The University Of Sheffield.

Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Bioarchaeology
2. Programme code	BIST08
3. QAA FHEQ level	FHEQ 7
4. Faculty	Arts & Humanities
5. Department	School of Biosciences
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	History
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	August 2023

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MSc	12 months / 24 months
10. Intermediate awards	PG Diploma	12 months / 24 months
	PG certificate	9 months / 18 months

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.*	V400		
12. HECoS code(s) *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	1003484		

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time and Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	Face to Face (on campus)

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Sheffield has a long-standing reputation for excellent research and teaching across different branches of archaeological science. This programme consolidates our expertise, enabling us to capitalise on our diverse scientific sub-disciplines (e.g., stable isotope analysis, histology, geochemistry), and further allows us to make the most of new opportunities that may arise as the programme moves into the School of Biosciences.

Students can design their own programme through a combination of core and optional modules without specifying particular pathways (see programme regulations and specification for further information). Students will play an active part in shaping their programme of study by exercising choice from the available modules. Students can focus on environmental archaeology (zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, geoarchaeology,), human osteology, palaeoanthropology (human evolution; evolutionary anatomy), or combinations of these areas. This flexibility allows students the opportunity to tailor their learning to the skill-set required in their chosen career. Students will benefit from exposure to leading research teams and will have the opportunity to engage in discussions with postgraduate and postdoctoral students and staff, both inside and outside the classroom and laboratory.

Graduates of this programme will have the specialist skills required to both continue in research on a doctoral programme and establish careers in industry. The programme will help meet the demand for growth in the sector identified by the British Academy (2016). Over the course of the 2018–19 financial year, the professional archaeology workforce in the UK grew by 7.8%, and post-fieldwork analysis by specialists was the second most frequently bought-in skill, as well as the second highest skills-shortage identified (after fieldwork) (Archaeological Market Survey 2018–19). The need for archaeological specialists with scientific training was specifically identified through our consultation with our Strategic Partners.

16. Programme aims

MSc Bioarchaeology aims to:	
A1	offer students a programme of study that is qualitatively different from BSc-level study by maximising opportunities for independent study and reflective practice.
A2	enable students to increase their knowledge and understanding of the major aspects of a specialism and to undertake independent analyses of relevant issues in this area.
A3	enable students to acquire key transferable skills that are applicable both within and outside the discipline.
A4	enable students to evaluate whether or not they possess the ability, motivation and interest to pursue a research degree.
A5	provide intensive advanced research training in the scientific study of bioarchaeological materials (human remains, animal bone, environmental samples including soils and sediments along with botanical remains), combining the scientific analysis with the cultural interpretation in order to recognize the potential of these organic materials for our understanding of human societies both past and present.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
		Links to Aim(s)
K1	Demonstrate advanced knowledge and critical understanding of the theoretical approaches, debates and current issues relevant to archaeological science, as explored through their chosen focus.	A1, A2,
K2	Identify and explain a range of scientific methods used to analyse different archaeological materials studied through their chosen focus.	A2, A5
K3	Apply advanced scientific methods to the analysis of archaeological materials studied through their chosen focus.	A3, A5
K4	Demonstrate their understanding of how scientific methods are used to inform understanding of, and interpret, the archaeological record.	A2, A5
In addition, students achieving a Masters' will have:		
K5	Identify an area of scientific enquiry in their chosen focus and engage in independent archaeological research.	A2, A3, A4
Skills and other attributes On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	Write and communicate effectively in both independent and collaborative working.	A3
S2	Respond constructively to debate and criticism.	A4
S3	Manage their time effectively, including the ability to work productively alone.	A3
S4	Employ a variety of IT skills, encompassing a range of bibliographical, statistical and other computer programmes and their application, and utilise sources (electronic/print) effectively for research.	A3
In addition, students achieving a Masters' will have:		
S5	Formulate a research design, generate and analyse relevant data, interpret the results, and present the findings in a publishable form.	A1, A2, A5
S6	Proceed to undertake doctoral research in scientific archaeology or to take up professional positions in their chosen area of specialism.	A4, A5

