe must open to other cultures in an attempt to overcome the discipline's traditional Eurocentric outlook, and to create new paradigms of knowledge. This is why the issue of translation is of extreme importance: it is no longer a question of comparison, where traditionally one of the terms had pre-eminence over the other, but one of making the effort to translate concepts into other cultural contexts, and see how they change, metamorphose and hybridise.

The document we are putting forward has no claim to being exhaustive, but aims at being rather a kind of meta-reflection on the part of experts trying to modify and renew their university teaching method. We have tried to assess the position of students in literary studies in our contemporary society in order to help them in their choice of future employment, and defining the kind of employment they may be directed to. Moreover, inside the working group, the importance of a plurilingual policy in Europe, aiming to overcome the dichotomy between the major languages and cultures and the so-called minor ones, has been much discussed. In our debates, we have identified a number of issues which constitute some of the central ramifications of literary studies as an academic discipline at the present time; they include, among others, the importance of finding a balance between language competence and the knowledge of literary culture (historical context), and the need for interdisciplinarity. These ramifications of literary studies arise from new theoretical ideas regarding the notion of the literary text, which has been affected by the revision of the canon, the new perspectives in gender studies, the emergence of postcolonial literatures, the increasing focus on the interrelationship between literature, visual arts, and film studies, etc. The various members of the group have also stressed the importance of having a European and trans-European perspective in literary and comparative studies.

The group has also discussed the changes in the concept of national identity which is, due to the increase in migration processes in Europe, no longer monolithic, but hybrid and multidimensional. In order to have a new concept of transnational literature, the complexity of the notion of national identity must be taken into account.

## 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT AREA

Literary studies as an academic discipline involves critical study, analysis, and interpretation of literary and related texts, considered in a diversity of historical, ideological, and aesthetic contexts, and using diverse methodological approaches. Literary scholars read, describe, and comment on texts from a variety of theoretical, historical, and comparative perspectives, investigating them from the point of view of their origin, their relationship to the historical and cultural context of the environment in which they were created, their thematic and formal features, and their relationship to other texts, both those written in the same language and those belonging to other linguistic and cultural traditions. These academic activities lead to a deeper, creative approach to literature as one of the chief indicators of cultural specificity and diversity, and as a field in which theoretical and practical, reflective and creative activities overlap and cross-fertilise, establishing unique and momentous links between divergent aspects of social life, such as ethics and economy, or aesthetics and politics.

Different approaches to literary studies are often manifested through a diversity of formal academic structures within which the study of literature is conducted, with university literature departments being defined in various ways, by the language of the literature(s) studied (departments of Danish, Italian, Russian, etc.), by the historical period(s) focused on (departments of Renaissance, Romantic, contemporary literature, etc.), by the specific thematic or formal focus adopted (departments of drama, children's literature, etc.), by the critical and methodological approaches adopted (departments of literary theory, comparative literature, etc.), or by a combination of these features (e.g. a Department of Czech Literature and Literary Theory).

In the academic world of modern European universities, literature is studied in two specific types of contexts: firstly, in the essentially monolingual environment of departments focusing on the study of literatures written in the students' and academic staff's first language (e.g. departments of French literature in France and Francophone parts of Belgium and Switzerland, departments of Slovak literature in Slovakia, departments of Portuguese literature in Portugal, and so on), and secondly, in a broad variety of departments focusing on the study of texts across linguistic boundaries, primarily in the context of modern language studies (departments of English in non-English-speaking countries, departments of Polish outside of Poland, etc.), but also in other contexts (departments of Classics or Sanskrit, departments of comparative literature, etc.). While this simple distinction reflects the key qualitative difference between two main types of environments in which literature is studied across Europe, it should not, however, be seen in simplistic national terms: given the historical, political, cultural, and linguistic complexities of Europe, as well as the increasing internationalisation of European academia, the actual dynamics of individual departments may well be much more complicated. One example of such complexities is Ireland, where on the one hand the study of the literary heritage of the country involves a highly nuanced negotiation of two, or indeed three (Latin, Irish, and English) linguistic contexts in an environment which is now dominated by first-language English speakers, while on the other hand the study of Anglophone literature involves the discussion of complex political and cultural relationships between Ireland and other parts of the English-speaking world. Other

examples of the complex and problematic nature of national and linguistic borderlines between distinctive areas of literary study include the study of the literatures of minority languages (such as Catalan) or the study of literatures written in postcolonial contexts (for example in Cyprus and Malta). In a very different way, in the increasingly globalised world of twenty-first-century academia, the opportunities for the study of the literature of a particular language by native speakers of that language studying outside of the relevant linguistic environment (for example, the study of French literature by Francophone students at a university in Italy), or that of the study of a number of diverse literary traditions in the multinational context of an international university (for example, at an English-medium university in Hungary), demonstrates that increasing student mobility modifies existing patterns of literary study and generates new opportunities for intellectual debate.

These kinds of liminalities are indicative of the direction in which literary studies as a modern academic discipline is developing: it is a field which increasingly goes beyond the traditional approach characterised by a focus on a single monolingual literary tradition, and incorporates the discussion of literature in all manner of comparative, transnational, and supranational contexts. At the same time, literary studies increasingly explores a diversity of fields involving the study of literature in specific contexts, or on the interface with other disciplines: some of these areas are cultural studies, gender studies, postcolonial studies, film studies, new media studies, and others. Finally, an important area of development is the theory and practice of creative writing: for an increasing number of students, literature is not just an object of study, but also an area of their own activity, requiring both intellectual reflection and specific competences and skills.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF TYPICAL DEGREES AND GRADUATE OCCUPATIONS (BA AND MA)

This chapter is based on a selection of data from individual EU countries, representing the long-established members as well as more recently admitted states. A comparison of typical degrees and occupations in the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Italy and Romania requires the identification of differences in understanding the subject area. Some of these are illustrated by the following examples drawn from the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic.

