

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts (MA)** and **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)** in **Medieval Studies**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2011**.

The aims of the Programme are to:

- promote a multidisciplinary understanding of the Middle Ages at an advanced level;
- provide advanced study of specialised topics (historical, literary, and archaeological) within medieval studies;
- develop the knowledge and skills necessary for the study of the Middle Ages, whether for further research or for personal intellectual development;
- provide skills-training in history, literary studies, and archaeology appropriate to a multidisciplinary programme in medieval studies;
- provide training in the research techniques appropriate to those fields of study;
- expand and enhance the intellectual community devoted to the study of the Middle Ages.

This is a multidisciplinary Programme, which takes both a literary and historical approach to the study of the medieval period, and also offers an archaeological perspective for students who choose the appropriate options. Most of the course units that make up the Programme are taught by the English and History departments of the College together with some courses delivered by the French Department and the Museum of London. Staff from the College's Drama, Italian and Music departments, who have research interests in the medieval period, also contribute to some of the courses. The MA Programme is delivered in a single stage, equating to one year of full-time study (52 weeks), or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). The PGDip is delivered over nine months of full-time study (38 weeks), or the equivalent amount of time divided into up to three years of part-time study.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the Programme, 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 research interests of medievalists at the forefront of their discipline drawn from the History, English, Drama, Music, French and Italian Departments of Royal Holloway and staff of the Museum of London, with which the College has a collaborative partnership. In general terms, the Programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding:

- a broad understanding of the Middle Ages based on relevant aspects of the disciplines (History, Literary Criticism, Languages, Museum Studies and Archaeology) which contribute to the Programme;

- the interrelationship of political, cultural, and social change within medieval society;
- a knowledge of the location and organisation of primary and secondary sources of evidence regarding the medieval period, and an understanding of how to deploy these effectively;
- an understanding of how the human past may be studied through an examination of material remains;
- the methodologies in the disciplines represented in the Programme and their application to existing problems of interpretation;
- a systematic knowledge of a variety of techniques of enquiry and analysis used in the disciplines represented in the Programme;
- the established principles and practice of research in medieval studies.

Skills and other attributes:

- making effective use of research institutions: libraries, archives, and museums;*
- locating, organising, deploying and evaluating critically the primary and secondary sources of information in medieval studies;
- reading and interpreting a variety of medieval manuscript texts;
- applying specific skills (linguistic, palaeographic, archaeological, etc.) relevant to the study of the Middle Ages;
- integrating and utilising literary, documentary, and archaeological evidence as appropriate;
- recognising, analysing, and assessing scholarly controversies related to specific topics within medieval studies;
- addressing complex problems of historical, archaeological, or literary interpretation, and making judgements on the basis of necessarily incomplete data;*
- constructing logical arguments in relation to specific medieval topics, grounded in a variety of kinds of evidence;
- conveying the results of research clearly and systematically in a manner comprehensible to the non-specialist, both orally and in writing*;
- engaging in critical discussion of research, both orally and in writing*;
- independent learning and scholarship*;
- independently planning and executing an original and extended piece of work [MA Programme only]
- In addition to the above skills, the Programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work, as appropriate, both autonomously and with others, and to lead and facilitate group discussions; self-awareness and self-management; 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 in the College. Delivery of the Programme is also enhanced through the resources of the Museum of London and the research skills of its staff. Teaching and learning methods will vary according to the intended outcomes of the particular course or session. The main methods used to develop knowledge, understanding and skills are: seminars, student oral presentations, small-group tutorials, and guided independent research or study.

Discipline-specific and transferable skills are developed throughout the Programme. Acquisition of these skills is further enhanced by the Research Development course, which provides training in humanities research techniques (footnoting, compiling a bibliography, reviewing, good writing, textual editing etc.) and in making and chairing oral presentations. Students also have the opportunity to take courses based at the Museum of London that will enable them to acquire specialist skills relating to the display and interpretation of the material culture of the medieval world.

Assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills is by assessed essays and other exercises, oral presentations, formal examinations, and an independent dissertation (the latter in the MA Programme only). The assessment methods used for a particular course will vary in accordance with the knowledge and skills being developed by that course (see next section for details). Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the Programme structure

MA Students follow the full-unit 'programme' course (contributing 25% of the total assessment of the degree) and also take a compulsory half-unit Research Development course (12.5%) plus a half-unit 'skills' option course (12.5%) and two half-unit option courses (12.5% each) selected from a wide choice. In addition, all students complete a compulsory Dissertation (25%).

The Postgraduate Diploma follows the same pattern, with the exception that students will not undertake the dissertation. Weightings for courses within the PGDip are proportionate, but exclude the dissertation. That is, PGDip students follow the full-unit 'Programme' course (contributing 34% of the total assessment of the degree) and also take a compulsory half-unit Research Development course (16.5%) plus a half-unit 'skills' option course (16.5%) and two half-unit option courses (16.5% each) selected from a wide choice.

