



# **South Gate** Creative Writing School

The art and business of storytelling



## **Quality Assurance**



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## **Introduction**

Welcome to Quality Assurance for South Gate Creative Writing School.

South Gate Creative Writing School (South Gate) is an institution that nurtures creativity and literary excellence among its students. With a close-knit community of students and faculty, South Gate fosters a vibrant and supportive environment where creativity thrives. This Quality Assurance (QA) policy is designed to complement our existing harmonious and constructive atmosphere by adding structured, formal procedures to ensure the continuous enhancement of our educational quality.

LeAnne Kline, Director of South Gate, is responsible for implementing QA procedures and maintaining South Gate's excellence.



## **Main Purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy**

The purpose of the QA policy at South Gate is to ensure the relevance and excellence of the Degree of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. This is achieved through clearly defined purposes, procedures, and objectives that align with our educational philosophy and operational framework.

## **Procedure for Revision and Publication of the QA Policy:**

### **Revision:**

The QA policy is reviewed annually by a committee consisting of the Director, Operations Manager, and Administrative Manager. Before the initial meeting, the committee must gather proposed amendments from the faculty. The committee will discuss the feedback and formulate a revised QA policy.

### **Publication**

The revised QA policy is published on the school's website, and students, faculty, and stakeholders are informed about it through appropriate communication channels.

### **Division of Responsibilities**

The overall responsibility for QA at South Gate rests with the Director.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the QA are maintained on an annually rotating basis.

- The QA is embedded in the daily work, ensuring the program's quality.
- At the end of the spring semester (May or June) the following meetings will be scheduled:
  - Student Board Meeting
  - Study Board Meeting
  - Advisory Committee Meeting
  - External Examiner's Meeting
  - Full time employee reviews
- At the end of the fall semester (December or January) the following meetings will be scheduled:
  - Student Board Meeting
  - Study Board Meeting
- By the end of the year (December), the QA policy is revised, edited, and posted on the website.

## **Study Board**

South Gate has established a comprehensive evaluation process that focuses on learning outcomes, teaching methods, and overall student satisfaction. The organizational responsibility for the quality of the education lies with the Study Board (made up of





representatives of the school's management and faculty), who work closely together to analyze and implement improvements based on the feedback collected.

## **Study Board Members**

The Study Board consists of:

1. Chair (the Director)
2. Administrative Manager
3. Operations Manager
4. Instructor Representative
5. Student Representative

## **Goals**

The goal of the Study Board is to work together on program excellence, which includes incorporating student feedback meaningfully. The Study Board will generally attempt to make unanimous decisions but will vote in those instances where unanimity is impossible. In the case of a tied vote, the Chair has the deciding vote. The Chair is also responsible for the student surveys being implemented.

In the cases where there is an issue with an instructor's performance, it is the responsibility of the Operations Manager to discuss the matter with the instructor to help improve the course. If the instructor does not improve a course over two consecutive semesters, the course will be assigned to a different instructor.

## **Meetings**

The Study Board meets once a semester after the Student Board meeting has concluded.



## **Advisory Board**

The Advisory Board consists of a group of industry professionals who discuss the industry's current need for skills and competencies from graduates in their field as relates to the South Gate curriculum. Due to the varied nature of South Gate graduates' employment, employability measures and initiatives are always on the agenda for every Advisory Board meeting. [It should be noted that South Gate dismantled its previously-named "Steering Committee" and evolved it into this new group of industry professionals with more specific goals].

### **Purpose**

The advisory board helps South Gate stay abreast of the state of the art of creative industries, in particular the literary field. The advisory board members also provide feedback on graduate employability, ensuring that the school maintains an appropriate academic standard and gives feedback on curriculum development.

### **Board Members**

The board members should consist of a diverse group of experts, with deep knowledge of literature, publishing, creative industries and/or employability, in order to best assist South Gate in updating and evolving its curriculum.

### **Meetings**

The Advisory Board will meet once a year for three hours and will include board members as well as the Director, Operations Manager, Administrative Manager and any instructor or relevant guests invited by the Director. During the meeting, the board members will discuss the industry's current need for skills and competencies from graduates in their field as relates to the South Gate curriculum. The meeting is chaired by the Director.





## Admissions Board

The Admissions Board is formed on an annual basis and consists of two to three individuals whose job it is to evaluate each application. The Director is the final arbiter of which applicants are enrolled in the program.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Admissions Board is to enlist two to three individuals with experience in education, creative writing, or other related fields to neutrally assess each application in a fair and judicial way based on an applicant's work ethic, grades, writing sample, letters of recommendation, ancillary materials such as awards and publications.