In the UK, literary studies (usually called literature) is generally not perceived as a distinctive and self-contained academic discipline, bringing together the study of literary and related works produced across linguistic, cultural, and political borders. On the contrary, the study of literature tends in most cases to be linked to specific cultural contexts defined primarily in terms of language. Thus, the most extensive area of literary studies in UK universities is that of Anglophone literatures, considered either in global terms, as part of the broadly defined discipline of English (or English language and literature), or as a combination of that discipline and relevant sub-disciplines of area studies - e.g., Welsh, Scottish, Irish, American, Canadian, Australian, or Caribbean studies. Literatures of most European languages other than English tend to be studied within the context of the broad study of the linguistic and cultural traditions of those languages; thus, Francophone literatures tend to be studied in the general context of the

study of French (or French language and literature), works written in German in the context of the study of German (or German language and literature), and so on; the pattern is similar with the literatures of non-European and Classical languages, though in those cases literary studies would normally link more closely with broader cultural and historical studies rather than focusing on the purely literary dimensions of the texts concerned. The extent to which the study of literature forms part of the study of a particular non-Anglophone linguistic and cultural tradition varies between institutions, with departments based at more traditional universities likely to offer more literature-related modules than their counterparts at other universities and colleges. The broad discipline of English sometimes accommodates the study, usually in English translation, of literary works written in other languages, especially when they can provide a perspective on the development of the Anglophone tradition, provide a broader cultural context for understanding Anglophone literatures or document cultural and/or historical facts (as in the case of European studies).

In the Czech Republic, literary studies used to be linked with the study of languages, both in the framework of traditional philological disciplines and in the context of the structuralist approach typical of the Prague Linguistic Circle. They have emerged as a specific subject only after the defeat of the totalitarian Communist system, under which all humanities and social sciences were under strict ideological control and the study of literature was seen as an ideological discipline. The first discussions about the meaning and structure of philological disciplines appeared in the 1990s and they are still continuing. The necessity of separating linguistics and literary studies became evident with the divergent development of both disciplines: on the one hand, literary studies started to display philosophical, historical and broadly interdisciplinary tendencies (including co-operation with film and new media studies, performance studies, gender studies, etc.), while on the other hand, linguistics was transformed by the influence of mathematical methods and the work with computerised databases (corpora). In this way, the notion of 'philology' became increasingly irrelevant, turning into a mere label used for the administrative classification of university programmes involving languages and literatures. A breakthrough was made in 2002, when the first 'non-philologically' defined programme, English and American Studies, was acknowledged by the Ministry of Education. Attempts at government recognition were made in the case of the Comparative Literature programme (called 'Comparative Studies' to reflect the changes in the understanding of the medium, which was no longer literature, but also film and the new media). At the leading university in the country, Charles University, the separation of linguistics and literary studies is now for the first time attempted at MA level; separate PhD courses already exist at all major Czech universities. BA programmes and MA programmes for teachers maintain linguistic as well as literary components.

## 2.1 TYPICAL DEGREES OFFERED IN LITERARY STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This section compares typical degrees in several EU countries, ranging from the UK to the Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Romania. The major differences between the countries considered result from a variety of factors:

- historical continuity or discontinuity (the latter in the case of some post-communist countries, as illustrated above by the difference between the UK and the Czech Republic).
- differences in duration and structure of individual courses: four-year BA courses in Cyprus and Romania vs. three-year courses in the Czech Republic and (at BA Honours level) in the UK. All these differences relate to the relative importance (or unimportance) of the MA degree: while for instance in the UK, students graduating with BA Honours can be admitted to a PhD course, in the Czech Republic, an MA degree is a legal requirement for PhD study.
- different importance attached to the study of the first language of a specific country and the culture(s) using it as a medium. While in the UK, courses in English or English literature prevail over courses involving two-subject study of different languages/literatures, or English and another language/literature, in other countries, like Romania, two-subject courses (combining Romanian with another language/ literature, or focusing on two foreign languages/literatures) are the only option. In the Czech Republic and Cyprus, both options are available, but the single-subject study of a major European or American culture is definitely preferred in the Czech Republic, while the 'smaller' languages and cultures are usually studied in two-subject courses.
- the nature of specialisation of MA courses. While in the UK, the usual focus of an MA course is a specific area of a discipline (Renaissance literature, Victorian studies), in other countries, such as the Czech Republic, specialisation is possible in diverse modules within broadly conceived MA courses. In most countries studied, greater specialisation is possible only at PhD level (see below).

