

Updated: 10 September 2019

“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. For more on the standard entry requirements, visit:

<https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/bachelor-of-english-studies-with-honours/>

Aside from the standard entry requirements, you would also need to have obtained a minimum score of 6.0 in **IELTS** or equivalent (e.g., TOEFL, MUET, Cambridge English Qualifications). This is mandated by MQA effective September 2019.

If you meet all standard entry requirements but do not possess a minimum score of 6.0 in IELTS or equivalent, you may apply to join BEST via the APEL route which takes into account your previous work and learning experience. To know more about APEL, visit:

<http://apel.oum.edu.my/apel/>

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

<https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/master-of-english-studies/>

Even if you have yet to obtain a basic degree in any discipline, you may still be eligible to join **MEST** if you (i) are 30 years old or above in the year of application; (ii) possess Diploma/A-Levels/STPM qualification or equivalent; (iii) have accumulated the relevant prior experience, and (iv) 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.

“A journey that will change your life forever.”
AP Dr Jamaluddin Aziz, National University of Malaysia

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.

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 writing, as well as literary and cultural studies.

MEST builds on **BEST** by offering contemporary courses in language studies, writing, and literary studies. These courses are simultaneously accessible to learners new to the discipline and sufficiently advanced to stimulate new ways of thinking.

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

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

“Discerning and immersive.”

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

- engage critically and imaginatively in the process of reading, analysing and producing advanced 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.

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

BEST courses (120 credits) comprise:

Compulsory MPU Courses (12 credits): Hubungan Etnik; Entrepreneurship; Tamadun Islam and Tamadun Asia; Health and Wellness; Community Service

Core Courses (81 credits): Learning Skills for the 21st Century; English for Written Communication; English for Oral Communication; English for Science and Technical Purposes; Professional Ethics; Critical Reading; English Across Time and Space; Critical Writing; English Grammar; Sociolinguistics; Psycholinguistics; Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum; Professional Communication; Language and the Digital Age; Advanced Writing: Argument and Persuasion; Introduction to Media and Culture; Language Policy and Planning; Language and Literature: Texts and Contexts; Advanced Writing: Elements of Style; Contemporary Asian Short Fiction; Southeast Asian Cultural Production; Critical and Cultural Theory; Contemporary Fiction and Film; Postcolonial Studies; Introduction to General Linguistics; Introduction to Drama and Poetry; Introduction to Novels and Short Stories

Core: Final Year Project (6 credits)

Core: Industrial Training (6 credits / 12 weeks)

MEST courses (42 credits) include:

Core Courses (27 credits): Mapping English Studies; Academic Writing for Postgraduates; Reading Literature; Language, Power and Society; Creative Nonfiction; World Literature; Research in English Studies 1; Global Englishes; Sense of Style

Electives (9 credits): Malaysian Fiction; Literary Theory; Cultural Studies; Film and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia; Postcolonial Writings

Project (6 credits)

“Intellectually stimulating”

Dr Boreth Ly, University of California, Santa Cruz

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** comprise mostly taught courses and a small project write-up component.

For **BEST**, there is a final-year project that requires learners to produce a guided write-up of about 10,000 words or its equivalent.

For **MEST**, the guided project write-up is about 15,000 words or its equivalent.

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 and trainers, among other professions. 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, as mandated by MQA.

**“Discover new worlds and ultimately yourself”
Dr Alicia Izharuddin, Harvard University**

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

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 **OUM Graduate Centre (OUMGC)** in **Kuala Lumpur**.

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 academic 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.

“Fits your learning around your life”
Prof Dr Sharmani Patricia Gabriel, University of Malaya

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.

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 RM24,720. For full breakdown of fees, visit <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/bachelor-of-english-studies-with-honours/>

Fees for **MEST** amount to RM23,268. For full breakdown of fees, visit <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/master-of-english-studies/>

The minimum cost of pursuing the **PhD Arts (English Studies)** programme at OUM is RM27,878. For full breakdown of fees, visit <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/doctor-of-philosophy-arts/>

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. 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 / Humanities graduates, see, for example, <https://goo.gl/C4XGe5>, <https://bit.ly/2VCO6ha>, and <https://bit.ly/2KjX55E>

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 <https://www.oum.edu.my/learningcentres/>

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

For **BEST** details, visit <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/bachelor-of-english-studies-with-honours/>

Details on **MEST** are accessible here: <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/master-of-english-studies/>

For more on **PhD Arts (English Studies)**, go to <https://www.oum.edu.my/portfolio-items/doctor-of-philosophy-arts/>

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 revision without prior notice.