### **Process and Decision**

**Application Materials:** The board member is notified through proper channels that an application has been received, and the following application materials are made available to them: CV, Personal Statement, Writing Sample, Transcripts, Letters of Recommendation, and any Ancillary Materials. If applicant has completed the media survey, this is also made available to the board member.

**Evaluation:** Then, they evaluate the materials to decide if the applicant has the work ethic, motivation, and ability to thrive in the program.

**Decision:** Finally, they return an assessment (based on a template) of the applicant's materials within 2-3 weeks of receipt.

### **Meetings**

The Admissions Board does not meet but sends their recommendation by email to the Director.



## **Student Board**

The Student Board meeting consists of the Student Representative and the student body to provide a free, open dialogue as well as anonymity for all students to discuss the previous semester.

### **Purpose**

An open forum for all students who have successfully completed a minimum of one full semester (attended classes, submitted exams, and received grades) in which they can discuss the semester course surveys and the environment and needs of the students to successfully attend and succeed at South Gate.

### **Meetings**

The Student Board meets once per semester before the Study Board meeting is held.

An agenda is created by the Student Representative, who will meet with the Operations Manager to go over the semester course surveys before the meeting. After the meeting, the Student Representative collates the information to bring to the Study Board meeting. This procedure allows students to bring any issues that may fall outside of course evaluations — positive as well as negative — to the attention of the Study Board.



## Course Evaluations

At South Gate, we place great emphasis on the continuous evaluation and improvement of our courses, workshops, and masterclasses, not only to ensure a high-quality learning experience for our students but also to remain at the forefront of industry trends and maintain relevance in the ever-evolving landscape of creative writing.

### Instructor Qualifications

To teach any of our core courses, an instructor must have at minimum, a master's degree or equivalent professional experience in the industry.

### Course Evaluations Methods

Secondly, we have established a comprehensive evaluation process that focuses on learning outcomes, teaching methods, and overall student satisfaction.

### Responsibility for Quality of Curriculum

The organizational responsibility for the quality of the education lies with the Study Board (made up of representatives of the school's management and faculty), who work closely together to analyze and implement improvements based on the feedback collected.

### Evaluation Frequency and Method

**Student Surveys:** Surveys are sent to all attendees of a course, workshop, masterclass, and guest lecture. The results help the Study Board assess the learning experience and gather valuable insights into areas for improvement upon courses, value and relevancy of workshops, masterclasses, and guest lectures.

**Instructor Surveys:** In addition, we ask that our instructors, guest instructors, and guest lecturers answer a survey in regard to their professional insight into the importance of their field of expertise in the creative writing industry.

### Student Survey Questions

The evaluation forms contain a range of questions designed to capture student feedback on various aspects of the course. Below is the list of all questions included in the evaluation forms:

1. Overview
  - a. Self-Assess: Level of effort you put into this course
  - b. Semester: In which semester are you taking this course?
  - c. What was your overall impression/enjoyment of this course?
2. Before/After
  - a. How many of the texts had you read before this semester?
  - b. How many of the texts did you read this semester?
  - c. Did you read the books or listen to them as audiobooks?
  - d. Your level of skill/knowledge at the end of the course
  - e. Would your skill level decrease if the number of assigned texts decreased?



- f. Would your skill level increase if the number of texts increased?
3. Skill and responsiveness of the instructor
  - a. Instructor was an effective lecturer
  - b. Presentations were clear and organized
  - c. Instructor stimulated student interest
  - d. Instructor effectively used time during class periods
  - e. Instructor was available and helpful
4. Course content:
  - a. Syllabus had clear learning objectives
  - b. Course content was organized with the syllabus
  - c. Course workload was appropriate
  - d. Course organized to allow all students to participate fully
5. Exam:
  - a. Exam requirements in the syllabus were clear
  - b. There was enough time to complete this exam
6. Final Comments
  - a. What aspects of this course were most useful or valuable?
  - b. How would you improve this course?
  - c. Would you recommend this course be taught again to future South Gate students or would you replace it with something else (if so, please specify)?
  - d. Do you have anything to add? If so, your comments are appreciated

