

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	MA History
5	Programme Code	4135F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	n/a
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	n/a
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Last updated	May 2013

10 Programme Aims

1. To increase postgraduate recruitment in the School of Historical Studies (domestic and international students) with a new, flexible PGT programme;
2. To provide greater choice and flexibility in the range of taught PG degrees in SHS within existing module provision;
3. To provide students with a range of learning opportunities (in relation to analytical, key research, and subject-specific skills) within the discipline of History;
4. To provide a curriculum that is responsive to the research training requirements of the AHRC (career pathway to a PhD and beyond);
5. To enable students to develop their capacity to learn in preparation for, or as part of continuing professional development (CPD) and lifelong learning;
6. To provide access to Higher Education to students from a variety of educational backgrounds, and to provide a bridge to further postgraduate qualifications;
7. 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;
8. To expose students to cutting-edge research environments in the sphere of History and encourage engagement by students with current staff research.
9. That the programme meets the requirements of a level 7 qualification as defined by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.
10. That the programme conforms to University policies and to QAA codes of practice.

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

Knowledge and Understanding	
On completing the programme students should:	
A1	have an advanced level knowledge of History from a variety of chronological and thematic perspectives;
A2	understand the theoretical and analytical frameworks that historians bring to their subject;
A3	understand the methodologies and sources which are used by specialists in this field;
A4	possess the detailed knowledge which comes from undertaking a sustained original piece of historical research (a dissertation).
Teaching and Learning Methods	
<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 compulsory module ('The Practice of History') introducing them to key theoretical and analytical frameworks [A2]. They will develop their knowledge of History and the methodologies and sources used by historians in various fields [A1-3] through taking additional Optional modules. 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>	
Assessment Strategy	
<p>Assessment for all modules is by written work and will evaluate the student's attainment of the knowledge outcomes expected at an advanced level. [A1-4]</p> <p>The dissertation will assess to what extent students have gained a deeper knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of History and its significance within the existing historiography of this disciplinary field.</p>	
Intellectual Skills	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
B1	demonstrate subject-specific skills through training and research experience and to have developed an ability to evaluate, analyse and interpret different sources of evidence relating to History;
B2	develop the ability to undertake higher degree research through completion of short pieces of written work and a dissertation;
B3	practice a wide range of intellectual skills such as the marshalling of historical evidence;
B4	articulate in written form an advanced level of knowledge about their dissertation topic

Teaching and Learning Methods
<p>The subject-specific skills will be imparted through in-School training in the methodological approaches of historians [B1] via 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 methodological frameworks [B2] They will develop the intellectual skills demanded in the practice of History and the methodologies and sources used by historians in various fields [B1-3] through the Core module and a semester 2 Dissertation Training Module. Research and writing a dissertation will practice intellectual skills through hands-on specialist research [B4].</p>
Assessment Strategy
<p>Assessment for all modules is by written work and will evaluate the student's attainment of the intellectual skills expected at an advanced level. [B1-4]</p> <p>The dissertation will assess to what extent students have mastered the intellectual skills required in analysing and writing up a thesis on a particular aspect of History and its significance within the existing historiography of this disciplinary field.</p>
Practical Skills
<p>On completing the programme students should be able to:</p> <p>C1 demonstrate a wide range of transferable skills such as the marshalling of evidence, presenting a balanced written argument, and a critical analysis of textual and bibliographic evidence;</p> <p>C2 demonstrate a variety of additional skills according to their individual needs, e.g. computer literacy, archive use and data management;</p> <p>C3 present a balanced written argument;</p> <p>C4 be competent in basic computer literacy.</p>
Teaching and Learning Methods
<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 History. Group work related to lectures provides students with the opportunity to develop and practice their practical skills [C1-4] 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 School level), tutorials, guided reading, feedback on outline proposals, and continuous supervision provide the basis for students to develop the practical skills required to complete their dissertations.</p>

Assessment Strategy

Assessment for all modules is by written work and will evaluate the student's attainment of the practical skills expected at an advanced level. [C1-4]. 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 [C1-4]. The dissertation represents the summative task in detailed practice of all of these practical skills.

The dissertation, which must be formatted and presented using qualitative and (where appropriate) quantitative methods in accordance with the formatting styles set out in the School handbook, will assess to what extent students have mastered the practical skills required in analysing and writing up a thesis on a particular aspect of History and its significance within the existing historiography of this disciplinary field.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to demonstrate:

- D1 Critical reasoning
- D2 Gathering and using information
- D3 Applying concepts
- D4 Evaluation, analysis, and interpretation
- D5 Empathy

Teaching and Learning Methods

In specific research training modules, students will be introduced through lectures and seminars to:

[A] How to plan and execute a piece of extended historical research [D1-5].

[b] Effective interpersonal/oral communication techniques, taught through the 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].

[c] Team working. This is practiced through the rest of the programme through seminar work [D3].

[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].

[e] Computer literacy. This is then practiced and developed throughout the programme through submission of coursework and then the dissertation, which will require an empathetic understanding of the research undertaken [D5].

Assessment Strategy

Critical reasoning [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.

Gathering information and applying concepts [D2-3] are 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.

Evaluating, analysing and interpreting evidence with empathy are assessed throughout the programme through the student's ability to meet deadlines and successfully complete the programme [D1-4].

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

The programme is available for study in both full-time and part-time modes and follows the standard pattern of 120 credits of taught modules with a 60 credit dissertation. The part-time route will be decided in consultation with the Degree Programme Director.

Students will take 40 credits of compulsory taught modules, providing an advanced-level introduction to the practice of the discipline (including the ideas and theoretical frameworks used in its study) and intensive training in research skills and dissertation development.

Students will also take at between 40 and 60 credits of optional modules from a list covering the major specialisms in the department (currently British, American, East Asian and Medical History)

The remaining 20 to 40 credit will be selected in consultation with the DPD and will comprise at least 20 credits from other MA modules in the Faculty (for example, Modern Languages, Archaeology, English and Politics). There will also be the option to undertake a short (20 credit) independent study module in History.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

This programme is tailored with maximum flexibility so that students not wishing to specialise in one type of History can draw upon a wide range of modules across a wide range of time periods and different geographical areas, and diverse specialist approaches (e.g. the History of Medicine). It provides robust skills training at an advanced level appropriate to the methodologies and concepts required in the practice of historical research, leading to a dissertation in any chosen field, providing that the supervisory expertise is available (in consultation with the Degree Programme Director). The programme incorporates the opportunity to acquire and/or develop specialist skills (e.g. language training) an Independent Study, and/or take a module in a complementary discipline (e.g. Politics).

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

At least a 2:1 degree in History or a related discipline (for example English, Politics or other essay –based subject).

Admissions policy/selection tools

Admission is at the discretion of the Degree Programme Director.

Level of English Language capability

IELTS 6.5 (or equivalent)

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. Stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee. The FTLSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process. Every six years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a one-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes

<50	Fail
50-59	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit
70 or above	Pass with Distinction

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes

<50	Fail
50 or above	Pass

Assessment criteria: see Annex

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- i. See and approve assessment papers
- ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
- iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
- iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either* (*core modules are the only ones listed: see above for very wide range of optional modules on this programme).

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Compulsory in Bold) – all prefixed with HIS unless stated
A1	8061, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
A2	8061, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
A3	8061, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
A4	8061, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
B1	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
B2	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
B3	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
B4	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
C1	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
C2	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
C3	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
C4	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
D1	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
D2	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
D3	8061, 8098, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107
D4	8061, 8023 , 8025, 8105, 8052, 8053, SHS8124, SHS8125, SHS8126, 8034, 8132, 8104, 8106, 8107