ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts** and **Postgraduate Diploma in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies.** This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2009**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to enable students to explore the diverse range of ancient and medieval world studies and to specialise in relevant disciplinary areas within the field of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies;
- to deliver a programme which is informed by the research expertise of staff, which is suited to the needs of students, which provides opportunities for students to develop academically, and which prepares students for further study;
- to develop knowledge and understanding of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies and of the research associated with it, and to prepare students to undertake their own research under appropriate levels of supervision;
- to support the development of a range of transferable skills suitable both for further academic study and for a range of future careers.

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.

The MA in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies is an intercollegiate degree programme of the University of London, taught by the Departments of Classics, Greek and Latin, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, and History in King's College London, Royal Holloway, University of London, and University College London. Teaching is divided between the individual colleges and the Institute of Classical Studies.

Students must take one language testing course, one approved skills course, one course from a list of dedicated courses and a dissertation. Students may include, subject to the approval of the Programme Director, an appropriate course from any other MA programme within the University of London.

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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.

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**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*
- a detailed knowledge and understanding of the methodologies of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies;
- an understanding of critical methodologies and their limitations;
- an understanding of advanced, current research issues relevant to the discipline;
- a critical awareness of the multiplicity of material available and the strengths and weaknesses of the various forms of historical information;
- a general appreciation of the varied and interlinked methodologies for understanding antiquity and the medieval age;
- the reading and understanding of ancient and medieval texts, both in print and in manuscript;
- a grasp of literary criticism necessary for understanding and appreciating the style of ancient and medieval authors;
- a critical awareness of the main forms of material available to those studying Classical antiquity and the Byzantine world.

*Skills and other attributes*
- an ability to understand and appreciate the limits of current understanding and knowledge of antiquity and the medieval world;
- an advanced ability to consider and critically assess secondary literature;*
- an ability to synthesise complex information from a range of sources and to recognise the differences and similarities between documentary and literary evidence where both exist;*
- an ability to consider, analyse and present research issues within a discussion format;*
- an ability to discuss research methodology with rigour and clarity;*
- an ability to pursue an extended piece of independent research to an appropriate level with appropriate supervision and guidance;*
- an ability to present research in a manner appropriate to the Byzantine Studies research discipline;
- skills necessary to pursue further research, whether academic or professional;*
- a basic competence in reading and studying Greek manuscripts;
- a range of skills and knowledge of methodologies drawn from a variety of sub-areas of Classical Studies;
- a range of skills and knowledge of methodologies deployed in the study of Byzantine history and literature;
- interpretative and analytical skills in dealing with a variety of primary and secondary source material including literary and/or philosophical, archaeological, documentary and legal;
- an ability to attain an understanding of ancient cultural and social forms from a range of different source materials;
- skills necessary for the written and oral presentation of argument and debate;*
- the discipline to meet deadlines;*
- research skills and the capacity of independent thought and study.*

* transferable skills

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**Teaching, learning and assessment**
Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminar discussions, oral presentations, site, library and museum visits, group work, problem solving study groups, practical project work, guided independent research and guided independent study. 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 thought, and research cognitive, intellectual and general skills. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework essays, groupwork, oral presentations, reports and exercises and an independent dissertation. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the Department of Classics and the Department of History

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**Details of the programme structure(s)**
The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in late September. It consists of five elements and students are examined in four. Element (v) though compulsory is not assessed and is zero weighted.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. Where weightings are indicated in brackets, these refer to weightings for assessment within the MA. The programme structure for the PgDip is as below, with the exception that students do not undertake the dissertation. Weightings for courses within the PgDip are proportionate, but exclude the dissertation.

Students must take the following:

(i) one course chosen from the current list of available MA courses (25%)
(ii) one course at an appropriate level which tests knowledge of Greek or Latin (25%)
(iii) one research skills course (25%)
(iv) HS5125: Dissertation in the field of Late and Antique Byzantine Studies (25%)
(v) MB03: Methods and Techniques Seminar (zero weighted)

Students are also expected to attend research seminars organised by the Department and by the Hellenic Institute and have the opportunity to attend a variety of other seminars at the Institute of Classical Studies, the Institute of Historical Research, the Warburg Institute and other central London locations.

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

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the Department of Classics and the Department of History.

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**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 65.00% 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 an oral examination 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 65.00% 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 60%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances an oral examination may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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**Student support and guidance**

- The Programme Director acts as personal adviser and meets with the students on a regular basis (and at least once a term) to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Programme Director also acts as a point of contact for pastoral support and any questions about the programme throughout the year.
- Course co-ordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College are organised by the Directors of Postgraduate taught Programmes in the Departments of History and Classics.
- All staff are available and accessible either through an office-hour system or by appointment via e mail.
- Representation on the Student-Staff Committee.
- Detailed MA handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries, Joint Library of the Institute of Classical Studies and the Hellenic and Roman Societies, British Library, as well as the Computer Centre.
- 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, Chaplaincy, Health Centre, Students' Union and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.

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**Admission requirements**

Admission to the programme normally requires a First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree usually in Classics or History or a related subject or a Combined Honours degree in Classics or History. In addition, applicants are expected to be able to use authors and sources in one or more ancient languages. (Students who need to improve their knowledge of an ancient language, or to learn another one, may take one language-learning course as part of the MA.) The Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants (such as mature students, those with degrees in other subjects 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.

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**Further learning and career opportunities**

Graduates from the MA programme in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies have successfully progressed into a wide range of professions which include law, politics, publishing and the media, museum work, management, the public sector, and teaching. For most graduates, completing this MA is the precursor to embarking on research, ultimately leading to an MPhil/PhD. Graduates of this MA who completed their doctoral studies at Royal Holloway currently hold teaching and research posts in Universities and

research institutes in Britain and abroad. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the Careers 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 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. 35% of the Classics, and 60% of the History Department's research profile is of 3* and 4* standard.

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

The programme is taught by staff from the Departments of Classics, Greek and Latin, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, and History at Royal Holloway, University of London, King's College London and University College London. The successful completion of the Master's programme in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma programme in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in Classics and History are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

**Master of Arts Programme in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies**

MA in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies (1250)

**Postgraduate Diploma in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies**

PG Diploma in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies (2481)

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