

Updated on 23 February 2018

“Opened my eyes to the impact of language on society”

Sophia Pious, BEST class of 2017

1. At what levels are English Studies programmes offered by Open University Malaysia (OUM)?

English Studies is offered at the **Bachelor**, **Masters** and **Doctoral** levels.

2. Which of these programmes in English Studies should I pursue?

Opt for the Bachelor of English Studies (Hons.) (**BEST**) if you have yet to earn a first degree and want to acquire a firm foundation in the discipline.

If you already have a recognised degree in any discipline and want to acquire an advanced degree in English, the Master of English Studies (**MEST**) programme is for you.

Even if you have yet to obtain a basic degree in any discipline, you may still be eligible to join MEST if (i) you are above 30 years of age in the year of application, (ii) have accumulated the relevant prior experience, and (iii) pass OUM’s **APEL** assessment. For more on APEL, visit <http://apel.oum.edu.my/apel/>

Prospective learners with at least a Masters in a relevant field and who are keen on research may pursue English Studies via the **PhD Arts** route offered by OUM.

3. Are OUM’s English Studies degree programmes offered in full-time or part-time mode?

All OUM degrees programmes offered in Malaysia are run in **part-time mode**, making them particularly suitable for working adults seeking to upgrade their qualifications, knowledge and skills without having to give up their jobs or compromise on their life responsibilities.

4. How are OUM’s English Studies degrees different from English programmes offered elsewhere?

BEST and **MEST** are uniquely different from traditional offerings of English. Both programmes are reflective of English as an evolving intellectual discipline offered in progressive universities across the globe.

“A journey that will change your life forever”

AP Dr Jamaluddin Aziz, National University of Malaysia

BEST takes as grounding that ‘doing English’ need not be interpreted solely in the traditional sense as choosing to study one branch of English (e.g., linguistics, communication) instead of the other branches (e.g., literature). **BEST** demonstrates that ‘doing English’ could alternatively and productively mean learning the essentials from the major branches of English in order to acquire a rounded contemporary education.

In other words, **BEST**’s curriculum provides learners with opportunities to acquire not only advanced language proficiency but also knowledge and competencies in linguistics, communication, including advanced and professional writing, as well as literary and cultural studies.

MEST, by contrast, is more specialised, as is expected of an advanced degree. It builds on **BEST** by emphasizing depth over breadth, leaning as it does towards a combination of Literary and Cultural Studies.

For more on the unique curricula of English Studies at OUM, see, for example, <https://goo.gl/CsaJLL>

The **PhD Arts (English Studies)** programme is research-based and suitable for independent, self-directed learners of advanced standing.

5. What does English Studies at OUM offer me?

In terms of learning outcomes, learners who successfully complete an English Studies programme at OUM can expect to be able to:

- demonstrate advanced English language proficiency skills and knowledge
- engage imaginatively in the advanced process of reading, analysing and/or producing complex and sophisticated literary and non-literary texts and discourse
- demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of contextual approaches to the production and reception of texts and discourses across fields
- reflect critically upon textual production and reception across time and space and in their own practice
- apply a range of subject-specific and transferrable skills, including high-order conceptual, analytic and communication skills
- embark on further study in English or related disciplines at higher levels.

“Discerning and immersive”

Tan Twan Eng, author of the award-winning *The Garden of Evening Mists*

6. What are the taught courses offered under BEST and MEST?

Listed by component, **BEST core courses** comprise:

Advanced Literacy Skills: Critical Reading; Critical Writing; Writing & Reading Across the Curriculum; Advanced Writing: Argument and Persuasion; Advanced Writing: Elements of Style.

Language & Linguistics: English Across Time & Space; Introduction to General Linguistics; English Grammar; Sociolinguistics; Psycholinguistics; Language Policy & Planning; Language & the Digital Age

Communication: Professional Communication; Introduction to Media & Culture; Editing for Print & Electronic Publications; Copywriting; Principles of Advertising; Professional Writing 1: Core Competencies; Professional Writing 2: Writing Across Fields

Literary & Cultural Studies: Introduction to Novels & Short Stories; Introduction to Drama & Poetry; Language and Literature: Texts & Contexts; Contemporary Asian Short Fiction; Critical & Cultural Theory; Southeast Asian Cultural Production; Postcolonial Studies; Contemporary Fiction & Film.

