

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts and PGDip in Modern Philosophy**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2011**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to give students knowledge of the two main intellectual traditions which are decisive for the contemporary philosophical landscape
- to familiarise students with methods involved in both analytical and European approaches to modern philosophy
- to enable students to gain knowledge of the core texts and issues which form the framework for contemporary philosophical research
- to encourage an awareness of the tensions between the more science-oriented and the more art- and society-oriented approaches to philosophy, which characterise the analytical and European traditions
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study
- to foster an independent learning ability required for continuing professional development
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). On successful completion of the programme 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 programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

Further information

[Learning outcomes](#)

[Teaching, learning and assessment](#)

[Details of the programme structure\(s\)](#)

[Progression and award requirements](#)

[Student support and guidance](#)

[Admission requirements](#)

[Further learning and career opportunities](#)

[Indicators of quality and standards](#)

[List of programmes, with details of awards, degree titles, accreditation and teaching arrangements](#)

This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(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, programmes and the availability of individual courses 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 programme. 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 programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- an appreciation of the different philosophical approaches characteristic of the European and analytical traditions of philosophy;
- an understanding of the complex relationship between argument and interpretation in modern philosophy;

- a familiarity with the core texts which define many of the terms of debate in contemporary philosophy;
- knowledge of how to critically appraise texts and arguments in contexts beyond philosophy;
- awareness of the centrality of philosophical issues to all areas of intellectual endeavour
- an advanced knowledge of a variety of critical and new technology approaches applicable to the specific field;
- the articulation of knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories relating to the chosen area of Modern Philosophy at an advanced level;
- understanding of the appropriate critical and technological skills required in the specific field of study;
- the acquisition of knowledge of advanced scholarship in the chosen area of the discipline to a level appropriate for a MA degree.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the field;
- the ability to analyse and critically interpret text and data;*
- the ability to conduct philosophical research independently at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;*
- to further develop skills of reflection on reading and learning, and skills in information handling and retrieval;*
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories at an advanced level, demonstrating self-direction and originality;
- the ability to present logical and coherent written and oral arguments of varying lengths;*
- the ability to comprehend and develop sophisticated concepts and original critical ideas;*
- enhanced interpersonal skills, involving recognising and respecting the viewpoints, and interacting constructively with other people;*
- enhanced time management and organisational skills including working to deadlines, prioritising tasks, organising work-time;*
- in addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthens our postgraduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity.*

* transferable skills

[Back to top](#)

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of seminar discussions, oral presentations, guided independent research, guided independent study, coursework essays, and a dissertation. The basic strategies are to nurture the interest and enthusiasm of the students for the field, to develop the students' critical and communication skills and to develop critical, research and creative skills. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework essays, and a dissertation. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

[Back to top](#)

Details of the programme structure(s)

The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September. The course consists of two core units, and a choice of two half units, with a dissertation.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook.

Students must take the following:

- (i) 'The European Philosophical Trajectory: from Kant to the Present' (Whole Unit) 25% (PY5001)
- (ii) 'The Analytical Trajectory: from Frege and Wittgenstein to the Present' (Whole Unit) 25% (PY 5002)
- (iii) Option 1 (Half Unit) 12.5%

- (iv) Option 2 (Half Unit) 12.5%
- (v) Dissertation 25% (PY5003)

Options will be chosen from a list of courses offered by the participating Departments. These may include: 'Foundations of Contemporary Political Theory'; 'Political Concepts'; 'Contemporary Continental Political Theory'; 'Post-Holocaust Philosophy'; 'Identity, Power and Radical Political Theory'; 'The Future of Phenomenology'

These courses are supplemented by elements of the Research Training in Humanities Research offered by the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies at the School of Advanced Study

<http://igrs.sas.ac.uk/postgraduate/igrs-research-training-programme.html>

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/classicsandphilosophy/home.aspx>

Part-time programme structure

The part-time programme lasts 104 weeks, beginning in September of year one. Part-time students normally take elements (i), (iii) in their first year, and elements (ii) (iv) and (v) in their second year.

[Back to top](#)

Progression and award requirements

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework. To pass the programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment, 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 Masters degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Masters degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element 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 element of the programme. 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 element 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 courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment.

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 element 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 element 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 element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

[Back to top](#)

Student support and guidance

- The Programme Director meets with the students on a regular basis to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Programme Director acts as a point of contact for pastoral support and any questions about the programme throughout the year.

- Course coordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- All students are allocated a personal adviser, with whom they meet at least once a term, and more regularly if required, to discuss all matters relating to their programme and for pastoral support.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- All staff available and accessible through an office-hour system.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.
- Detailed MA handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries, as well as the Computer Centre.
- Computing equipment and office space at Bedford Square.
- Dedicated Departmental computing facilities and study room in Egham.
- Dedicated College Graduate School.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.
- Membership of the Institute of Philosophy; access to further research seminars and courses.

[Back to top](#)

Admission requirements

Admission to the programme normally requires a First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree in Philosophy or a Combined Honours Philosophy degree, or a degree with Philosophy as a minor subject. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and very strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants (such as those with degrees in other subjects which often involve substantial amounts of philosophy, like social studies, English, History, Modern Languages, Theology, Cultural Studies, subjects in the natural sciences which involve philosophical issues, and/or with relevant publications). Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

[Back to top](#)

Further learning and career opportunities

Graduates from Philosophy MA programmes successfully progress into a wide range of professions which include journalism, publishing and the media, computing, advertising and marketing, the creative industries, the public sector, and teaching. For other graduates, completing an MA is the precursor to embarking on research, ultimately leading to a PhD. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

[Back to top](#)

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 Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 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. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research. Members of the teaching staff come from departments which are in the top 10 ranked by proportion of 3* & 4* research.

[Back to top](#)

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

The programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Masters leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma leads to an award of Royal

Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in Philosophy are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in Modern Philosophy

MA in Modern Philosophy (2492)

Postgraduate Diploma in Philosophy

PG Diploma in Philosophy (2493)

[Back to top](#)