### **Instructor Survey Questions:**

1. **What is the name of the workshop, masterclass, or guest lecture you presented at South Gate?**
2. **Relevance to Creative Writing:** In your opinion, how does your specific expertise intersect with the world of creative writing, and why do you believe it's crucial for our students to be exposed to this perspective?
3. **Benefits to Students:** How do you envision our creative writing students benefiting from the knowledge and insights you've shared during your presentation, especially as they embark on their own writing journeys?
4. **Industry Integration:** Given the evolving nature of the creative writing industry, how do you see your area of expertise playing a role in shaping the future of storytelling and content creation?
5. **Collaborative Opportunities:**  
Can you suggest ways our students might collaborate or engage with professionals in your field to enrich their writing experiences and expand their horizons?
6. **Personal Experience:**  
From your personal journey, can you share an instance where a collaboration or interaction with a creative writer led to a unique and impactful outcome, showcasing the synergy between your expertise and the world of creative writing?
7. **Challenging Perceptions:**  
While many perceive creative writing as merely a hobby, its influence permeates



almost every facet of our daily lives. From the content we consume to the narratives that shape our worldviews, writing plays a pivotal role. Can you elucidate the importance and far-reaching impact of a formal education in creative writing, especially in challenging such misconceptions?

#### 8. **Additional Comments**

Feel free to write other comments here.

### **Follow-up and Improvement**

After Course Surveys are submitted by students and instructors, two meetings are held: Student Board meeting and Study Board meeting. See details of these meetings within this document. This approach ensures that the course surveys are carried out and implemented in a way that supports the students in achieving the overall learning outcomes and maintains a high standard of educational quality.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, we encourage open communication between students and faculty, allowing for ongoing feedback and adjustments throughout the semester.

### **Examples of student feedback that has been implemented:**

Many small requests have been accommodated and immediately implemented (for example, students requested that everyone take off their shoes when entering the school and bring house slippers), but below are some of the most impactful student-driven requests.

#### **1. Eight Genre-Driven Semesters**

One of the biggest implementations of student feedback was when the students wanted to have more genre-driven semesters. South Gate's original curriculum began the education with two semesters of Introduction to Creative Writing followed by four genre-driven semesters (Science Fiction and Fantasy, Gothic and Horror, Mystery and Crime, and Romance), followed by two senior-project semesters. At the students' suggestions, we removed Introduction to Creative Writing and developed four additional genre-driven semesters: Narrative Complexity, Children's Literature, Transmedia and Seriality, and Literary Realism.

#### **2. Diversity and Representation**

More diversity and representation in the course readings: The school has endeavored to continually evaluate the primary texts assigned in a semester (approximately 10-15 texts per semester ranging from the 1700s to the 2020s) and assess the authors and characters in terms of: gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, religion, and countries of origin. For example, when given the choice between E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* or *Maurice*, we have chosen *Maurice*.



In addition, in 2022 South Gate started an in-depth, 4-year study of all assigned textbooks. As we teach each semester during this 4-year period, we evaluate every assigned genre text and enter data into a spreadsheet on the author and the characters within the narrative.

### **3. Suggested Readings and Forms of Primary Texts**

- a. Incorporating a list of Required and *Suggested* Readings: Students asked the instructors to provide, in addition to the semester's required texts, more texts they could engage with within a particular subgenre. We have therefore implemented a Suggested Readings section on our syllabi to help students delve more deeply into the sub-genre they are interested in studying further.
- b. South Gate has also endeavored to mix up the forms of texts assigned for required readings to include not only novels, but also short stories, comics, graphic novels, screenplays, films, games, and poetry.

### **4. Clubs & Extracurricular Activities**

Students requested extracurricular activities and clubs. South Gate has implemented the following:

- a. Film club in which students watch and analyze films and discuss production and visual narrative techniques.
- b. Gaming club with an educational focus on collaborative storytelling.
- c. Writing workshop club for students, alumni, and faculty to write together and submit work for critique.
- d. Field Trips:

This is a sampling of some of the field trips South Gate has taken.

1. AWP Conference Online, 2 years
2. Lindholm Høje
3. Skagen/Grenen
4. The Royal Danish Navy Ships in Frederikshavn,
5. Aalborg Rifle Club
6. Kunsten Modern Art Museum
7. Aalborg Scavenger Hunt
8. Viborg Animation School
9. Hammer Bakker and "Pepper Pond"
10. The Fun Center, Aalborg
11. Det Hem'lige Teater
12. Aalborg Zoo

### **5. Location Change to Downtown Aalborg**

Another monumental student request was for South Gate to move from Aalborg Øst to a more central location in downtown Aalborg. South Gate moved in September 2022 to accommodate this continued request over the





years, which has made travel time to school much shorter for most students, as well as making more downtown activities and comforts available to everyone, which has enhanced the social aspect of the school. For example, students now come to school and *stay* at the school because they feel comfortable working and socializing in their own space; dining together outside of school or getting lunch from various restaurants in the vicinity and eating together in the cantina.