In more specific terms, first-cycle courses focusing on literature tend to fall into the following categories:

- courses focusing on, or involving the study of, literature written in the students' first language, possibly with some (usually very minor) element of foreign literature in translation:
  - courses focusing exclusively on the literature of the students' first language;
  - courses involving a mixture of the study of the literature of the students' first language and of the areas of linguistics related to that language;
  - specialised courses in a relevant field of area studies, involving, as part of the course, the study of the specific literary tradition;
  - courses in comparative literature (rare);
- courses involving the study of foreign literatures:

- modern-language-style degrees involving a mixture of the study of a foreign language and its literature;
- courses involving the study of literature as part of a broad study of a specific culture, area, or historical period
- combined courses involving the study of selections of modules from two academic subjects, at least one of which focuses on literature

In a number of countries, courses focusing on literature (or literature and linguistics) include, in addition, modules in areas such as psychology, pedagogy, and didactics, with a view to preparing graduates for teaching careers, primarily though not exclusively in secondary schools. This pattern appears to be more common in modern-language-style degrees, where students train, effectively, to be foreign-language teachers, than in courses focusing on the study of the literature of the students' first language.

Second-cycle literature courses tend to focus on specific sub-areas of literary and/or cultural studies, or on broad inter- or multidisciplinary areas where literature can be chosen as one of the specialist areas of study. A recent tendency, in the context of funding cuts and the need for efficiency savings, is for universities to organise umbrella-style general postgraduate programmes, including a range of generic modules in areas such as critical theory, as well as individualised teaching in specialist sub-areas of literature. An important related field is postgraduate programmes in creative writing.

At PhD level, there are no set programmes of study, with students following individual programmes of research designed either by themselves, or as part of broader research projects, usually involving some form of targeted external sponsorship. Specialisms vary widely, from focused studies of individual authors to broader synoptic and/or comparative studies, often involving interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary approaches.

## 2.2 TYPICAL OCCUPATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES OF LITERARY STUDIES

Throughout Europe there are differences in the way literary studies as an academic discipline is perceived. Thus, for example, in the United Kingdom the majority of BA and MA programmes in literary studies are considered non-vocational, while in other countries, such as the Czech Republic and Romania, special programmes have been developed for the education of secondary-school teachers as an integral part of academic studies. Programmes of this kind tend to combine educational disciplines (psychology, pedagogy, methodology of teaching) with modules in one or two languages and literatures. Otherwise, there are many similarities in the non-vocational orientation of literary studies courses and career destinations of their graduates.

In cases where literary studies is not related directly to the native language, emphasis is put on the development of a high level of language proficiency, ranging from levels C1 and C2 to B2 depending on the complexity of the language and the national/linguistic background of the student. Typical graduate occupations and career destinations are in consequence, defined, to

a large extent, by the graduates' high proficiency in colloquial as well as academic language (particularly as relevant to the disciplines of linguistics or literary and cultural studies), combined with deeper theoretical knowledge of either linguistics or literary and cultural theory and history of the literatures and cultures of the relevant countries/languages.

In a growing number of countries, the job market is more and more related to the development of generic graduate skills as part of the first cycle, and linked to specialist second cycle academic education or on-the-job training. Graduates do not necessarily expect to be employed in areas in which their experience of and expertise in literary studies is likely to be of direct relevance. Thus, regular career destinations of literature graduates include the public and service sector, e.g. civil service, general administration and management, non-profit organisations, banking and financial services, trade companies, etc.

Students might also use the critical and analytical tools developed in their first degree programmes in literature as a preparation for a different track in graduate studies, both within the Humanities domain, but also outside it , e.g. in business studies (MBA) or criminology.

Among those whose careers are linked to their academic background, the most frequent career paths, following the completion of first- or second cycle studies (depending on the specific nature of the job), include:

- teaching (usually secondary and tertiary) ,
- publishing and the book trade,
- editing (of literature or academic publications);
- library and information science;
- management of cultural, political or media organisations;
- translation / interpretation;
- work in EU and other international organisations
- diplomatic service
- civil service;
- journalism in domestic and international media (e.g. BBC, Associated Press);
- public relations;
- advertising.

### 3. SUBJECT SPECIFIC AND GENERIC COMPETENCES IN LITERARY STUDIES PROGRAMMES

#### 3.1 GENERIC COMPETENCES

One of the key tasks undertaken by the HUMART literary studies group was to consider the extent to which the generic competences identified during the earlier stages of the Tuning project applied to the academic discipline of literature. The process consisted of three stages.

In the first instance, the members of the group familiarised themselves with the 31 generic competences, considered them in relation to their relevance to the discipline of literary studies, and discussed the parameters of the process through which those competences could be tested vis-à-vis the perceptions and expectations of the stakeholders of the discipline, as well as in the context of the actual academic practice of the subject area across Europe.

Secondly, the members of the group identified, in their respective countries, respondents belonging to the four target groups of stakeholders (graduates of literature programmes, potential and/or actual employers of literature graduates, academics working in the area of literary studies, and current students of literature), and invited them to participate in a questionnaire involving three tasks:

- estimating the importance of the specific skill/competence for work in professional areas related to the academic discipline of literary studies;
- estimating the level to which each specific skill/competence was developed by degree programmes at their university;
- ranking the five skills/competences deemed by them to be the most important in the context of literary studies.

The results of the questionnaire were subsequently analysed in terms of the ratings of the competences as regards their importance and the extent to which they are actually developed and achieved, and their relative ranking; the results of the analysis were presented to the members of the subject group at the second meeting of the project.

