



## 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

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	History
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	HSTU01
3	<b>JACS Code</b>	V100
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Undergraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA Hons)
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Honours
6	<b>Intermediate Qualifications</b>	None
7	<b>Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)</b>	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Arts and Humanities
9	<b>Department</b>	History
10	<b>Other Departments involved in teaching the programme</b>	None
11	<b>Mode of Attendance</b>	Full-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	3 years
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	None
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	May 2024

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

Knowledge and understanding of the human past is of incalculable value both to the individual and to society. Studying history provides a distinctive education by providing a sense of the past and its separation from the present, together with an awareness of the development over time of different values, systems and societies. Degree-level study in history instils a respect for historical context and evidence, a greater awareness of the historical processes unfolding in our own time, and a deeper understanding of the varied traditions current today.

The Department of History at the University of Sheffield is one of the most active centres for teaching and historical research in the country. Our research interests extend chronologically from Ancient to contemporary history; geographically from the UK to Western, Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa, Asia, and the Americas; and thematically to include political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual history. The Department's unique composition provides the interdisciplinary scope to develop new ways of dealing with complex source materials and promote research perspectives across chronological and geographical divides.

The Department is committed to public history and the wide dissemination of historical scholarship. Staff frequently take part in media work on television, radio and the print media. They also give public lectures; film talks and make school visits. Colleagues also engage in a broad range of knowledge exchange, public engagement and co-production activities with external partners.

Completing a single honours degree in History at Sheffield provides many opportunities for acquiring and refining Sheffield Graduate Attributes, which we have adapted in our document the Sheffield Graduate Historian:

1. A historian who understands the distinctiveness of the discipline and works creatively across a wide range of historical regions and periods.
2. An ethical investigator, sensitive to cultural complexity and aware of sustainability and inclusivity.
3. An experienced researcher, capable of discovering, assessing and deploying evidence from a wide range of sources.

4. A skilled, flexible, and confident communicator.
5. A critical, analytical and original thinker.
6. An independent and reflective learner.
7. A positive team-worker and thoughtful collaborator.
8. An organised and adaptable project manager.
9. A confident and imaginative problem-solver.
10. A globally aware citizen, who understands the importance of history, and its relevance to the modern world.

The skills and intellectual training provided by a degree in History are valued by employers. In recent years, graduates from the Department have gone on to follow careers in marketing and retail, accountancy, media, the civil service and the law, as well as in education, museums and libraries, tourism and the heritage industry.

## 16. Programme aims

Degree programmes offered by the Department of History have the following general aims consonant with the University of Sheffield's Education Vision and the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for History:

1. To provide high quality teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels that is informed and invigorated by research and scholarship and alert to the benefits of student-centred learning.
2. To sustain a culture of research and learning that promotes the free pursuit of knowledge, impartial analysis and the acquisition of informed attitudes to the study of the past.
3. To maintain broad access to its programmes of study for students from a wide range of educational and social backgrounds.
4. To respond to the diversity of student interests by offering an appropriate level of student choice at each level of study, enabling them to pursue chronologically and geographically diverse fields of study.
5. To equip students with the skills that will prepare them for employment or for further study.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding:

<b>K1</b>	The ability to reflect upon a wide range of historical knowledge about a range of regions in remote and recent periods of time.
<b>K2</b>	Critical understanding of disciplinary issues and approaches and an awareness of how and why these have varied over time and place.
<b>K3</b>	Comprehension of the relationship between the scholarly study of History and understandings of the past outside of academic settings.
<b>K4</b>	The ability to read widely and critically within the historical literature.
<b>K5</b>	Recognition of the importance of historical debate, with an understanding of historical analysis and an evaluation of historians' arguments.

### Skills and other attributes:

<b>S1</b>	The ability to comprehend historical material.
<b>S2</b>	The ability to articulate historical arguments clearly and persuasively in written and oral form.
<b>S3</b>	The ability to present work in a professional and ethical manner.
<b>S4</b>	The ability to locate, critically evaluate, and assess the reliability of information from diverse sources.
<b>S5</b>	The ability to formulate independent and informed historical judgements through critical analysis of evidence and historical literature.
<b>S6</b>	The ability to respond constructively to debate and criticism.
<b>S7</b>	The ability to use a range of digital platforms, with an awareness of how to use the likes of databases, AI, and referencing software in a productive, ethical, and informed manner.
<b>S8</b>	Skills in effective time- and project-management, including the ability to work productively alone and in groups.

<b>S9</b>	The ability to undertake complex projects that involve identifying problems and evidence and arriving at reasoned decisions.
<b>S10</b>	The ability to reflect on the process of learning and skills acquisition.

