

Royal Holloway, University of London

Course specification for a postgraduate award

MA in Public History (2422)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

This Masters course has been devised to provide an advanced level study of the theories and practical skills that underpin the discipline of Public History. It does so through a mandatory core module, studied by all students, 'Pathways to the Past: Public History in Theory and Practice', which examines key concepts, theories and methodologies. Additionally, in common with MA History students, MA Public History students take a mandatory skills and concepts core module which pursues these conceptual questions further in relation to the practical applications of historical research. There are three further mandatory modules that explore approaches to 'Communicating History: Radio, Podcasts and Social Media'; oral history, 'Nothing about us without us: The Power of Oral History'; and the Final Project, which combines a practice-based output and a reflective essay. The 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 across two days each week, over the Autumn and Spring terms from September to March. The Final Project is submitted in September. On successful completion of the course a student should have a thorough and nuanced understanding of Public History, 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.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – Also referred to as 'programme', this term refers to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies. 'Courses' were formerly known as 'programmes' at Royal Holloway.

Module – This refers to the credits you will study each year to complete your degree course. Postgraduate taught degrees at Royal Holloway comprise 180 credits. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title. 'Modules' were formerly known as 'course units' at Royal Holloway.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	May 2024	Location of study	Egham and Central London campuses
Course award and title	MA in History	Level of study	Postgraduate
Course code	2422	Year of entry	2025/26
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	History, School of Humanities	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time and part time	Duration of the course	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two to five years (104 - 260 weeks) part-time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

Section 3 – Degree course structure				
3.1 Mandatory module information				
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study				
Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC)
HS5455	The Historian’s Toolkit: Researching and, Conceptualising the Past	30	7	MC
HS5460	Pathways to the Past: Public History in Theory and Practice	30	7	MC
HS5461	Communicating History: Radio, Podcasts and Social Media	30	7	MC
HS5462	‘Nothing about us without us’: The Power of Oral History	30	7	MC
HS5463	Final Project	60	7	MNC
<p>This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: ‘condonable’ or ‘non-condonable’.</p> <p>In the case of mandatory ‘non-condonable’ (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory ‘condonable’ (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.</p>				
3.2 Optional modules				
N/A				

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a 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.

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to be awarded. The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who otherwise meet the requirements for award as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

Full-time MA students will complete the equivalent of 120 credits worth of taught modules in the first two terms and complete their Final Project in the summer months for submission in early September. Part-time students will normally complete 3 modules to the value of 90 credits in the first year of study (HS5460, HS5461 and HS5455) and 2 modules to the value of 90 credits in the second year of study (HS5462 and HS5463). Further details are obtainable from the Course Handbook and the Director of the MA in Public History. Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

- provide advanced study of Public History from multiple perspectives and time periods;
- provide students with the skills to communicate with the public about the past in a meaningful, nuanced and engaging fashion;
- examine critically current knowledge, and the essential concepts and theories that inform the study and practice of Public History;
- provide the opportunity for advanced study of specialised topics within Public History that involve the critical assessment of primary source material and secondary literature;
- examine critically current techniques of enquiry and research in the chosen specialism(s) within Public 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.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes	
In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (<i>Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)</i>)	
Theme	Course Learning Outcome
K	Students will undertake knowledge discovery, information synthesis and analysis in conveying historical knowledge to a range of public audiences. They will acquire an advanced knowledge of key debates and issues in Public History, and be able to evaluate, in oral and written form, complex historical events and issues, the choices and contexts of past historical actors and societies, and approach related historiographical debates both critically and creatively, making sound academic judgements based on available data and evidence.
K, S	Students will be able to demonstrate personal responsibility and effective time management; advanced skills in designing creative means of conveying research driven narratives about the past to the public; and competency in a range of communication skills.
K	Students will be able to engage critically with a range of sources (secondary; primary) and by genre (material, visual, textual, oral, digital, etc), addressing questions about the diversity of genre (context and content, perspective, and purpose) that currently inform the methodological diversity, archiving, and study of Public History.
S, *	Students will be able to structure and communicate their ideas, in writing or by other formats (e.g., digital, oral, creative, verbal, as appropriate to the discipline and study of Public History), producing coherent outcomes that are supported with relevant evidence, to a variety of public or scholarly audiences (depending on the assignment types and lengths involved).
K, *	Students will be mindful of others, acting with inclusion and empathy, and understand the importance of collaboration, co-creation, and shared authority as public historians. They will acquire an advanced and renewed appreciation of the diversity of historical experiences and the languages, records, and sources of the period/location under study, and understand why partial and incomplete historical narratives occurred in the past and persist today.
K, S, *	Students will gain an understanding of the ongoing resonances of their period(s) of study for contemporary social and political life, and, if/as relevant, demonstrate confidence and appropriate skills in clarifying the historical record where it arises for different groups (e.g., educators, heritage providers, and marginalised and minority groups, as appropriate to their sub-field of Public History).
K, S, *	Students will acquire transferable historical insights, knowledge, and practical skills that are multi-vocational, agile, and responsive to contemporary social and global challenges.
S, *	Students will be able to demonstrate intellectual progress and competency in designing creative work and/or research assignments that integrate prior feedback, whether this feedback is gained through peer-to-peer learning opportunities or written assessments.
S, *	Students will be able to demonstrate self-direction and time management in tackling and solving set tasks; they will be able to act independently when it comes to planning and carrying out their assignments, including designing and completing an original extended piece of research driven public history (Final Project).

S, *	Students will be able to practice self-generated and authentic design by creating topics for discussion and/or research assignments (Final Project) that speak to, and advance, their academic and vocational interests and interpretation of the field/period under study.
S, *	Students will build a portfolio of projects that can act as calling cards when approaching potential employers or partners after graduation.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research and professional practice of staff. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein. As befits an advanced research programme, all teaching is highly interactive, with an emphasis on open discussion within a 'community of scholars'.

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of seminars, workshops, essay consultations, oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal coursework, including essays, blog posts, model funding applications, podcasts, and reviews. This culminates in the Final Project, which combines a practical output, such as an exhibition, podcast series, documentary, learning resources, or website, and an accompanying evaluative and reflective essay. https://ssb-prod.ec.royalholloway.ac.uk/PROD/bwckctlg.p_disp_dyn_ctlg

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a seminar or fieldtrip with other students. Contact hours may also be project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Module Catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this degree course.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	7
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10– Intermediate exit awards (where available)		
You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.		
Award	Criteria	Awarding body
PG Diploma	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 40 credits condonable (with the exception of any course specific requirements).	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College