The final stage of the discussion of the generic competences involved an extended consideration of the results of the questionnaire, both across all subject areas and in the specific context of literary studies, but with a particular focus on the identification of those of the generic competence which were, in the opinion of both the respondents and the members of the subject group, central to the academic and professional practice of the discipline. The group concluded that while it was not possible to put the key skills/competence in a clear order of significance, with different groups of stakeholders defining their priorities in different terms, there were seven competences which were generally perceived, by members of the literary studies community, as being crucial to the subject area; these were as follows (in the order in which they appear on the generic Tuning list):

- ability to communicate in a second language (Tuning competence 1);
- capacity to learn and stay up-to-date with learning (Tuning competence 2);

- ability to communicate both orally and through the written word in the first language (Tuning competence 3);
- ability to be critical and self-critical (Tuning competence 4);
- capacity to generate new ideas (creativity) (Tuning competence 7);
- ability to search for, process, and analyse information from a variety of sources (Tuning competence 8);
- ability to identify, pose, and resolve problems (Tuning competence 10).

### 3.2 SUBJECT SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

The development of a list of subject specific competences for literary studies constituted the basis for the work of the literary studies subject group, and served as a basis for further documents developed by the group. In the very first stage of identifying the most important professional competences central to the field, it became clear that experts from different countries shared a common vision and understanding of the essence of literary studies as an academic discipline; this facilitated the formulation of shared ideas based on approaches already developed within the Tuning project.

The group had a goal of identifying/formulating core abilities (competences, knowledge and skills) for those graduating from academic programmes in the area of literary studies at different levels (BA, MA, or PhD), and planning to use their knowledge, analytical abilities, and practical skills in various fields of occupation, whether involving academic scholarship, teaching activities, or a variety of career opportunities.

Keeping in mind that there are differences in understanding the nuances of the literary studies subject area, the group tried to ensure that the list was representative of its members' shared vision of the area, and that it also referred to modern approaches to the field which have gained significance within the last few decades, due to the intense process of the interaction of literature with its various contexts, as well as the interaction between literary studies and various other academic disciplines.

The group agreed that there were certain notions, concepts and attitudes which should be represented as fundamental for those working in the field of literary studies. The list of competences should first of all emphasise that literary studies is a discipline which deals with literary and related texts seen in relevant (cultural, historical, aesthetic etc) contexts; the ability to read, analyse and interpret literary texts in their various contexts is shown, in fact, as the core competence to be developed amongst students. Literary texts should be investigated from the point of view of their origin, their relationship to the historical and cultural context of the environment in which they were created, their thematic and formal features, and their relationship to other texts, both those written in the same language and those belonging to other linguistic and cultural traditions.

At the same time, this ability synthesizes theoretical and contextual knowledge and analytical skills; thus, students who perform well in this area demonstrate that they have attained core subject-specific knowledge/competences/skills, and can describe and comment on texts from various theoretical, cultural and/or comparative perspectives.

This requires the knowledge and understanding of a broad diversity of literary theoretical and historical methodologies, and an ability to identify critical issues raised by those methodological approaches.

While referring to a variety of contexts and methodologies, literary scholarship is an analytical activity which allows, and indeed requires, self-reflection and the involvement, in the process of studying literature, of one's own personal cultural and analytical experience. Thus, the ability to develop a critical, self-reflective approach to literature and cultural history is seen as one of the major competences.

Linking the knowledge of methodological and contextual backgrounds with personal experience and the ability to adopt an analytical position, as well as to understand and articulate ethical and critical issues raised by literary texts also leads to the competence of generating original ideas in relation to literary texts, contexts and methodologies.

The modern understanding of literary studies is oriented towards perceiving literature in wider cultural and aesthetic, as well social, economic, political, and ideological contexts. Literary and related texts are studied in relation to a variety of contexts, and using a variety of methodologies developed within other established disciplines or fields of study. Thus, interdisciplinarity is one of key approaches to modern literary studies nowadays, and the ability to define and reflect on the specificity of literary studies in relevant interdisciplinary contexts is one of basic requirements for those working in the field. It is also recognised that in the last twenty years literary studies in Europe have branched out into cultural studies, gender studies, film studies, etc.; thus, a modern approach to literary studies has to show a strong transdisciplinary imprint.

Literary scholarship has to tackle the problems of relations between literature, discourse and power, also considering the experience of changing ideological and political processes in Europe and in the world in the past century, and also nowadays.

Since literature is one of the chief indicators of cultural and social specificity and diversity, scholars in the field of literary studies have to be able to understand literary texts in relation to the problems of race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, as well as with the broader questions of value (economic, cultural, etc.), using modern approaches to various problems.

Literary studies refer to the processes of historical development in the practice of the production, transmission, and delivery of literary texts which impact on the status of literary text; thus, literary scholar should be able to analyse the impact of the history of orality, writing, printing press and modern communication media on literary texts, as well as understanding the changing status of authorship and the relations of literary production and copyright.

Literary scholars have to understand that they study literature in a time of rapid, constant changes in social, cultural, and economic spheres, all of them exerting an influence on the literary process and literary works. Modern varieties of culture (high-brow, popular, and mass culture) have an impact on the status and value of works of literature. Traditional literary canons are being changed under the influence of contextual changes as well as theoretical debates. Thus the ability to understand issues of canonicity, and problems associated with the construction of literary canons, should be attained by future literary scholars.

Intense processes of interaction between diverse cultural/linguistic contexts in the global world increase the need of the ability to reflect on issues of intercultural translation. The expectation of the knowledge of two or three languages, which in the past was mostly relevant to comparative literature programs, is now becoming common to different degree courses in the area; thus, the ability to read, interpret and compare texts written in at least in three European languages (including the native language), or in two European and one non-European language, is included in the list of subject competences to be developed within MA and PhD programs.