## 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

### Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

**Induction procedures** at Level 1 are concentrated mainly in Welcome Week and include a meeting with the Personal Tutor and an introductory academic session with the Director of Education, which introduces students to wider support in the department, like the History Hacks online resources. Students have access to a glossary of common terms they may encounter over their first few weeks.

**Formal lectures** introduce students to large bodies of historical material and the principal arguments in particular fields. They are used extensively at Level 1, less frequently at Level 2 and sparingly at Level 3. At all Levels, lectures are used to impart knowledge in ways that reflect K1-3 and K 5 above.

Regular **small-group seminars** are used throughout the programme to encourage the oral expression and exchange of views, the concise summary of complex arguments and the ability to respond constructively to the presentation of alternative views. Some seminars are discussion classes, whether of a particular historical problem or period, or of methodological issues; others are dedicated to the interpretation of various kinds of primary source material (both textual and non-textual). They may be staff or student-led, and encompass group discussion, small-group work or individual assignments. Seminar teaching thus contributes both to students' attainment of historical knowledge and understanding (K1-5) and to the acquisition of key skills (S1-6, S10).

**Guided seminar preparation** is a principal component of independent study. It allows students to develop and reinforce the awareness of historical knowledge and debate (K1-5) acquired from lectures and seminars as well as furthering their information literacy and research skills and making effective use of library and internet resources (S1-2, S5-8, S10).

**Workshops**, which are used at all levels in various sizes to provide a bridge between lectures and seminars. Tutors design different learning activities that range from transmission of knowledge to collaborative learning and research. The onus in workshops is on active, inquiry-based learning under staff supervision. Workshops provide a space to model the expectations for independent work, which is a vital element of the programme.

**Individual tutorial guidance** is given to students preparing extended essays to enable them better to attain the learning outcomes detailed above. Students receive academic support and engage in reflective discussion in tutorials with both their Personal and Academic (teaching) Tutors (S9).

**Learning support and resources** include workshops and online materials provided by 301 Skills Centre. History Hacks has been developed within the department to offer discipline specific advice in different formats, and is incorporated into teaching, feedback, and academic tutoring. Extracurricular [History Hacks](#) sessions include Pomodoro writing workshops which provide a structured and supervised space for students to work independently.

### Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

All forms of assessment used within the Department of History evaluate students' acquisition of historical knowledge and understanding, while also cultivating skills. A review in 2023-24 saw us grapple with persistent issues in assessment and feedback and move towards a programme level approach that reduces pinch points, encourages feeding forwards, and is designed to build student confidence.

**Purely formative** (i.e. not for credit work) is used in a 'revise and resubmit' format where new forms of assessment are introduced. Students at L1, L2, and L3 are therefore encouraged to submit draft work and develop their abilities to respond to constructive feedback.

**Written assignments** encourage students to develop their ability to summarise material, to present coherent arguments in good English prose, and to support their arguments with appropriate evidence. Preparing such assignments, particularly researching and reading around the topic or question set, is essential to the acquisition of historical knowledge and understanding as set out above (K1-5). As both the form and the length of written assignments varies -- from book reviews and short exercises on documentary sources through essays to

extended essays and dissertations -- students develop a range of learning and time-management strategies in response to them (S1-5, 7-10). Written assignments also encourage transferable professional skills as students are expected to present their work according to disciplinary standards, which they begin to learn from the first weeks of Level 1 (S3).

**Essays**, typically of 1,500 to 2,500 words, are an important element of assessment. They test students' information literacy, decision-making, and communication skills, as well as their capacity to present work according to professional standards.

**Shorter form written work** includes seminar diaries, short analytical pieces, and 'gobbet' source analysis, sometimes submitted in a mixed portfolio format that allows students to showcase their learning across a module. Each assignment tests different skills - e.g., reflection, sharp synthesis, and the ability to critically contextualise evidence - while requiring students to write in concise, insightful prose on a regular basis.

**Presentations**, whether individual or collaborative, develop a different set of oral communication skills, while still prioritising insightful historical analysis.

**Invigilated and take-home exams** test students' ability to write analytically under varying time pressure.

**Research projects** involve students drawing on different skills from across the degree from information literacy to time management.

**Public history projects**, like their research counterparts, allow students to showcase their skills in independent work, but place an emphasis on creatively communicating their understanding to non-academic audiences.

**Source-based assessment** can come in longer (e.g., dissertation) or shorter (e.g., gobbet) form, and involves students identifying and critiquing evidence. In an age marked by the wide circulation of decontextualised fragments of information it is a vital transferable skill.