MEST core courses comprise:

Academic Writing for Postgraduates; Mapping English Studies; Reading Literature; Research in English Studies; Language, Power & Society; Literary Theory; Malaysian Fiction; Creative Nonfiction; Cultural Studies; World Literature; Visual Culture; Film & Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia; Postcolonial Writings; Advanced Readings in Critical Theory

7. I understand that research is compulsory at the doctoral level. But if I were to pursue BEST or MEST, would I need to do any research?

BEST and **MEST** are full-coursework programmes which do *not* require learners to produce an extended dissertation. Both programmes however require learners to complete course assignments which entail small-scale guided research.

“Intellectually stimulating”

Dr Boreth Ly, University of California, Santa Cruz

8. How do BEST and MEST compare to TESL programmes?

BEST and **MEST** do *not* share the same curriculum with TESL (Teaching of English as a Second Language) programmes.

TESL is essentially a teaching degree. Its focus is more on equipping learners with pedagogic skills to be teachers of the English language. Of course, TESL graduates are not constrained to the teaching path. Many TESL graduates enjoy careers outside teaching. Similarly, BEST and MEST graduates can opt to teach.

For more on this, visit <https://goo.gl/KXDSAJ>

9. Can I enter the teaching profession with BEST, MEST or PhD Arts (English Studies)?

Innumerable English Studies graduates are gainfully employed as teachers in learning institutions. You should nonetheless consider checking with your prospective institutions or employers if the scope of the degree you are planning to obtain fits what they have in mind when they look for potential employees to teach in particular areas within the broad field of English.

10. How soon can I complete BEST, MEST, or PhD Arts (English Studies)?

BEST is a 120 credit-hour programme, which means that it can typically be completed in 14 semesters.

That's approximately 4 ½ years if the programme is completed without any credit transfer, and if learners take the standard 3 courses per semester path.

Those whose English language proficiency is already very advanced should be able to take more than 3 courses per semester, subject to conditions.

MEST is a 42 credit-hour programme, which can be completed in a minimum of 6 semesters, or 2 years.

The duration to complete **PhD Arts (English Studies)** is between 4 to 8 years.

“Discover new worlds and ultimately yourself”

Dr Alicia Izharuddin, University of Malaya

11. How are BEST, MEST and PhD Arts (English Studies) delivered?

BEST and **MEST** run in **online** as well as **blended** modes.

Online mode means that you can follow an OUM programme from anywhere in Malaysia, at your own pace and alongside your online peers, with the guidance of your e-tutor. In this mode, you need *not* attend face-to-face tutorials or seminars, unless you want or are able to.

Blended mode refers to a combination of online study and face-to-face tutorials/seminars. Face-to-face tutorials/seminars are supplementary, and useful only to those who need them.

Face-to-face tutorials and seminars for **BEST** and **MEST** are offered only at selected Learning Centres. Tutorials for BEST core courses are held at the **Petaling Jaya Learning Centre (PJLC)**, while MEST seminars are held at the **Kuala Lumpur Learning Centre (KLLC)**.

This flexibility of modes is a specialty of OUM, the first open and distance learning university in Malaysia. It is particularly suitable for self-directed adult learners who want to upgrade their skills and qualifications on a part-time basis without having to give up work and other life commitments.

For **PhD Arts (English Studies)**, learners are required to take a set of research preparatory courses which may require face-to-face attendance. Thereafter, learners may complete the programme from any location with the guidance of a supervisor.

12. When can I join BEST, MEST, or PhD Arts (English Studies)?

BEST and **MEST** programmes have intakes in the January, May and September semesters. Learners accepted into the **PhD Arts (English Studies)** programme may join OUM at any time of the year.

13. Who are the teaching staff responsible for delivering English Studies at OUM?

English Studies programmes at OUM are delivered by qualified and experienced subject-matter experts and tutors/facilitators with degrees from reputable universities.

The Programme Director is **AP Dr David Lim**. Dr Lim obtained his PhD from the Australian National University. He has held the positions of Postdoctoral Fellow at Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, and Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University.

