

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Masters of Arts Degree programme, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in History**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2021**.

The aims of the programme are to:

- provide advanced study of History from one or more perspectives and time periods including British, European and World history, Gender History, Public History;
- examine critically current knowledge, and the essential concepts and theories that inform the study of History;
- provide the opportunity for advanced study of specialised topics within History that involve the critical assessment of both primary source material and secondary literature;
- examine critically current techniques of enquiry and research in the chosen specialism(s) within History;
- provide applied training in the methodologies and techniques needed for research leading to MPhil/PhD in History and related fields;
- foster the ability to learn independently, whether for further research, for career enhancement or for personal intellectual development;
- develop the written and oral presentation skills needed for effective communication of research findings at postgraduate level.

This Masters course has been specially devised to provide an advanced level study of the theories and practical skills that underpin the discipline of history. It does so through a mandatory module, studied by all students, which examines key concepts, theories and methodologies. Additionally, all students take a skills modules which pursues these conceptual questions further in relation to the practical applications of historical research (e.g. media and museums). Public History students take a further three mandatory modules (see below). Finally, students (with the exception of Public History students) choose a number of Option modules, which cover leading edge research in an array of key fields of Modern, World, European, British and Public History. The Masters course is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part-time study (260 weeks). Teaching takes place during the day over two terms from September to March. The dissertation is submitted in September. On successful completion of the course a student should have an understanding of the area of the MA at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the course provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the course(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students

under review, courses and the availability of individual modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the course are closely informed by the research interests of the staff in Royal Holloway's History Department. In general terms, the course provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding:

- an advanced knowledge and critical understanding of the major concepts and theories that inform the subject;
- the various explanations and theories for changes and continuities in history;
- the underlying social, cultural, economic, religious, ideological and political changes occurring during the periods studied;
- the location and organisation of primary and secondary sources of evidence, both textual and otherwise, relating to the chosen field of history;
- the variety of media and resources for the public presentation of history;
- the research skills that are commonly used in the study of history.

Skills and other attributes:

- assimilating, interrogating and evaluating critically a wide range of material required for research into history, including both documentary and other sources;
- interpreting developments within a long-term framework;
- the ability to analyse and assess complex historical debates in a variety of areas and topics within history and to engage in constructive debates with other students and with course teachers;
- analysing and synthesising complex and often contradictory material to create coherent and logical arguments supported by relevant evidence;*
- addressing complex problems of history, and making judgements on the basis of incomplete data;
- making productive use of research institutions: libraries, record offices, museums, world-wide web and other useful sources of information;*
- the capacity to evaluate when it is appropriate to employ aggregative and historical methodologies such as historical databases, prosopography, and various cliometric techniques;
- independently planning and executing an original Skills Project;
- independently planning and executing an original and extended piece of research for the Dissertation/Final Project;
- the ability to reflect critically on the results of research investigations and the methods used to obtain these;*
- the ability to convey the results of research clearly and systematically in a manner comprehensible to the non-specialist, both orally and in writing;*
- independent learning and scholarship;*
- In addition to the above skills, the course fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important to the world of work, and that strengthen the ability to engage in continuing professional development and to contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work, as appropriate, both autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; critical reflection; intellectual integrity; flexibility, adaptability; and creativity.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

The interest and enthusiasm of students are nurtured through their close involvement with the current research of established scholars. As befits an advanced research course, all teaching is highly interactive, with an emphasis on open discussion within a 'community of scholars'. Methods used to develop knowledge and understanding are seminars, discussion groups and student oral presentations. In mandatory modules, assignment sheets are given to students each week to provide suggested reading and advance notice of topics for forthcoming discussion. In skills modules, teaching involves small groups with presentations from the tutor and/or visiting speakers and/or weekly reports from students. Option classes are taught on the basis of themes intensively prepared by students themselves and then debated collectively with the group and the tutor.

Discipline-specific and transferable skills are developed throughout the course by means of group discussion; a range of other participative activities (e.g. short student papers; the reciprocal pre-circulation of discussion points by all students in a class) and by guided independent research or study. All modules will contribute to the acquisition of these skills but the mandatory modules in Modern History and the Dissertation are particularly important in this respect. Research skills are developed to a professional level through the design and production of the independent research dissertation, which also serves to integrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the programme.

Assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills is by coursework essays, by other related coursework as appropriate (e.g. skills project) and by independent dissertation. The assessment methods used for a particular module will vary in accordance with the knowledge and skills being developed by that module (see next section for details). Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the course structure

The brief outline of the course is shown below; however, students can obtain further details from the Course Handbook(s). **Credits are indicated in brackets, and indicate proportional weighting towards the MA, PGDip and PGCert classification grade.** The course structure for the PgDip is as below, with the exception that students will not undertake the dissertation, while that for the PG Cert is that students are required to pass modules worth only 60 credits.

The MA in History course consists of taught modules and a Dissertation/Final Project. The taught components are usually each worth 20 credits, although a minority are worth 40 credits. Each MA student must take taught modules to the value of 120 credits. They must also write a Dissertation/Final Project worth 60 credits. Thus the value of the MA overall is 180 credits.

Full-time MA students will complete the equivalent of 120 credits worth of taught modules in the first two terms, and complete their Dissertation/Final Project in the summer months for submission in early September. Part-time students will normally complete methodology, skills and option modules to the value of 80 credits in the first year of study, and choose more options (to the value of 40 credits) and the Dissertation/Final Project in the second year of study. The brief outline of the programme is show below; however, students can obtain further details from the Course Handbook and the Director of the MA in History.