**Reflective writing** can also be longer (reflective essays) or shorter (learning journals) and encourages students to narrate their learning and decision-making process.

For each kind of assessment we have produced [assessment guides](#) and [specific marking criteria](#). Across our core programme and module types we aim to stagger deadlines, vary assessment, and provide a clear spine so students can see how one assignment feeds to the next.

## 19. Reference points

[QAA History Subject Benchmarking 2022](#)

[University of Sheffield Education Vision and Strategic Plan](#)

[Sheffield Graduate Attributes](#)

[Sheffield Graduate Historian](#)

## 20. Programme structure and regulations

The Single Honours degree programme trains students in historical enquiry, developing an increasingly rigorous approach to the discipline.

### Level 1

At Level 1, there are two connected compulsory modules. In the first semester 'History Workshop' teaches students the craft and key skills of the historian by working closely with an academic, on a particular topic of their research, smoothing the transition to university level study. In semester 2 'Thinking Historically' pans out to consider broader disciplinary questions about periodisation, sources, and narratives, while requiring students to work collaboratively on a research proposal. Alongside the core units, students can take up to a further 80 credits in History. These option modules use varied assessment methods to ensure there are coursework and exam pathways each semester. Students are therefore able to develop key skills in a way that avoids assessment bunching and prepares them for Level 2. Assessment includes revise and resubmit essays, invigilated exams, reflective journals, and team project work.

### Level 2

At Level 2, students take 'Historians and History' which introduces students to the development of the discipline since professionalisation, a Document Option, which focuses on source criticism; a semester 2 research option, which through weekly workshops provides a stepping stone to the larger, independent project students

undertake in their final year; and 'Historians and the Public', which involves collaborative, critical, and reflective study of historical knowledge outside of academic settings. Each semester students take an additional two options or a guided module. Students must take at least one module in medieval history, one in early modern and one in modern history. 20 credits may be taken outside the Department. Assessment varies at Level 2 from traditional essays and invigilated exams to shorter portfolio work, reflective writing, and team projects.

### **Level 3**

At Level 3, students build on their initial work on source criticism and the study of primary documents via the double module Special Subject and the double module Dissertation. In 'Conflict, Controversy, and Critique', they build their confidence in navigating complex debates with precision and respect and develop skills in decision-making. 'Making History Public' in semester 2 gives them the chance to translate their learning to a different audience. As a public history project, it parallels the dissertation in its emphasis on creativity and supervised independent study.

Overall, the degree programme provides the context in which the defined learning outcomes may be achieved, and progresses from solid foundations in historical study to a more rigorous, independent and reflective understanding of the study of the past.

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

## **21. Student development over the course of study**

A programme level approach has long been a guiding principle in the History department. We have recognised that students value choice and expertise while also wanting coherence and clearly articulated skills and learning objectives. Each student has access to an academic tutor for the duration of their studies who will have a detailed knowledge of learning outcomes and programme design by level. The History welfare team, headed by professional services staff and an academic senior tutor, provides pastoral care.

Progression through the programme structure is defined by the Learning Outcomes set for each level of study in the Department of History.

### **Level 1**

By the end of Level 1, our students will have an understanding of the theory and practice of History as a discipline. They will be able to discriminate between different sources of information; locate, comprehend, and offer informed critique of scholarly literature; communicate their findings clearly to an academic audience; and have a developing sense of what historical research entails and its place in the contemporary world. Moving across a range of diverse periods and regions students will be able to work independently, collaboratively, and reflectively, setting the stage for more specialist work at Level 2.

### **Level 2**

By the end of Level 2, our students will have a critical awareness of methodological issues in history produced for academic and non-academic audiences. They will be able to evaluate information, express complex historical arguments, and undertake original research of their own, with cognisance of the practical and ethical challenges of doing so. Students will show a more advanced knowledge and understanding of places, periods, and interpretive issues - including those related to sustainability - moving towards the kind of expertise expected at Level 3. They will be confident in their capacity to work effectively independently, collaboratively, and reflectively.

### **Level 3**

By the end of Level 3, students will have met all programme learning outcomes, and will embody the qualities of the Sheffield Graduate Historian.

## **22. Criteria for admission to the programme**

The standard offer to candidates applying to read Single Honours History at Sheffield is AAB including History. Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available in the University's On-Line Prospectus at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/>.

Inquiries should be made in the first instance to the Department's Admissions Tutor at [history@shef.ac.uk](mailto:history@shef.ac.uk) (Tel: 0114 222 2552)

## **23. Additional information**

Please refer to the Department's web pages at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/history>.

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>.