Of course, the ability to produce formally correct, logically clear, persuasive and relevant academic writing, which is has traditionally been expected of literary scholars, is included in the list; at the same time, the competitive job market requires literary scholars graduating from PhD programmes to demonstrate practical skills such as the ability to formulate grant proposals in relation to the major problems and targets of the discipline, or the ability to present results of individual research at specialised workshops, seminars and conferences.

The full list of 22 competences (including those specific to MA- and PhD-level study) was submitted for consultation to hundreds of representatives of four different groups of stakeholders (academics, students, graduates, and employers), and feedback was received. The process was conducted in accordance to Tuning/HUMART methodology. The results of the consultation were subsequently debated in the HUMART group; as in the case of generic competences, the conclusion reached was that while there was no clear sense that individual subject-specific competences could, or should, be ranked in order of significance, it was still possible to identify those which were generally agreed to constitute the subject-specific core of the discipline. Those seven competences are listed at the top of the final list below (subject-specific competences 1-7):

## SUBJECT SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

1. Ability to read, analyse and interpret literary texts.
2. Ability to develop a critical, self-reflective approach to literature and cultural history.
3. Ability to identify ethical issues in literary texts and relate them to different and cultural and historical contexts.
4. Ability to generate original ideas in relation to literary texts, contexts and methodologies.
5. Ability to identify and tackle critical issues raised by literary texts.
6. Ability to define and reflect on the specificity of literary studies in relevant interdisciplinary contexts.
7. Ability to produce formally correct, logically clear, persuasive and relevant academic writing in the basic (BA) and all major types of academic discourse (MA, PhD).
  
8. Ability to understand and reflect on a broad diversity of literary theoretical and historical methodologies, and identify critical issues raised by those methodological approaches.
9. Ability to reflect on the problems and history of orality, writing, printing press and modern communication media and the respective changes in the status of the text.
10. Ability to understand the impact of modern varieties of culture (high-brow, popular, mass culture) on the status and value of works of literature.
11. Ability to understand the changing status of authorship and the relations of literary production and copyright.
12. Ability to understand the relations between literature, discourse and power.
13. Ability to understand the interrelationships and differences between works of literature and historical sources.
14. Ability to understand issues of canonicity, and problems associated with the construction of literary canons, in the context of recent theoretical debates.
15. Ability to understand the relation of critical evaluation of literature and the broader questions of value (economic, cultural, etc.).
16. Ability to understand literary texts in relation to the problems of gender and sexual orientation.
17. Ability to understand literary texts in relation to the problems of race and ethnicity.
18. Ability to read, interpret and compare texts written at least in three European languages (including the native language) or in two European and one non-European language (MA, PhD).
19. Ability to critically evaluate translations of literary texts at least from one foreign language (MA, PhD).
20. Ability to reflect on the issues of intercultural translation and to practise it in one's own work if appropriate (MA, PhD).
21. Ability to present results of individual research at specialised workshops, seminars and conferences (PhD).
22. Ability to formulate grant proposals in relation to the major problems and targets of the discipline (PhD).

#### 4. COMPETENCE BASED CYCLE DESCRIPTORS

The section below outlines general descriptors of the central knowledge, skills, and competence normally expected of BA, MA, and PhD graduates in the field of literary studies, based on the list of competences identified in the above chapter. While the descriptors have been formulated and agreed as representing, in broad terms, existing academic practice across Europe, it is recognised that some of the knowledge indicators, skills, and competences may, in some individual cases, be seen as aspirational. This relates, in particular, to the area of foreign language skills, particularly in relation to Anglophone countries: thus, for example, students of English or American literature in the UK would only infrequently demonstrate levels of competence in a foreign language comparable to, for example, English-language competence of typical students from most other European countries.

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LITERARY STUDIES AT LEVEL 6 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
<b>LEVEL 6</b>	<p>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of critical and methodological approaches to texts;</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of a range of social, cultural, and historical contexts relevant to the specific field of study;</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of a range of core literary and related texts relevant to the field of study.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to apply a range of critical and methodological approaches to the study of literary and related texts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to identify and evaluate relevant primary and secondary sources of information and to use them properly in the process of developing knowledge and interpretation;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to communicate ideas in accordance with professional standards and conventions of academic writing;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to communicate in a foreign language.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to interpret literary and related texts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to be critical and self-reflective independent learners;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to identify ethical issues in literary texts and to relate them to different cultural and historical contexts.</p>

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LITERARY STUDIES AT LEVEL 7 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
<b>LEVEL 7</b>	<p>Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of a broad spectrum of critical and methodological approaches to texts;</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of a broad social, cultural, and historical framework of the development of relevant literature(s);</p> <p>Demonstrate knowledge of a broad range of core literary and related texts relevant to the field of study, and of their interpretations;</p> <p>Demonstrate understanding of the place of literary studies in broad interdisciplinary contexts.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to apply complex critical and methodological approaches to the study of literary and related texts, often in interdisciplinary contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to identify and evaluate a broad range of diverse primary and secondary sources of information in the process of generating new complex knowledge and interpretation;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to communicate ideas in accordance with professional standards and conventions of academic writing, with a view to contributing to the development of knowledge;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to engage in academic discourse through the medium of a foreign language.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to develop complex interpretations of literary and related texts, often in interdisciplinary contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to be critical and self-reflective independent learners capable of generating independent knowledge;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to reflect on and interpret ethical issues in literary texts in complex cultural and historical contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to demonstrate autonomy and responsibility in the delivery of work in a manner transferable to a range of professional contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to think and articulate ideas creatively.</p>

