



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	History
2. Programme code	HPHT001
3. QAA FHEQ level	7
4. Faculty	Arts and Humanities
5. School	History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities
6. Other Schools providing credit bearing modules for the programme	None
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	January 2024

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	MA	1 year Full-time or 2 years Part-time
10. Intermediate awards	Postgraduate Diploma	

Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HESA website.</i>	V100		
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.</i>	100302		

Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time or Part-time
14. Mode of delivery	Seminar-based teaching; one-on-one supervision; independent study

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.

Completing a MA degree in History at Sheffield enhances students' critical and organisation skills, equipping them to undertake independent historical research. It provides opportunities for students to acquire a high level of historical knowledge and understanding, explore a range of historical contexts, gain practical experiences with public history and a work placement, and develop and refine digital, bibliographical and research skills. It encourages problem solving and individual reflection.

The School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities at the University of Sheffield is an internationally renowned centre for the teaching and research of history. Over recent years, the School has built up particular research strengths in different temporal periods (ancient and medieval, early modern, and modern history) and thematic/geographical areas (including global, American, European, and British and Irish history).

Historians based at the School conduct research of the highest standards, reflecting critically on all aspects of human society and culture, past, present, and future, and on the process of reflection itself. Our research fields are wide ranging, methodologically, chronologically and geographically. Historians at Sheffield draw upon multiple disciplinary perspectives, including working collaboratively with colleagues from the University, the wider academic world and external partners. We aim to be at the forefront in developing new perspectives on the past. The School is strongly committed to disseminating the results of the research of its historians to a wide range of audiences, and in innovative ways.

The degree programme is designed both for students who wish to go on to advanced independent research up to doctoral level, and for those who wish to acquire a broad range of transferable skills and intellectual training that will be of value to employers outside academia. MA students from the School regularly go on to undertake advanced study in History as well as to pursue careers in areas such as education, museums and libraries, tourism and the heritage industry, the digital humanities, the civil service, marketing and retail, and the media.

16. Programme aims

MA in History aims to:	
A1	To offer students an advanced programme that is qualitatively different from undergraduate-level study by maximising opportunities for independent study and reflexive practice.
A2	To focus on transferable research, learning and presentational skills that are applicable both within the academic discipline of History and in other professional settings.
A3	To enable students to evaluate whether or not they possess the ability, motivation and interest to pursue a further research degree.
A4	To foster critical thought, intellectual curiosity and an appreciation of the value of History.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:		
		Links to Aim(s)
K1	History as a discipline, of the sources available to those writing it, and of the academic debates that inform the area of study.	A1-2, A4
K2	the historiography that defines the discipline and of how this relates to my own research interests.	A1-2
K3	the distinctiveness of History as a discipline, and an ability to reflect on how other disciplines have influenced the development of the historical method.	A1-2
K4	the intellectual concepts that inform History, to enable me to evaluate scholarly writing and to undertake detailed source-criticism.	A1-2, A4
K5	whether or not the learner possesses the ability, motivation and interest to pursue further postgraduate study in History.	A3
Skills and other attributes		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
S1	reflect deeply on historical knowledge and to demonstrate an awareness of current historical debates.	A1
S2	write and speak about the past in good English, showing an awareness of History as a literary discipline and of the needs of different audiences.	A2
S3	use a wide range of bibliographical tools to locate and critically evaluate appropriate sources and materials for the advanced study of history.	A1-3
S4	formulate and sustain independent historical arguments, to provide appropriate evidence to support them, including quantitative and visual evidence, and to reference the sources of the evidence used.	A1-2
S5	demonstrate transferable skills in written and oral communication, independent and collaborative working, and the digital environment.	A2

18. Learning and teaching methods

The MA in History is taught by members of the School from our main temporal sections (Medieval, Early Modern and Modern History), ensuring that students are provided with opportunities to pursue taught- and research-based interests throughout the programme. All core and option modules use Blackboard to communicate and interact with students.

Introduction to the advanced study of history is available from the first semester of the programme through tutor-led classes for the core module, Research Skills for Historians. These cover defining a research topic, bibliographical and information skills, and approaches to different sorts of written and non-textual sources (S3-4). General digital induction is also provided via demonstration classes led by Faculty Learning Technologists (S5). Oral skills are developed through another core module, Research Presentation, taught in semester 2 (S2). This encourages communication and presentation skills, including technical competence in PowerPoint, how to present data effectively and the use of

visual material.

Further study-skills advice, including guidance on the professional presentation of written work using the appropriate scholarly apparatus (i.e. footnotes and a stratified bibliography) is provided to students via the School Style Guide.

Seminars are used throughout the year to encourage oral expression and the exchange of informed views, the concise summary of complex arguments and the ability to respond constructively to the presentation of alternative views. Some seminars take the form of discussion classes, exploring specific historical problems or methodological issues while others may be dedicated to the interpretation of particular primary sources (S1, S4; K1-4). Seminars may be staff or student-led, as students work within small groups for taught classes, focusing on the specific historiographical or evidence-based themes and problems appropriate to their field of study.

Guided reading is a principal component of independent study. It allows students to develop and reinforce their awareness of historical knowledge and debate (K1-3, S1), to reflect on different methodological approaches and to refine their own historical interests (K4-5). It furthers their bibliographical skills and enables them to make effective use of library and internet resources (S3, S5).

Written assignments encourage students to develop their ability to summarise material critically, to present coherent and independent arguments in good English, 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 historical knowledge and understanding (K1-3, S1). As both the form and the length of written assignments varies, students develop an appropriate range of learning and time-management strategies in response to them (S2-5).

