

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

### MA in British History

<b>1</b>	<b>AWARDING INSTITUTION</b>	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>2</b>	<b>TEACHING INSTITUTION</b>	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>3</b>	<b>FINAL AWARD</b>	MA
<b>4</b>	<b>PROGRAMME TITLES</b>	MA in British History
<b>5</b>	<b>PROGRAMME ACCREDITED BY:</b>	N/A
<b>6</b>	<b>UNIVERSITY CODE</b>	
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA SUBJECT BENCHMARKING GROUP(S)</b>	N/A
<b>8</b>	<b>DATE OF PRODUCTION/REVISION</b>	8/6/04
<b>9</b>	<b>PROGRAMMES AIMS</b>	<p>[a] To provide students with a range of learning opportunities (in relation to analytical, key, research and subject-specific skills) within the field of British History</p> <p>[b] To provide a curriculum that is responsive to the research training requirements of the AHRB/AHRC and ESRC</p> <p>[c] To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for or as part of continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning</p> <p>[d] To provide access to Higher Education to students from a variety of educational backgrounds, and to provide a bridge to further postgraduate qualifications</p> <p>[e] To provide students with the opportunity to gain the basic skills and knowledge required to continue with academic research in History at PhD level, or to enter the workplace in a variety of professions requiring high levels of skill such as literacy, research and project management.</p> <p>[f] That the programme meets the requirements of a Master's level qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications</p> <p>[h] That the programme conforms to University policies and to QAA codes of practice</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	By the end of the programme a typical graduate will have acquired knowledge and understanding of:
1		British history from a variety of chronological and thematic perspectives;
2		The theoretical and analytical frameworks that British historians bring to their subject;
3		The methodologies and sources which are used by specialists in this field;
4		The detailed knowledge which comes from undertaking a sustained original piece of historical research (a dissertation).
<b>B</b>	<b>Subject-specific/professional skills</b>	By the end of the programme a typical graduate will have:
1		Acquired subject-specific skills through training and research experience and developed an ability to evaluate, analyse and interpret different sources of evidence relating to British History;
2		Developed the ability to undertake higher degree research through completion of short pieces of written work and a dissertation;
3		Practiced a wide range of subject-specific skills such as the marshalling of evidence, presenting a balanced written argument, and a critical analysis of historical and bibliographic evidence;
4		Developed an in-depth understanding of their dissertation topic;
5		Developed a variety of additional skills according to their individual needs, e.g. computer literacy, archive use and data management.

<p><b>C</b>      <b>Cognitive skills</b>  <i>By the end of the programme a typical graduate will have acquired and developed skills in:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1      Critical reasoning</li> <li>2      Gathering and using information</li> <li>3      Applying concepts</li> <li>4      Evaluation, analysis, and interpretation</li> <li>5      Empathy</li> </ol> <p><b>D</b>      <b>Key (transferable) skills</b>  <i>By the end of the programme a typical graduate will have acquired and developed skills in</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1      Written communication</li> <li>2      Interpersonal/oral communication</li> <li>3      Teamwork</li> <li>4      Planning and organisation</li> <li>5      Computer literacy</li> </ol>
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10(b) <b>PROGRAMME INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:</b>	<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS AND STRATEGIES</b>
<p><b>A</b>      <b>Knowledge and understanding</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Knowledge of British history from a variety of chronological and thematic perspectives</li> <li>2 The theoretical and analytical frameworks that British historians bring to their subject</li> <li>3 The methodologies and sources which are used by specialists in this field</li> <li>4 The detailed knowledge which comes from undertaking a sustained original piece of historical research.</li> </ol>	<p>The primary method of imparting knowledge and understanding [A1-A4] is lectures, supplemented by group seminars, individual tutorials for the return of coursework, and self-directed learning.</p> <p>The structure of the MA is designed so that all students take a Core Module ('The Practice of History') introducing them to key theoretical and analytical frameworks [A2]. They will develop their knowledge of British history and the methodologies and sources used by historians in this field [A1-3] through taking an additional 'Pathway' module in British History, and an additional Optional module. The dissertation will impart skills and knowledge through hands-on specialist research [A4].</p> <p>Throughout the programmes students are encouraged to read widely and extensive bibliographies are supplied. Students are encouraged to use a wide range of learning resources, such as books, journal articles, primary sources (e.g. Robinson Library Special Collections, Tyne and Wear Record Office, Northumberland Record Office, Newcastle City Library, Northumbria and Durham University Libraries, Literary and Philosophical Society Library) and on-line resources and databases available at the Robinson Library (e.g. JSTOR, DNB).</p> <p>The dissertation provides students with the opportunity to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of British History and its significance within the existing historiography of this disciplinary field.</p>