	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	COMPETENCE
	GRADUATES IN LITERARY STUDIES AT LEVEL 8 ARE EXPECTED TO...		
<b>LEVEL 8</b>	<p>Demonstrate highly advanced and refined knowledge and understanding of a broad spectrum of critical and methodological approaches to texts;</p> <p>Demonstrate expert knowledge of a broad social, cultural, and historical framework of the development of relevant literature(s);</p> <p>Demonstrate expert knowledge of a broad range of literary and related texts relevant to the field of study, and of their interpretations;</p> <p>Demonstrate highly specialised knowledge of literary and non-literary material constituting the relevant research area;</p> <p>Demonstrate highly advanced knowledge and understanding of complex paradigms of the operation of literary and related studies in subject-specific as well as interdisciplinary contexts.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to identify and define areas and specific topics of research;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to reflect on and develop complex critical and methodological approaches to the study of literary and related texts, often in interdisciplinary contexts, with a view to generating new knowledge;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to manage large amounts of information originating from a broad range of diverse primary and secondary sources, with a view to bringing out innovative insights and opening up new critical perspectives;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to engage in academic debate and disseminate ideas, in speech and in writing, through a variety of channels and in a variety of national and international contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to maintain an extensive level of engagement in academic discourse through the medium of a foreign language.</p>	<p>Demonstrate ability to develop innovative interpretations of literary and related texts, and of literary-historical processes, in subject-specific as well as interdisciplinary contexts;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to be critical and self-reflective independent scholars, and to transfer knowledge and skills into a variety of different areas of research;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to bring the social, political, and ethical implications of literary texts and other forms of cultural expression into public debate;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to plan and co-ordinate research projects, individually and in co-operation with others, and to function as independent members of the research community;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to independently design and deliver university courses in the area of literary studies, and supervise student work;</p> <p>Demonstrate ability to develop complex ideas and approaches to literature and culture in an intellectually challenging and imaginative way, in subject-specific as well as interdisciplinary contexts.</p>

## 5. TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

An initial consideration when discussing methodologies and teaching practices concerning literature and other related discourses such as filmic texts is that successful teaching should always aspire to a central goal: the presentation of learning as a motivating and exciting process for students. Thus, whenever possible, the courses should be designed in such a way that they are relevant to the group of students being taught. Depending on the type of courses and the freedom allowed to the teacher, this relevance could apply to the design of the whole course or to some of the activities and tasks in the course units.

At any rate, one of the first decisions to be taken by the instructor is the organisation of the programme into units, which should be illustrated by a selection of relevant texts (written, visual, aural) and supported by background reading.

The second decision is the type of training/learning for each unit. This can either be presential (direct contact situation between instructor and students whether face to face in class or tutorials or online) or non-presential (student's own activities outside the classroom/virtual platform communication contexts). At present the presential/non-presential learning ratio within modules has been or is being regulated by the rules of the Bologna process and the implementation of ECTS in each country's educational system.

The teaching/learning methodology finally adopted comes next and must adapt to the designed programme and to the distribution of presential and non-presential modes of learning. It materialises in the choice of learning tasks to be undertaken by students in the development of each unit.

All these processes involve the teacher's preliminary reflection on his/her own responses and critical stances towards the texts and tasks selected. At any rate, for all types of teaching, the instructor must be conscious of choices for 'top-down' deductive approaches (providing students with frameworks for them to apply in a deductive manner) or 'bottom-up' inductive approaches (encouraging students to make their own connections and applications).

### 5.2 DECISIONS FOR PROGRAMME ORGANISATION

Instructors can opt for thematic, textual, generic or historiographic/chronological modes of the organisation of the programme. Intersectional organisation based on a combination of these criteria can sometimes be a very interesting approach.

- Theme/issue organisation: units are organised according to themes addressed in texts. When possible, themes should be chosen with the purpose of engaging students into the reading and discussion of texts. Thus, making themes socially and/or ethically relevant to the students will enhance learning and also discussion,

- since different students will react differently to different themes. An example of such course could be a course on 'Women in Mediterranean literature and film', taught in a Mediterranean country, with each unit organised upon one of the issues that touch on the main concerns involving the situation of women in the specific context of that country nowadays (e.g. gender violence, prostitution, women's movements, domesticity, access to jobs, traditions, leadership), and each one illustrated by a relevant written (novel, short story, play, poem, essay, etc.) and/or visual text (film, documentary, TV sketch, ad, visual art, etc.).
- Generic organisation: units are organised around the various genres and subgenres involved in the study of literature (e.g. fiction, drama, poetry, film, TV series, documentary). The concepts relevant to each genre are studied (e.g. plot, characterisation, point of view, narration, time, etc.). A selection of text samples from different periods to illustrate these concepts is often a useful strategy to give students a chronological perspective too.
  - Chronological/period-based organisation: this involves a study of literary historiography, with an approach to the different periods in the history of a particular literature. Often it incorporates the background of historical events or cultural aspects of each period, and the sociological context of the texts produced. The texts can also be approached from the perspectives of different critical schools (e.g. a reader-response approach to a Victorian novel vs., say, a feminist analysis of it), which may help introduce students to the importance of critical scholarship and the relativism of the text itself, the way the same text is open to multifarious readings.