A. Programme Course

This element of the Programme contributes 25% toward the final award of MA or 34% toward the final award of PGDip. Students take the following course, which runs over both the Autumn and Spring terms:

EN5607 Medieval Narrative (1 unit)

B. Option Courses

This element of the Programme contributes 25% toward the final award of MA or 33% toward the final award of PGDip. Students select **two** of the following, one of which will be studied in the Autumn and the other in the Spring term:

HS5213 Archaeology of Medieval London (½ unit)

EN5604 Arthurian Literature and Tradition in England (½ unit)

HS5219 Byzantium and the First Two Crusades (½ unit)

HS5220 Byzantium and the Crusades: From the Origins of the Fourth Crusade to the Fall of Constantinople (½ unit)

EN5613 Chaucer (½ unit)

HS5235 The Court in England and Europe c.1350-c.1450 (½ unit)

HS5236 The English Court in its European Context c.1450-1603 (½ unit)

HS5221 The English Parliament to 1536 (½ unit)

EN5611 Medieval Literary London (½ unit)

EN5609 Old English Riddles (½ unit)

FR5102 Representations of the Twelfth-Century Court in Anglo-Norman, French and Occitan Literature (½ unit)

EN5612 The Visual and The Verbal (½ unit)

HS5210 Women in England 1300-1550 (½ unit)

C. Skills Courses

This element of the Programme contributes 25% toward the final award of MA or 33% toward the final award PGDip. During the Autumn and Spring terms, students take:

HS5217 Research Development course (½ unit)

plus one of the following:

HS5250 Introductory Latin for Medievalists (½ unit)

HS5251 Further Latin for Medievalists (½ unit)

EN5602 Pre-Conquest English (½ unit)

EN5601 Reading Middle English (½ unit)

FR5101 Reading Medieval French (½ unit)

HS5216 Palaeography and Diplomatic (½ unit)

HS5238 Archaeological Skills (½ unit)

HS5237 Museum Skills (½ unit)

D. Dissertation

MA Students take the following compulsory unit during the Summer term and the following vacation:

EN5610 Dissertation (1 unit)

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 the [Department](#).

N.B. Part-time MA students will normally complete the *Programme Course* and the *Research Development Course* in their first year of study and the two *Option Courses*, the *Skills Course*, and the *Dissertation* in their second year of study. Part-time students following the PGDip over two years will follow the same pattern, excluding the dissertation. Part-time students following the PGDip over three years will normally complete the *Research Development Course* and the *Skills Course* in their first year, the *Programme Course* in their second year, and the two *Option Courses* in their third year. Variations of these patterns may be allowed in consultation with the Programme Director.

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Progression and Award Requirements

If a student is taking the programme over more than one year, he or she must normally pass the course or courses taken in one year in order to progress into the following year.

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 and the Programme Course 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.

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Student support and guidance

- Full information about the programme can be found on the website below: <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/programmes/medieval-studies>
- A Programme Guide is 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.
- Personal Adviser. The Programme Director from the English department acts as the Personal Adviser for students on this programme. His/her role is to offer advice on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Personal Adviser sees students at regular intervals, typically once a term, throughout the Programme and is also available for consultation at advertised office hours. He/she also sees all the students on the Programme at the weekly Research Development Seminar.
- All tutors are available for consultation by their students at advertised office hours.

- Departmental Student-Staff Postgraduate Committees in the English department 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, in the Computer Centre, and at the College's London base at 11, Bedford Square.
- Students enjoy access to all College and University support services, including the College Careers Service (and the Departmental Careers Service Liaison Officer), Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Education Support Unit for students with special needs, College Chaplaincy and the Student Union.
- 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 Institute of English Studies, Senate House library and the Warburg Institute.

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Admission requirements

Students are normally expected to have a first degree equivalent to at least Second Class Honours from a UK or overseas university. Mature applicants who do not possess the standard qualifications, but can demonstrate appropriate professional experience within the discipline, will also be considered, each such application being considered on its merits. 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

The MA and PG Diploma in Medieval Studies provide ideal qualifications for embarking upon further postgraduate work in the field. Students may, for example, elect to extend the PG Diploma to a full MA Programme by completing a dissertation of 12,000 to 15,000 words; the MA, in turn, provides a solid foundation for PhD work. The wide range of discipline-specific and transferable skills developed by this programme also makes it an excellent qualification for posts involving research, analysis and presentation of information at an advanced level. It is thus suitable for, for example, writers, archivists, librarians, full-time researchers, journalists, business and marketing people, civil servants, university administrators and teachers looking to develop and extend their professional skills. Several of our previous MA students who have gone on to doctoral research have taken up lecturing posts in British and American universities. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

The design and delivery of the College's Programmes draws extensively upon the research activities and expertise of its staff. Over the years the English Department has won a reputation as one of the most dynamic departments of English in the country. 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. 65% of the English Department's research profile is of 3* and 4* standard, and 60% of the History Department's research profile is of 3* and 4* standard. Members of staff of the Museum of London involved in the Programme also have international reputations in their specialist fields.

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

The programme is taught by staff of Royal Holloway, University of London, with some options taught by staff of the Museum of London. The MA leads to an award of the University of London; the PG Diploma leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in English and History are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

Master of Arts in Medieval Studies

MA in Medieval Studies (1300)

Postgraduate Diploma in Medieval Studies

PG Diploma in Medieval Studies (2336)