<p><b>B Subject-specific/professional skills</b></p> <p>1 Acquired subject-specific skills through training and research experience and developed an ability to evaluate, analyse and interpret different sources of evidence relating to British History</p> <p>2 Developed the ability to undertake higher degree research through completion of short pieces of written work and a dissertation</p> <p>3 Practiced a wide range of subject-specific skills such as the marshalling of evidence, presenting a balanced written argument, and a critical analysis of historical and bibliographic evidence.</p> <p>4 Developed an in-depth understanding of their dissertation topic.</p> <p>5 Developed a variety of additional skills according to their individual needs, e.g. computer literacy, archive use and data management.</p>	<p>All taught modules include lectures from a number of professional historians who research and teach in the area about which they lecture. All contributors use a wide range of examples from their own field of expertise in British History. Group work related to lectures provides students with the opportunity to develop and practice their subject specific and generic skills [B1-5] through, for example, preparation for and oral contribution to seminars, shorter formative pieces of written work, and the final dissertation.</p> <p>Research training (at Faculty and School level), tutorials, guided reading, feedback on outline proposals, and continuous supervision provide the basis for students to complete their dissertations.</p>
<p><b>D Key (transferable) skills</b></p> <p>1 written communication</p> <p>2 Interpersonal/oral communication</p> <p>3 teamwork</p> <p>4 planning and organisation</p> <p>5 computer literacy</p>	<p>In specific research training modules, students will be introduced through lectures and seminars to:</p> <p>[a] how to plan and execute a piece of extended historical research [D1, 4, 5].</p> <p>[b] effective interpersonal/oral communication techniques, taught through the Faculty and School Research Training Modules. Students practice and develop these skills by contributing orally either as groups or individually in seminars for each taught module [D2, 3-4].</p> <p>[c] teamworking. This is practiced through the rest of the programme through seminar work [D3].</p> <p>[d] planning and organization. Students practice and develop these crucial skills through keeping to programme deadlines and by planning and organizing their written work, including the dissertation [D4-5].</p> <p>[e] computer literacy. This is then practiced and developed throughout the programme through submission of coursework and then the dissertation [D5].</p>
<p><b>10(b) PROGRAMME INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>METHODS OF ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p><b>The main method of assessment will be through written work, including short essays other written assignments such as writing research reports (details are specified in Module Outline Forms). Written work for the Core Module, ‘Pathways’ module and Optional Modules constitute formative pieces of written work, that will culminate in the Dissertation, which carries with it a weighting of 60 credits, reflecting the summative nature of this final assessed piece.</b></p>