### 5.3 TRAINING MODALITIES: PRESENTIAL/NON-PRESENTIAL TEACHING/LEARNING

#### Presential teaching/training (30-40% of the total ECTS learning load)

The goal is to introduce the main concepts/issues/themes organising the programme and to guide students towards learning goals, giving them basic instructions and/or supervising their individual/group achievement in tackling the various activities and tasks designed or responding to the readings and texts provided. The methodology used in presential teaching should, whenever possible, stimulate active participation of the students in the development of the teaching/learning process. This interaction generates a sense of responsibility in the students, helps in giving them ownership of their own learning processes, promotes their assimilation of the semantics of the subject in question, and enhances their participation in decision-making regarding the critical analysis and the problem solving involved. In order to achieve this goal the methodology should be characterised by:

- a variety of teaching strategies: expositions (with the help of ICTs, filmic discourses or other visual discourses), debates, case studies, comparative studies, readings, etc.
- the adoption of inquiry-based approaches and use of techniques that promote discussion, reflection and critical evaluation of theoretical frameworks and their practical applications. An example of such technique can be the design of questions by the instructor or by students themselves according to their own responses to

- texts, followed by the students' coordination of discussion of the answers by the whole group.
- Revision and discussion of secondary sources and other supporting material which may have been previously negotiated with the students.
  - collaborative work between students in order to generate competences and skills related to teamwork and decision-making processes in the elaboration of team projects.
  - incorporation of new technologies, such as teaching platforms like Moodle, or various types of chatrooms.

The most common presential forms of teaching are the following:

#### *Masterclass (large group)*

The masterclass is a useful method for the teacher to get through the most important theoretical concepts in the programme. It can also be used as an introduction to the literary period or exposition of the most complicated aspects of primary/secondary readings. The approach is general to the whole large group and only allows for individual questions or responses from selected students, but not for the interaction of the whole group.

The teaching methodology is often theoretical, argumentative and inductive (questioning). The main activity is lecturing by the exposition and presentation of theory and methodology in a lecturing theatre, with the use of teaching materials designed in order to facilitate learning in large groups (presentation packages, transparencies, blackboard, use of audiovisual materials, etc.). Students often receive materials beforehand in order to facilitate learning. These supporting materials could be texts to be analysed, background reading, quotes illustrating main points, summaries, copies of the slides with room for notetaking, etc.

#### *Seminar and workshops (medium-size group/small group)*

Seminars and workshops are useful in order to reinforce the learning of the contents of the large group training/masterclasses as they move on to the practical application of the concepts learned, and focus upon the specific competences of small groups and even individual class members. Thus, these modalities are essential in order to respond to the diversity of learning styles or the various degrees of confidence and stage-fear of students. They obviously allow students more freedom and less intimidation by peer pressure than the masterclass.

The teaching methodology involves a combination of individual, small group, and whole group activities. These include: inductive presentation of activities around literary concepts (jigsaw information, guided questions); close reading; text comparison and critical thinking activities on chosen texts; group debate on critical conclusions in small groups coordinated by students themselves, and expositions to the whole seminar. The degree of guidance by the instructor can be adapted to the level of individual/group competence and the stage in the development of the programme.

#### *Tutorials*

Tutorials offer a unique training space for the promotion of a higher degree of intimacy, which may help create a different, more friendly, rapport between teacher and students from that established in the classroom. This new space facilitates negotiations and interactions between participants. Tutorials thus help enhancing learning autonomy and interactive capacities.

In methodological terms, there can be group or individual tutorials. Through ICTs this contact can also take place online, through the many virtual platforms for teaching. Depending on the number of students in the group there could be an individualised tutorial plan which will help teachers monitor individual student learning, supervise the progress of autonomy in individual students' learning processes, and negotiate specific remedial activities when needed. The limitations of this mode of teaching are obviously a function of the size of the group, since the teacher may not be able to cater for each one of the students individually.

#### Non-presential learning/training (60% of the ECTS allocated to subject)

The goal here is to promote autonomous learning activities that will make the student the protagonist of his/her own learning processes, thus playing an active role in decision-making about activities suitable to his/her own learning profile.

- Team-work: elaboration of a project developed around, or in synergy with, the contents of presential teaching. Students develop communication, management and co-ordination skills when working in a group, while also learning to negotiate confidence, compromise, distribution of tasks and conflict resolution skills. The teacher must be, nevertheless, prepared to evaluate also individual performance in these projects, since large groups may encompass individuals whose grading expectations differ drastically and often tend to distribute workload unevenly (with those aiming at the highest grade frequently taking a heavier load than the rest).
- Individual work: individual guided projects where the student applies what has been learned in the contact hours. The student must practise his/her own research skills in finding, selecting, ordering and interpreting the most relevant library/online sources, and write an original text where her/his own contributions are clearly shown to complement and developed ideas discovered during the research process. This activity aims at consolidating synthetic and analytical skills and tests the conceptualisation of the subject. The student must also learn to justify and defend his/her work before the teacher or in mock viva voce student panels.
- Individual/team field-work: students must interact with people from other academic and non-academic sectors working on the practical application of literary knowledge (publishing houses, cultural events, schools, etc.). This can take the form of a critical interview or a documentary, which can then be validated as ECTS credits within the module.
- Complementary activities accreditation: attending cultural events around literature/cinema, writing, creative activity (literary festivals, international conferences, theatre performances, cinema premieres, exhibitions, etc.) could be validated as ECTS when students produce a critical dossier on the activity attended.