## **Ensuring Education Quality via Guest Speakers and Lecturers**

### **Purpose**

To ensure the curriculum remains relevant and enriched with contemporary insights from the creative writing industry and academia, South Gate will identify and invite guest speakers and lecturers who bring valuable industry or academic insights.

South Gate integrates guest lectures into the curriculum, ensuring alignment with learning objectives.

The Director is responsible for identifying, inviting, and integrating guest instructors and lecturers, and collecting feedback from students and faculty regarding the effectiveness and relevance of guest sessions. All faculty and students are encouraged to suggest topics and guest speakers.

### **Guest Lecturers**

Guest lecturers range from scholars and academics who can discuss topics like representation in literature to scientists in the field of forensics, gaming narrative developers and traditional-style lectures from publishers and authors. All experts share their specialized knowledge with our students to help them become successful writers.



## **Continuing Education of Instructors and Staff**

To ensure that South Gate full time faculty and staff members remain updated with the latest in pedagogical strategies and industry trends in creative writing, South Gate identifies areas for professional development in pedagogy and industry knowledge.

The Director is responsible for facilitating and ensuring the continuous professional development of the full-time faculty and staff.

### **Meetings**

All full-time staff employees and full-time faculty members will meet with the Director at least once per year to discuss their continued development and place within South Gate.

### **Meeting Topics**

Employee meetings will cover the following topics:

1. Looking back: How has the previous year been? Has work gone well and were the agreements from last meeting met?
2. Employment: Are things going well? Does the employee have the tasks that they want? Are they interested in more, fewer, or different courses or tasks?
3. Well-being: How is the employee's relationship with their colleagues? Do they have the support they need? Is work-life balance satisfactory?
4. Looking ahead: Any new ideas for their work and teaching? What can South Gate do to help further professional goals and ambitions?
  - a. In case an employee has turned 55, have they thought about any needed changes to their work and workload? What are their thoughts on retirement and possible reduced workload?

### **Professional Development**

South Gate encourages all full-time faculty members to participate in at least one professional development activity such as AWP, EACWP, or completing a Master Class, in order to foster creative and academic growth. South Gate will sponsor the participation in one such professional development.

### **Research and Grant Applications**

South Gate encourages and supports faculty members who want to form a research funding application-writing club. A research project should be presented first in a brown-bag seminar, before entering the research funding application writing club circle.

### **Part-time staff and instructors**

Part-time staff and instructors are offered meetings with the Director about their employment with an open-door policy. The Director will reach out informally to inquire how classes are going. If a part-time staff member wishes to have a one-on-one meeting with the Operations Manager or the Director, simply request the meeting through appropriate channels. South



Gate will work with the part-time employee to fulfill their professional development but cannot guarantee to sponsor such activities as full-time faculty.



## **Student Attendance and Wellbeing**

Exams are not the only way that South Gate ensures a high level of student engagement and work ethic. The students are assessed on a semester basis to make sure that they have reached the appropriate level to proceed to the next semester.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is taken for all courses at South Gate, although not workshops, masterclasses, or clubs.

If a student is absent for more than 15% of classes, the Student Counselor will reach out to the student to discuss their lack of attendance. The student and Student Counselor will work together to remedy the situation.

No student will be expelled due to lack of attendance but may have to take an academic withdrawal, academic leave, or make an individual study plan.

### **Student wellbeing**

South Gate takes student wellbeing seriously and maintains an open-door policy with both the Student Counselor and the Director being available for student meetings as needed or requested.

In the first semester, the Student Counselor hosts weekly check-ins, where students share and discuss their current level of wellbeing.



## **External Examiners**

To ensure fair, unbiased, and quality assessment of student work, especially for final projects and examinations, South Gate works with a board of external examiners.

South Gate will slowly grow its external examiners board until it has at least seven members. This slow growth is to ensure organic evolution of the board and allow time to identify and recruit the most suitable examiners. Once the board consists of at least seven members, South Gate will begin to rotate membership with at least 15% of the board members changing every two years.

The external examiners will convene at least once a year to discuss the academic status of South Gate. It is the responsibility of the board to draft a report and submit it to the Director of South Gate, including any and all significant feedback from the external examiners.

The external examiner's board is self-organized and independent of South Gate, with South Gate bearing the reasonable costs of the board convening.





## **Collaboration with Educational Institutions**

There are two primary ways that South Gate collaborates with other educational institutions: master's degree and exchange.

### **Master's degree programs**

South Gate contacts and develops liaisons with international universities offering master's degrees in creative writing fields, so that South Gate graduates may continue their education if they choose.