<p><b>A Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 British history from a variety of chronological and thematic perspectives</li> <li>2 The theoretical and analytical frameworks that British historians bring to their subject</li> <li>3 The methodologies and sources which are used by specialists in this field</li> <li>4 The detailed knowledge which comes from undertaking a sustained original piece of historical research .</li> </ol>	<p>Knowledge and understanding [A1] are assessed through a number of short written essays and research assignments for each module, and the final dissertation [A4]. Written assignments for 'Pathway' and Optional modules are designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore the historiography of Britain [A2]. In the assessment of these modules, students will write formative essays on British history, on which they will receive written and oral feedback. Marks will be awarded for evidence of knowledge attained, as well as evidence that the student has achieved an appropriate level of understanding of the methodologies and sources used by specialists in this field [A2-3]. The dissertation provides an extended opportunity for students to reveal their in-depth knowledge and understanding of one particular topic and time period in British history [A4].</p>
<p><b>B Subject-specific/professional skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Acquired subject-specific skills through practical experience of oral and written work</li> <li>2 Developed the ability to undertake both work-based and higher degree research through completion of a dissertation</li> </ol>	<p>All assignments include an element of assessment related to the understanding of subject-specific skills [B1]. Students are encouraged through the research logs compiled for Faculty and School training modules to reflect on their own research in relation to the attainment of transferable skills, in either the pursuit of further postgraduate research, or in the wider workplace [B2].</p>
<p><b>C Cognitive skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Critical reasoning</li> <li>2 Gathering and using information</li> <li>3 Applying concepts</li> <li>4 Evaluating, analysing, and interpreting different sources of evidence</li> <li>5 Empathising with historical subjects</li> </ol>	<p>All written pieces of work in the taught modules require students formatively to gather, evaluate, analyse, and interpret evidence, using the skills identified in History as benchmark skills within the discipline [C1-5].</p> <p>The dissertation represents the summative task in detailed practice of all of these cognitive skills.</p>
<p><b>D Key (transferable) skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 written communication</li> <li>2 Interpersonal/oral communication</li> <li>3 teamwork</li> <li>4 planning and organisation</li> <li>5 computer literacy</li> </ol>	<p>Written communication [D1] is assessed in each of the modules on this programme. Assignments will be mostly essay-based, reflecting the dominance of this form of writing within the discipline, but other written work may be set, such as writing a research log, or compiling a database as part of a research assignment.</p> <p>Interpersonal/oral communication, individually and as part of a team [D2-3] is a critical part of the teaching and learning experience for this programme, for example, during individual feedback sessions, and group seminars. As with other comparable Master's level degree programmes in History around the country, performance in oral communication does not form a part of the assessment.</p> <p>Planning and organization is assessed throughout the programme through the student's ability to meet deadlines and successfully complete the programme [D4].</p> <p>Basic computer literacy [D5] is assessed through all written assignments that are all required to be word-processed. Additional IT training is provided in the compulsory module 'IT for Historians' [Semester 2]. Where appropriate, students may wish to acquire higher skills (e.g. in database analysis) in relation to quantitative research methodologies, for which training will be provided.</p>

**11 PROGRAMME CURRICULUM, STRUCTURE, AND FEATURES**

The programme may be taken on a full time or part time basis. A part-time route through the programme will be decided on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Degree Programme Director.

All students take the following compulsory modules:

Title	Code	Year	Semester	Credit
The Practice of History	HIS824	1	1	30
Pathways in British History I Social and Economic History [recommended for ESRC applicants ] OR Pathways in British History II: Political and Cultural History [recommended for AHRB/AHRC applicants]	HIS825  HIS826	1	1	20
Faculty Research Training Module	ART800	1	1	10
Dissertation Training Module	LES 803	1	2	10
Research Methods in History	HIS800	1	2	10
IT for Historians	HIS819	1	2	20
Dissertation	HIS823	1	3	60

In addition all students shall take *one* optional module in Semester 1 or 2 chosen from the following:

Title	Code	Year	Semester	Credit
Women and Gender in Britain, c. 1650-1800	HIS827	1	2	20
Death and Burial Cultures in Britain, 1550-1800	HIS828	1	2	20
Literature, Politics and the Nation in Ireland, 1890–1923	HIS829	1	2	20
Politics and the Great War	HIS830	1	2	20
Power and Politics in North-East England, 1750-2000	HIS809	1	1*	20

\*This Module has already been approved as part of the MA in North-East History. It is currently offered in Semester 1, although an application may be made to change this to Semester 2 after 2004/5.