Individual tutorial guidance is given to all students undertaking the Dissertation and also to students who wish to receive guidance on preparing a research proposal and application for further study and associated funding (K4-5).

Self-directed learning is encouraged through reflective practices in a number of modules, assessment questions as a collaboration between tutors and students, and access to MySkills to promote personal development.

19. Assessment and feedback methods

All forms of assessment used on the programme evaluate students' acquisition of historical knowledge and understanding, particularly K1-4. Assessment also serves a formative function to monitor students' progress and provide learners with the feedback they need to evaluate their own progress and reflect upon the historical understanding they have acquired (S1). In **Research Skills for Historians**, the core module, students are invited to submit up to 500 words of a draft / plan / piece of exploratory writing in advance of their final essay. Feedback on coursework encourages students to respond effectively and positively to constructive criticism by reflecting both on their skills of argument and presentation and on the coherence of their understanding of particular historical problems (S3-4). All assessment which contributes marks towards the degree, and therefore has a summative as well as formative function, is marked in accordance with published marking criteria.

Oral performance is assessed via the **Research Presentation** (semester 2) when each student gives a formal presentation about their research to other MA students and a representative selection of academic staff. This takes place during the second semester in the Research Presentation module and represents 100% of a student's overall mark for that module. The presentation tests the students' ability to convey the significance and intellectual content of research; the clarity and fluency of their communication skills; the effectiveness and imagination of their use of illustrative material; and their confidence in handling of questions, defending the coherence of their argument while respecting the opinions of others (S2, S4).

Collectively, the portfolio of **written assignments** which students will produce for the assessment of the taught modules demonstrates acquisition of learning outcomes K1-4. This includes a range of

technical exercises (including a bibliography for the dissertation) which are assessed on the basis of the students' technical proficiency in execution of the task set; the range of material located; the critical assessment offered by the student of the usefulness of the material collected and their informed awareness of any problems, (S2-3; K1-4). **Historiographical, source and methodological essays** written for the core and optional modules also test students' ability to identify a suitable topic for analysis, their familiarity with the relevant theoretical issues and their ability to handle theoretical or methodological material and to use an appropriate vocabulary in discussion as well as their critical and analytical capacity (K5, S4). In assignments for optional modules such as Presenting the Past, History Writers' Workshop and Work Placement, we assess students' technical skills (for example, through their use of film, audio or digital technology) and communication skills for non-specialist audiences (S2).

Successful preparation of a 15,000-word **Dissertation** demonstrates MA students' ability to work independently (S4), to define and complete extended research projects (K4, S1, S4) and to present the results in a professional fashion (S2). The Dissertation also tests the ability to locate and analyse a body of primary source material and to undertake independent research on that material (S1-5).

20. Programme structure and student development

The programme is modular in format. To be awarded the degree of MA, students will successfully complete modules totalling 180 credits over 1 year (full-time study) or 2 years (part-time study), this includes 120 credits of taught modules plus a dissertation worth 60 credits.

Students will take two compulsory taught modules: Research Skills for Historians (15 credits) in semester one and Research Presentation (15 credits) in semester two. The remaining 90 credits of taught modules allow students to broaden their knowledge of history and/or develop their skills in public history. The flexibility of the programme allows students to focus on their own specific interests and skills.

Full-time students will normally take 60 credits of taught modules in each semester, to ensure that their workload is evenly balanced. Work on defining the dissertation topic will begin early in the Autumn Semester and research will continue throughout the year, with the period between the end of the Spring Semester and the beginning of September being devoted entirely to the dissertation.

Part-time students will normally take 30 credits of taught modules in each semester of the two years of study, to ensure that their workload is evenly balanced. Research Skills for Historians will be taken in the first year and Research Presentation will be taken in the second year. Work on defining the dissertation topic will begin early in the Autumn Semester of the second year and research will continue throughout the year, with the period between the end of the Spring Semester and the beginning of September being devoted entirely to the dissertation.

The Postgraduate Diploma in History is awarded to students who successfully complete 120 credits of taught modules but do not undertake the Dissertation.

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

Applicants are expected to have a good first degree in History or a related discipline. Our standard requirement is a 2.1 classification, or equivalent, in a Bachelors' degree from a recognised UK or overseas university. Applicants who have not studied History at undergraduate level will be expected to demonstrate commitment to and academic preparedness for advanced study in History. This might be via an interview or by the submission of written work, as requested by the Director of MA Programmes during consideration of the application. All students should be able to function effectively in an academic setting and to produce clear, independently reasoned, well-structured written work and oral arguments. An upper second-class degree or its equivalent would normally be taken as an

indicator of these threshold levels.

Non-native speakers of English should demonstrate proficiency in English through one of the University approved language tests, for example an IELTS average of 7 with at least 6.5 in each component. Further details are available on the university webpages at www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate/info/englang

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available on the School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities web pages at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hpdh/postgraduate> and the University webpages at www.sheffield.ac.uk/postgraduate

For more information students can contact the Admissions and Postgraduate Support Manager in the School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities; history.@sheffield.ac.uk; telephone 0114 222 2552.

Detailed information regarding admission to programmes is available from the University's On-Line Prospectus at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/courses/>.

22. Reference points

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

QAA Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements/history>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2014)

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_18

University Strategic Plan

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan>

University Education Pillar Priorities

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision/our-pillars/education>

23. Additional information

Further information is available on the School of History, Philosophy and Digital Humanities webpages at <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hpdh/postgraduate> and <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hpdh/research/history/research-strengths>.

These provide full details about the content of the MA degree programme, information about the research interests (and dissertation supervision expertise) of individual members of staff and the research collections in Sheffield, as well as advice about how to apply and funding opportunities.

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 School(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>.