“Fits your learning around your life”

Prof Dr Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, University of Malaya

He is the author of *The Infinite Longing for Home: Desire and the Nation in Selected Writings of Ben Okri and KS Maniam* (Rodopi), editor of *Overcoming Passion for Race in Malaysia Cultural Studies* (Brill), and co-editor of *Film in Contemporary Southeast Asia: Cultural Interpretation and Social Intervention* (Routledge). He has also been published in such international refereed journals as *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, and *Wasafiri*.

14. Are course materials provided by OUM?

All core learning materials are provided or made available for library loan. They include specially-commissioned course modules, e-textbooks, study guides, reading bricks, AV files, CDs and/or DVDs. Learners may also use OUM’s physical and digital libraries to access a wide range of learning materials.

15. How will I be assessed should I enrol for BEST, MEST, or PhD Arts (English Studies)?

For **BEST** and **MEST**, assessment methods vary from course to course. Most courses have assignments and final exams. Assessment for several advanced courses is entirely assignment-based. At the **PhD Arts** level, the dissertation is the main assessment.

16. How much does it cost to pursue BEST, MEST or PhD Arts (English Studies)? Are there special rates for senior citizens and physically-challenged learners?

Fees for **BEST** amount to RM23,400. For full breakdown of fees, visit <http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/bach-englishStudies.php>

Fees for **MEST** amount to RM22,932. For full breakdown of fees, visit <http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/master-englishStudies.php>

The minimum cost of pursuing the **PhD Arts (English Studies)** programme at OUM is RM26,598. For full breakdown of fees, visit <http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/doctor-philosophyArt.php>

A 50% discount on fees is offered to qualified senior citizens and physically-challenged learners

All fees are subject to revision without prior notice.

“Rigorous and enriching”

K. N. Krishnadas, MEST class of 2015

For further enquiries on fees and financial matters, please email OUM’s Marketing Unit at enquiries@oum.edu.my or call +60-3-2773 2121.

17. Can I apply for a PTPTN loan if I want to pursue BEST, MEST or PhD Arts (English Studies)?

The PTPTN loan is only available to Malaysian citizens enrolled in a recognised **undergraduate** programme such as **BEST**. You can only apply for a PTPTN loan *after* you have applied, been accepted and registered in the programme. For more information on PTPTN loan, visit <http://www.ptptn.gov.my/>

18. Are BEST, MEST and PhD Arts (English Studies) recognised by the Malaysian government?

BEST (A9470) and **MEST** (A11501) are fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). The **PhD Arts** programme is due for full MQA accreditation.

19. What are the potential career paths for English Studies graduates?

English graduates have thrived in diverse careers. This is because they possess not only subject knowledge and subject specific skills, but also such transferable graduate skills as advanced literacy and communication skills, critical reasoning, and the capacity to critically analyse diverse forms of discourse.

Interesting and diverse career paths await English graduates, including Teaching, Training, Journalism, Management, Professional Writing, Creative Writing, Research, Editorial, Advertising, Media, Public Relations, Academia, Theatre, Consultancy, and more.

On the marketability of English graduates, see, for example, <https://goo.gl/C4XGe5>

20. I’ve decided I want to pursue English Studies at OUM. How do I apply?

Apply online at <http://fastrac.oum.edu.my/>

Alternatively, visit any of OUM’s Learning Centres (LCs) located throughout the country for guidance. For info on the LCs, go to http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/prospective/prospective/learning_centres.php

21. Where can I find more details on OUM's English Studies programmes?

For **BEST** details, visit <http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/bach-englishStudies.php>

Details on **MEST** are accessible here:

<http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/master-englishStudies.php>

For more on **PhD Arts (English Studies)**, go to

<http://www.oum.edu.my/pages/cluster/ESS/doctor-philosophyArt.php>

22. Whom should I contact if I need to find out more about OUM's English Studies programmes?

For academic-related enquiries related to English Studies, email AP Dr David Lim at david@oum.edu.my or call +60-3-2773 2723.

For general enquiries on OUM programmes, email the Marketing Unit at enquiries@oum.edu.my or call +60-3-2773 2121.

*All information contained in this FAQ are subject to change without prior notice