18. Learning and teaching methods

Through a suite of core and optional modules, students will be taught by academic staff responsible for those modules supported by the technical team. Currently the majority of lab-based classes taught on the existing programmes takes place within the Archaeology laboratories. Teaching for non-lab-based modules takes place in lecture theatres or classrooms on campus. Students are supported to become self-directed learners by having course materials available on Blackboard; engagement with these materials will ensure the students are familiar with the course content as well as the teaching materials, assessment methods and deadlines used by each module. Moreover, students are

provided reading lists for their chosen modules and are encouraged to employ their own research skills in order to support their independent study. Students also become independent researchers by planning, implementing and undertaking research for their final publication-style dissertation.

The following forms of teaching will be delivered as part of the programme:

For Masters' and Diploma students

Lectures provide in-depth understanding of the theoretical approaches, debates and issues relevant to their chosen archaeological science pathway (K1-2).

Laboratory classes require students to work both alone and in teams. Laboratory-based training in identification and analytical skills emphasises transferable principles and practices (K2, K3, S1). They introduce relevant tools and instruments, and procedures for collecting and analysing data (K3, K4). The practical teaching concentrates on the specialist skills required for the analysis of archaeological material relevant to their chosen pathway (K2, K3, S4). Laboratory classes provide students with the skills and confidence necessary to carry out the independent research linked to the dissertation and to become able archaeological practitioners (K5, S3-6).

Seminars are student or staff-led and they reinforce information imparted through lectures, laboratory classes and independent study (K1, K4). They are used throughout the programme to encourage the oral expression and exchange of views (S1), to cultivate the ability to respond constructively to the presentation of alternative views (S2) and to assess critically research methodologies (K5). They also provide a forum for students to work cooperatively in the evaluation of the research issues raised by the teaching (S1). Seminar learning thus contributes to students' attainment of archaeological knowledge and understanding and to the acquisition of key skills.

Written assignments encourage students to develop their ability to summarise material critically, to present coherent and independent arguments and to support their arguments with appropriate evidence. Preparing such assignments – particularly defining and researching an appropriate topic and formulating independent questions – is essential to the acquisition of archaeological knowledge and understanding. As both the form and the length of written assignments varies – from essays, through extended laboratory and project reports to the dissertation – students develop a range of learning and time-management strategies in response to them (S3).

19. Assessment and feedback methods

For Masters' and Diploma students

All written assignments will be assessed using marking criteria aligned with the School of Biosciences criteria for work at Masters' level and are expected to be well presented and written (S1) using the advice given in the postgraduate handbook.

Practical examinations are conducted to allow the demonstration of the acquisition of core knowledge and identification skills in Human Osteology, Archaeozoology (K1, S2).

Project reports allow students to show their ability to collect, analyse and present archaeological data. This allows for the evaluation of learning outcomes K1-K3 and S1-S4. Practical modules are assessed through extended project reports that require structured reporting and significant analysis of original datasets. Project reports are used as the principal method of assessment in the following modules: Zooarchaeology, Advanced Zooarchaeology, Biological Anthropology I.

Essays allow students to demonstrate their familiarity with the relevant theoretical issues and their ability to handle theoretical or methodological material as well as their critical and analytical capacity. This allows for the evaluation of learning outcomes K1, K2, K4 and S1, S3, S4. Essays are used as the principal method of assessment in the following modules: Human Osteology, Archaeobotany, Applied Bioarchaeological Science, Research Design: Planning, Execution and Presentation and Geoarchaeology.

Presentations are conducted to allow the demonstration of the acquisition of core knowledge and how scientific methods are used to inform understanding of, and interpret, the archaeological record.

This method allows students to demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in both independent and collaborative working (K1, K4, S1). Presentations are an assessment method used in the following modules: Research Design: Planning, Execution And Presentation.