#### **Universities with master's degrees for South Gate Graduates**

1. University of Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom
2. University of Hull
3. Brunel University London
4. Western Colorado University

### **Student Exchange**

The other is student exchange, especially welcoming students from other educational institutions to South Gate. Exchange arrangements will be done on a per-student basis to ensure the optimal experience for visiting students.

### **Local Workshops**

South Gate works academically with other educational institutions, whether this is a matter of providing workshops or doing academic conferences.

### **Collaborations**

Collaborations allow South Gate to grow its network and grow its academic strength and competencies.

The Director is responsible for identifying, engaging, and implementing collaborations with educational institutions. Anyone at South Gate may suggest or recommend a collaboration to the Director who will assess and follow up.



## **Collaborations with External Partners**

South Gate is organically growing its collaborations with external partners, especially industry partners. The aim is to allow students deeper engagement with creative industries to see how these industries work from the inside.

Collaborations especially take the form of lectures by industry members, field trips to organizations and institutions, all with the goal of expanding insight into fields that may not be directly related to creative writing yet will expand the understanding of the craft of writing.

The Director is responsible for identifying, engaging, and implementing collaborations with external partners. Anyone at South Gate may suggest or recommend a collaboration to the Director who will assess and follow up.



## Internship Program

### Purpose

To provide students with practical industry experience and enhance their career readiness through structured internship programs.

### Procedure

**Identification:** Identify potential organizations for student internships

**Coordination:** Coordinate with organizations to establish internship opportunities

**Implementation:** Implement the internship program, ensuring clear learning objectives, mentorship, and evaluation mechanisms

### Responsibility

The Director is responsible for coordinating and implementing the internship program.

### Objectives

There are no formal requirements for internship evaluation. These will be created in a holistic way to ensure that the tasks the student will undertake during their internship align with the goals of the student as well as the industry's needs. No internship can replace the entire curriculum for a semester, and classes will have to be undertaken by the student on top of their internship.

### Requirements of full-time internship

Should the internship be full-time, South Gate allows the student to be absent for no more than one semester to still be considered engaged with the school. Depending on the internship, and if it has been preapproved by the school, South Gate might be able to offer class credit in, for instance, Business; but this requires that the job tasks in the internship align with the curriculum the student would otherwise teach the student. It is required that the student follow the rest of the classes and take the exams to move on to the next year. Should an internship be set up in such a way that it does not interfere with the student's ability to keep up with all classes, South Gate poses no restriction.

Notable for most jobs within the creative field is that the employee is ready to be flexible to new job environments as they appear. This means that regular full-time internships at any one company can be difficult to construct, as they rarely can simulate the work situation in which a person in the creative field operates. There are exceptions to this, and for institutions such as Musikkens Hus, Aalborg Kongres & Kultur Center, Aalborg City, FunCenter ApS, and similar institutions that can make use of a strong writer. Many of these wish to persuade guests with descriptive materials, brochures, and narrative advertising, and, other than writing these with descriptive flair, they also need translation into other languages to better welcome the diversity in Aalborg. It could be institutions like Musikkens Hus, Aalborg Kongres & Kultur Center, or Aalborg City.



### **Project Management Internship**

In certain institutions that focus on team-building, parties, and celebrations, the artistic flair that South Gate students can provide is also an important element in making fun and immersive narratives to engage with. This includes companies such as FunCenter Aalborg ApS, whom South Gate Creative Writing School has previously collaborated with.

### **Writing and Directing Internship**

Businesses like Aalborg Teater, Teater Nordkraft, and Det Hem'lige Teater can use the students for writing and directing community plays that engage with the local population.

### **Journalism Internship**

News agencies would be another internship where the students can implement their skills. Be it in reporting local news to discussion pieces or reviews, depending on the specific student's skillsets in combination with the place of internship, this will naturally vary.

### **Workshop Development & Teaching Internship**

The students can take what they have learned and use it to teach their own workshops through companies such as the local theaters or other suppliers of workshops.

### **Translation Internship**

This can be combined with a simulated independent translation business, where the students do translations for local businesses for items like menus and more.

### **Social Media and Content Development Internship**

Any business interested in standing out in the media landscape would benefit from implementing the skillsets the students have acquired. Students from South Gate would excel in editing and creating engaging content for social media platforms and websites.

### **Publishing Internship**

Publishing houses can use the students to polish and market manuscripts and liaise between writers and publishing houses.

Keeping in mind that most jobs in this line of business can be done remotely, the world is an oyster for a student interested in an internship, and they could work in thousands of different companies, building up their expertise and CV.



## Conclusion

South Gate is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience, ensuring continuous improvement, and adapting to meet the evolving needs of students and the industry. We are grateful to all stakeholders for their contribution to maintaining and enhancing quality at South Gate.