#### 5.4 SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE: A BRIEF LIST OF SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

There is no room here for a comprehensive list of models of good practice and useful sources related to the teaching of literature. What follows is merely a list of some successful ones:

- cinema adaptation of literature: contrasting contexts, themes, perspectives between novels and films, for instance;
- creative writing: as narrator or character of the novels/short stories read/films watched (e.g. 'what happens next?', private diary of one of the characters, reading between the lines, the hidden texts, etc.);
- general essay (argumentative, illustrative);
- literature circles/film fans: (teacher as facilitator, fellow commentator, reader/viewer);
- note taking (briefing of debates) by students (later monitored and sent to all members of the group by the teacher);
- online forum/chats on reading interests (with or without prompts from teacher);
- short film/documentary projects;
- Socratic dialogue seminars (with students moving from inner to outer circles and taking terms in questioning and answering);
- students' learning diaries: for the continuous evaluation of work by instructor;
- viewing/reading cards: with questions on films/stories; all cards are put into an online card repository at the end of the course;
- visual representation of the contents of a written/visual text, using mime, parallel dramatisation, ideograms, graphics, incomplete charts, pictorial games, etc.

## 6. ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES TO MEASURE LEARNING

The assessment strategies that are used in literary studies are linked to more general assessment strategies used in academia, but they also respond to specific needs of literary studies.

As has been emphasised earlier in this report, the last two decades have been a period of significant shifts, indeed deep changes in the very conceptualisation of the field of literary studies, which have also affected the way in which educational goals are being set. Branching out towards other disciplines, and, more generally, the opening-up of literary studies towards interdisciplinary approaches, have necessarily affected the way in which concrete programs in various academic environments are being created. The change of paradigm in humanities with linguistic turn, and the dominance of constructivism, which brought about a serious critical re-evaluation of some key concepts in theory, have also induced significant changes in traditional literary curricula. The concept of national literature has been seriously challenged by a number of factors, one of them being the global phenomenon of mass migrations. Traditional canons keep on being revised in order to include various literary and cultural texts that are of importance for various social groups, and various audiences. Specificities of local communities are being put in perspective with more general views of globalised processes in the field of culture and in other areas of social life. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that despite all of these changes literary studies tends to preserve a particular position within academia, as a repository of cultural memory of different social groups. And together with other humanities, the discipline of literary studies has a significant role in development of cultural literacy and critical thinking.

Thus during the consultation process following the formulation by the HUMART group of specific competences to be achieved in literary studies, all the four groups (academics, students, graduates, and employers) indicated that they most highly valued the two first competences on the list: 1. Ability to read, analyze and interpret literary texts, and 2. Ability to develop a critical, self-reflective approach to literature and cultural history. In other words, all of them recognised and valued interpretative strategies to be mastered during an academic course in literary studies which enables trainees to apply them to all kinds of cultural texts.

Thus assessment in literary studies has an important task to foster quality in educational processes, but without interfering into complex processes of rethinking and reshaping disciplinary borders of literary studies and their (inter)disciplinary challenges of the new research and learning environment. The necessity to work beyond disciplinary boundaries and to co-operate closely with other related fields like film studies, media studies, women's studies, queer studies, etc. should be adequately recognised and valued in assessment processes. Also, when it comes to research, it is important to recognise the need of literary scholars to publish in peer-reviewed journals across wide interdisciplinary areas of study and to acknowledge the value of such endeavours (which for example can be a serious problem in educational systems where scholars have to be registered in a discipline without much flexibility in the later stages of their careers).

While it was not possible within the current Tuning programme to make a detailed analysis of assessment practice across Europe, the problem was discussed, and some major observations have been made.

Firstly, we have concluded that in literary studies a variety of practices to assess students' knowledge is being used, including written and oral examinations, individual and group presentations, literature reviews, mid-term papers and response papers of various kinds. In general, the preference whether to examine students in written or oral form or to substitute an exam with a final paper depends on local academic traditions, class sizes and teacher choices. It seems that teaching at the level of the first cycle generally privileges exams over final papers, while in the second and the third cycles the ratio changes, giving more importance to essay writing. But in order to have more exact data, it would be necessary to make a more comprehensive review of academic practice internationally.

We have also recognized the growing mutual participation of both teachers and students in the evaluation processes. It concerns more and more widely accepted practice of including students' evaluations in the quality assessment mechanisms, which gives space to students to voice their opinions, requirements and concerns regarding not only specific courses, but also the educational institutions themselves. Students' course evaluations usually include an evaluation of the course itself, as well as of the teacher's educational methods and practices, his/her ability to present course material in a clear and adequate manner and to set clear requirements for the course, and a number of related questions. It would be useful to extend these evaluation practices to other forms of work in the educational process, like tutoring, thesis supervision, etc.

Apart from those most immediate forms of assessment, i.e. the evaluation of student work by teachers which serves as the basis for obtaining a degree in the specific area of studies, and of students' evaluation of their courses which should give them voice as participants in educational processes, there are also other quality assurance mechanisms that operate on institutional and extra-institutional levels. Some of them are regular accreditation and re-accreditation processes, annual reviews at departmental/institutional level, and periodic reviews organised both internally and externally. It is not our intention to enumerate them here, but rather to confirm their relevance for the continuous critical effort to develop and maintain high-level educational programmes in academia.

An international perspective offered through various forms of co-operation is of particular importance in this respect since it enables all participants in educational processes to get a comparative perspective on their own work.

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