The list of optional modules offered could vary from year to year and modules will run subject to appropriate levels of enrolment, as specified on the individual module outline forms. The semester in which each of the optional modules is offered may also vary.

All students will receive a module handbook at the start of each module, which contain full details of lectures, lecturers, methods of assessment, seminar themes and set reading. The handbook will also contain a list of aims and learning outcomes for the module, and a bibliography. Extra teaching and learning support material will be provided, e.g. through Blackboard 6, Robinson Library Special Collections. Module outline forms will be provided for all modules.

In Semester 1, all students take:

[a] *The Practice of History* [30 credits]. This will introduce key methodological and historiographical issues in the study of history, and will provide each student with an introduction to the subject of British history from a wide chronological and thematic perspective.

[b] *Pathways in British History* [20 credits]. This module provides students with the opportunity to develop a thematic approach to the methodologies and themes deployed by historians of Britain. The 'pathways' approach facilitates student choice, allowing them to specialise in the theme that is of particular interest, raising areas of research that may be further explored in the dissertation.

[c] *Faculty Research Training* [10 credits]. This will provide skills training in key research skills.

In Semester 2, all students take:

- [a] Dissertation training [10 credits]
- [b] School research training [10 credits]. Discipline-specific research training for historians.
- [c] IT skills for historians [20 credits]

[b] *An Optional Module* [20 credits]. These are more specialist studies which students can select from a range of specialist topics in British history that are devised according to the particular research expertise of each module leader. In some cases, students may elect to take their Optional Module in Semester One.

*Statement on Progression*

Candidates are normally expected to pass the taught modules before proceeding to the Dissertation.

In Semester 3, provided that they normally meet the progression criteria stated above, all students research and write up a *Dissertation* [60 credits]:

Students complete their dissertation after the taught modules have been completed. Dissertations are presented in the form of a 14,000 word piece of work, including footnotes and appendices but excluding bibliography. Students are encouraged to think about potential topics as early as possible and discuss topics in detail with staff at the beginning of Semester 2. The Masters Degree dissertation must be an original piece of work and not simply a synthesis of existing knowledge. It requires the gathering and analysis of new data, the development of original arguments and the presentation of conclusions and recommendations. To be successful the dissertation requires careful planning and preparation, for which training is given in Semesters 1 and 2.

**CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION**

- (a) Candidates should normally hold a first degree in History, or a Joint or Combined Honours degree with History, and shall normally hold at least a 2:1 (Upper Second Class) degree. Other degree qualifications may be considered where appropriate, especially where essay-based work formed the written component of the undergraduate programme (e.g. in English).
- (b) Candidates who have followed a non-traditional route into Higher Education will also be considered eligible, according to the Faculty Admissions Policy.

**ADMISSIONS POLICY**

We actively encourage applications from overseas and domestic students. All overseas students have to satisfy the University's language requirements and obtain a minimum of 6.5 IELTS or equivalent.

All applications are seen by the DPD and, where deemed appropriate, another member of staff. All borderline or unusual applicants are contacted by letter, email, or phone and further information solicited. All applicants will be invited for interview, and will be offered the chance to meet staff and view facilities.

**13 SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING**

**Academic support**

All students are encouraged to discuss any academic issues or concerns as soon as they arise – usually with the relevant module leader in the first instance. Where a student's assessed work is in need of support, staff (usually the first marker) set-up individual tutorial sessions. The level of student support will be in keeping with the new University guidelines and policies governing Postgraduate Degrees at Newcastle (including the most recent Examination Conventions for Taught Postgraduate Programmes approved by Senate, 10/3/04).

**Pastoral support**

Every student has a personal tutor assigned to them. Part-time and overseas students are allocated to specialized tutors. The university's full pastoral support system is explained to students in the Degree Programme Handbook (DPH).

**Support for Special Needs**

The teaching and learning support, resources and method of delivery, e.g. course documentation, provision of lectures and seminars, are scrutinized to ensure that it is appropriately provided to any student with Special Needs, taking into account those needs as and when they arise, in accordance with University policy. Information regarding the Disability Office will be included in the DPH.