Course code	Course title	Course unit value
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A. Mandatory modules

Mandatory for all students:

HS5455	The Historian's Toolkit: Studying and Communicating the Past	(20 credits)
HS5450	History Past and Present: Definitions, Concepts and Approaches	(20 credits)

Mandatory for students on MA Public History stream:

HS5461	Communicating History: Radio, Podcasts and Social Media	(20 credits)
HS5462	Nothing about Us without Us: The Power of Oral History	(20 credits)
HS5460	Pathways to the Past: Public History in Theory and Practice	(40 credits)

B. Option Courses

Students on all other programmes choose option courses to a total course value of 80 credits. RHUL options are usually worth 20 credits each, so students would normally choose **FOUR** in total. The list of available options varies from year to year. Students should consult the departmental literature and/or online postgraduate course catalogue.

N.B.

Subject to the agreement of the Director of the MA in History, students may also choose option modules to a maximum value of 40 credits from a cognate MA within Royal Holloway or from another History MA course within the University of London (i.e. those courses offered by other London Colleges within the federal basketing system).

D. Dissertation/Final Project

HS5410	Dissertation (mandatory for all students except Public History)	(60 credits)
HS5463	Final Project (mandatory for Public History students)	(60 credits)

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of modules including optional modules for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

EXIT CODES

Students are initially registered under the general title of MA History (Banner code 2338). Depending on the choices of option module taken, each student can exit with a specific degree subtitle tagged by an exit code. The most usual exit codes are listed below. If students have related questions, or are unclear about the impact of their option choices on their degree subtitle, they should consult the Director of the MA in History at their earliest opportunity. In order to exit with one of the Exit Awards, one of the option modules taken (from a list supplied by the department, or otherwise agreed with the MA History Programme Director) should relate to that specialist area and the dissertation should be on a related topic.

MA History: Gender Histories (3457)

MA History: Modern History (2355)
MA History: Modern History and Gender History (2356)
MA History: Public History (2422)
MA History: Early Modern History, Literature and Culture (2302)
MA History: Hellenic Studies (2378)
MA History: Medieval and Modern History (2600)
MA History: Modern Europe and Modern China (2910)
MA History: Histories of Conflict and Violence (3458)

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Award and Progression requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

Please note that if you hold a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

To pass the **Master's** programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in modules which constitute up to a maximum of 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The Master's degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Master's degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any module of the course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% *and* has either chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in modules which do not constitute more than 40 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any module. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any module which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any module. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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Student support and guidance

- Course information and induction notes are sent to all students before their arrival.
- An Induction Meeting at the beginning of the Autumn Term provides students with both College and Departmental orientation.
- The MA Handbook and Workbooks are supplied to all students on the first day of the programme. (The Handbook is also available online.)
- Personal Advisers. The role of the Personal Adviser is to offer students advice on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Director of the MA in History acts as Personal Adviser to all students on the programme. The Director is available for consultation by students during her advertised office hours.
- All tutors are available for consultation by their students at advertised office hours.
- Dissertation Supervisor. Each student is assigned a supervisor, who gives advice on the selection of the topic, supervises the research programme, and provides feedback on one draft of the dissertation.
- The Skills Project (for HS5455) is supervised by the Skills module tutor.
- The Departmental Staff-Student Postgraduate Committee, which has at least one member from each History MA programme, acts as a two-way channel of communication between the Department and the student community.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources are available in the College libraries and in the Computer Centre. However, as takers of a postgraduate degree, MA students will be expected to access as a matter of course the British Library and other specialist collections in Senate House and other University of London libraries.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Employability Lead officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and students with additional learning needs also have access to Disability and Dyslexia Services (DDS).
- Students enjoy membership of a number of research centres and libraries in Central London, including the University of London's Institute of Historical Research and Senate House library. They also have easy access to the British Library and the National Archives, as well as a host of research archives.
- Off-site workshops and field trips will be arranged for students taking the Public History masters.

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Admission requirements

For details of admissions requirements please refer to the [Course Finder](#).

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Further learning and career opportunities

This MA course provides an attractive, advanced qualification for those seeking employment in fields involving the professional creation, evaluation and dissemination of knowledge. Our graduates have gone on to become, amongst other things: writers, archivists and librarians, full-time researchers, journalists, PR consultants, business people, university lecturers and teachers. It is also an ideal qualification for those intending to undertake

postgraduate research in Modern History leading to MPhil/PhD. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers & Employability Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour and 3* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31st overall in the UK for 4* and 3* research and 33rd based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

The Department of History is ranked 26th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 38th for 3* and 4* research.

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List of courses with details of awards, teaching arrangements and accreditation

The course and its streams are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the MA leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in History are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

Master of Arts in History

Generic Programme

MA in History (2338)

Exit awards

MA History: Gender Histories (3457)

MA History: Modern History (2355)

MA History: Modern History and Gender History (2356)

MA History: Public History (2422)

MA History: Early Modern History, Literature and Culture (2302)

MA History: Hellenic Studies (2378)

MA History: Medieval and Modern History (2600)

MA History: Modern Europe and Modern China (2910)

MA History: Histories of Conflict and Violence (3458)

Postgraduate Diploma in History (Exit Award only)

PG Dip in History (2392)

Postgraduate Certificate in History (Exit Award only)

PG Cert in History (2911)