For Masters' students

The **Dissertation (Journal-style Paper)** (8,000 words maximum) makes it possible to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes K1, K3-K5 and S1, S3-S5.

Students will receive **verbal feedback** from their tutors and **peer feedback** during laboratory-based classes and seminars. Feedback from tutors in laboratory classes may be individual as well as whole cohort feedback. Such continuous feedback enables the students to monitor their own progress through self-reflection.

Students have the opportunity to discuss their progress with their module tutors and programme director either by prior arrangement or during staff office hours.

Depending on the form of assessment, students will receive **written feedback** on essays, laboratory reports or portfolios; this individual feedback is provided in a timely manner following the submission deadline. Feedback on presentations may be given verbally in class, either to the individual or the group, depending on the format of the presentation. This verbal feedback may then be followed by written feedback to enable the students to self-reflect on their progress.

Information and guidance on how the students can best use their feedback is provided in the handbook, whilst students are also encouraged to discuss any queries around their feedback with the programme director and/or module coordinator.

20. Programme structure and student development

The programme follows a modular format, and Masters' students are required to complete a total of 180 credits over 12 months (full-time study), Diploma students over 12 months (full-time study). Students are encouraged to take 60 credits in each semester in order to balance their workload. For Masters' students, the period between the end of the Spring Semester and the end of the period of registration is devoted entirely to the dissertation.

Students will follow this indicative structure:

3 x Core modules (45 credits)	**5 x 'optional' modules (60 credits)**
Advanced Scientific Skills (15 credits) Research design: planning, execution and presentation (15 credits) Applied Bioarchaeological Science (15 credits)	Biological Anthropology I (15 credits) Human Anatomy (15 credits) Human Osteology (15 credits) Archaeobotany (15 credits) Archaeozoology (15 credits) Evolutionary Anatomy (15 credits) Advanced Zooarchaeology (15 credits) Human Evolution: Theory & Practice in Research (15 credits) Geoarchaeology (15 credits) Funerary Archaeology (15 credits) Landscapes in Archaeology: Methods & Perspectives (15 credits)
Dissertation (Journal-Style Paper (60 credits): c. 8000 words	Reinventing Archaeology (15 credits)

A total of 120 credits which entitles students to the Postgraduate Diploma in Bioarchaeology. To proceed to the Dissertation (journal-style paper) a candidate must first have been awarded 120 credits in the taught modules and progression is dependent upon the recommendation of the examiners based on performance in the taught units.

In addition to the taught modules, students must accumulate further credits from the following to be eligible for the award of MSc in Bioarchaeology:

- *Dissertation (Journal-style paper) carrying 60 credits (summer).*

This provides a total of 180 credits.

Student development
For both Masters' and Diploma students the modules taught in Semesters 1 and 2 ensure a steady process of deepening and broadening engagement with their chosen focus, and an appreciation of the diversity of approaches utilised. In addition, in the course of the programme a skills base is

developed so that, by the end of Semester 2, students will have built up expertise in a broad range of specialisms offered.

For Masters' students, the programme is structured so as to lead logically to the writing of the journal-style paper; the major indicator of the successful achievement of the learning outcomes. The teaching in Semesters 1 and 2 provides the student with an opportunity to select a specialist analytical approach which can be developed in-depth during the dissertation through application to a specific bioarchaeological problem. The analyses required and the writing of the journal-style paper are undertaken over the Summer after completion of the taught modules. Preparation and planning for this research will, however, begin in the Autumn semester as part of the compulsory academic-year module, Research Design: Planning, Execution and Presentation, complemented by Advanced Scientific Skills, also taught across the academic year.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available online at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/

21. Criteria for admission to the programme

A minimum of a good honour's degree (2.1 or better) in Archaeology or another humanities or science subject is required. IELTS score of 6.5 with at least 5.5 in all the component tests. One academic reference.

22. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx
Subject Benchmark Statement - Archaeology (qaa.ac.uk)

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx

University Vision and Strategic Plan
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision/our-pillars/education

23. Additional information

None

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.