**Learning resources**

Within Newcastle: The Robinson Library; Robinson Library Special Collections; Northumbria University Library; Newcastle City Library; Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society; Tyne and Wear Record Office; Northumberland Record Office. On-line databases and electronic journals available via the Robinson Library (e.g. JSTOR, DNB: see Appendix); microfilm collections. Other specialist museums and archive collections, e.g. Laing Art Gallery, Hancock Museum. Within the region: Durham University Library and Palace Green Library (Special Collections); Durham City and County Archives; York University Library and City of York Archives; Yorkshire County Record Office (Northallerton). Copyright library within day-return journey (Edinburgh). Other specialist museums and archives, e.g. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle; Durham Light Infantry Museum.

**14 METHODS FOR EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**Module reviews**

Individual module reviews will be carried out annually for the taught modules and will be discussed at the Postgraduate BoS in the School of Historical Studies.

**Programme reviews**

The Programme will be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring and Review process carried out by the Board of Studies which is then considered by FTLC and UTLC.

**External examiner reports**

Will be received annually, discussed at BoS and reports made to FTLC.

**Accreditation reports**

N/A

**Student evaluations**

Students will complete module and individual teacher evaluation report forms for every taught module. The results of the module evaluation will be discussed by the BoS. Results of individual evaluation will be discussed between the DPD, module leaders, and relevant staff.

Student concerns are also discussed at the Staff/Student Committee and where necessary, referred to BoS.

**Feedback Mechanisms**

All evaluations (module leaders, students, external examiners etc) of the quality of teaching and learning will be discussed at BoS and, as and where appropriate, will be fed back to students through their BoS representatives and up to Faculty through FTLC to UTLC.

**15 Regulation of Assessment**

When examining work the examiners use the following criteria in awarding marks.

*A distinction level mark (70%-100%)* will be given to work that displays depth of knowledge and mastery of skills appropriate to that module (or modules). The work will be clearly presented with well-structured, sharply focused arguments and will explore the limits of knowledge in the area under investigation. It will demonstrate critical analysis, independence of mind, initiative and intellectual rigour. In terms of the MA dissertation, work may also demonstrate originality and an ability to extend the research further through doctoral study, or convey ideas that might be publishable. Examiners will use the mark range 70-79% for good performance at distinction level and 80-100% for publishable work.

*A merit level mark (60%-69%)* will be awarded for well written and informed work that indicates awareness of recent developments in the area under investigation. The work will be well organised, showing a thorough understanding of the subject, and evidence of additional self-study. There should be no significant deficiencies, although some points may be discussed without being argued through fully.

*A pass level mark (50%-59%)* will be awarded for work that displays competence and general understanding of the subject. It contains relevant information but lacks the sophistication and incisiveness of work at higher grades, and shows limited evidence of additional, independent study. There may be insufficient discussion and conclusions.

**A fail mark (49% and below)** will be given to work which displays a serious lack of understanding of the principles of the subject, major errors, serious deficiencies in knowledge, expression and organisation, substantial omissions and irrelevance.

**Award of a Diploma** A) The examiners may recommend the award of a Diploma, based upon performance in the assessment of the Degree Programme above. B) Candidates who achieve Diploma standard but are not eligible for the award of the MA shall be eligible for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in History.

**Role of the External Examiner**

The External Examiners are full members of the Board of Examiners and have the right to speak on any matter at meetings of the Board regardless of whether their opinion has been specifically invited. The Board is required to take into account the views of the external examiners but is not obliged to defer to their judgment in taking decisions. External examiners are required to report back to the University on the comparability of standards of the programmes and other matters as they so wish.

**16 Indicators of Quality and Standards:**

**Professional Accreditation Reports**

None

**Internal Review Reports**

None

**Previous QAA Reports**

n/a

**Additional Publicity:**

The School Prospectus  
The University and Degree Programme Regulations  
The Degree Programme Handbook