MA Research/Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Archaeology
For students entering in 2009

Awarding Institution:	The University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	The University of Reading
	Faculty of Science
Programme length:	12 months Full-time (24 months Part-time)
Date of specification:	June 2008
Programme Director:	Professor Bob Chapman
Programme Adviser:	TBA
Board of Studies:	MA in Archaeology
Accreditation:	Not appropriate

Summary of programme aims

The MA Research in Archaeology aims to provide advanced study and research training in Archaeology primarily as a foundation for further research at Doctoral Level and also for students who wish to develop research in particular areas of interest at postgraduate level and are either already employed in Archaeology or wish to pursue a career in Archaeology.

The MA Research in Archaeology aims to enable students:

- to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the substantive and conceptual issues in their chosen aspects of Archaeology
- to discuss research issues with practising researchers and specialists in their fields in order to develop critical awareness of current methods, problems and insights in advanced scholarship at the forefront of Archaeology
- to make a significant contribution in evaluating methodologies and developing critiques of them, and where appropriate, in proposing hypotheses and knowledge in essays and a dissertation
- to develop general and specific research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for independent research at doctoral level, or to undertake a professional career and continue to engage in, and contribute to, scholarly research.

Transferable skills

In following this programme students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to research, communication of complex material (both written and oral) to specialist and non-specialist audiences, information handling, time management, problem-solving and decision-making, self-directed learning and use of information and communication technology. The MA Research in Archaeology will enable students to develop skills such as: synthesising and evaluating data from a range of sources; providing a coherent overview and critique of competing theories and positions on a topic; developing arguments on the merits and limitations of these; and self-direction and originality in independent planning and production of a substantial piece of research under supervision in the dissertation, as a potential foundation for further study and continuing professional development.

Programme content

MA Research in Archaeology (180 credits)

Students take the following modules:

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
ARME1	Essay Module 1	20	7
ARME2	Essay Module 2	20	7
ARME3	Essay Module 3	20	7
ARMSP1	Seminar Presentation	10	7
ARMDW	Dissertation Workshops	10	7
ARMRD	Dissertation	100	7

Work for each module must be on a topic in Archaeology, which may include one or more themes from the following:

Cognition and the Human Mind
Social Identity and Gender
Religion, Ritual and Belief

Burial Archaeology
Palaeo-health and -diet
Life-cycle
Migration
Forensic Anthropology or Archaeology
Archaeological Prospection

Material Culture
Buildings, Settlement, Urbanism
Social Complexity

Environmental Change
Landscape

Topics can be selected from a wide range of early and later prehistoric and historical periods and regions including Britain, Europe, the Mediterranean, Western Asia and the Americas, including for example:

Palaeolithic
Neolithic
Bronze Age
Iron Age
Classical periods
Early and Later Medieval periods

Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeology (120 credits)

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
ARME1	Essay Module 1	20	7
ARMSP1	Seminar Presentation	10	7
ARMDW	Dissertation Workshops	10	7
ARMRP	Dissertation	80	7

Or

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
ARME1	Essay Module 1	20	7
ARME2	Essay Module 2	20	7
ARME3	Essay Module 3	20	7
ARMSP1	Seminar Presentation	10	7
ARMRE	Extended Essay	50	7

Postgraduate Certificate in Archaeology (60 credits)

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
ARME1	Essay Module 1	20	7
ARME2	Essay Module 2	20	7
ARME3	Essay Module 3	20	7

Part-time/Modular arrangements
The programme may be undertaken over two years on a part-time basis. Selection of modules between the two years will be agreed at the commencement of the programme. It is anticipated that students will normally complete at least 60 credits' worth of modules in Year 1 and begin the Dissertation in Year 1. Modules will be assessed in the year that they are taken.

Code	Module title	Credits	Level
ARME1	Essay Module 1	20	7
ARME2	Essay Module 2	20	7
ARME3	Essay Module 3	20	7
ARMSP1	Seminar Presentation	10	7
ARMDW	Dissertation Workshops	10	7
ARMRD	Dissertation	100	7

Progression requirements
None.

Summary of teaching and assessment
Teaching is primarily by means of individually supervised essays with regular tutorials and a supervised dissertation. Support and teaching for the Seminar Presentation module will be provided by staff with relevant expertise in the subject area and the Seminar Presentation

Module Convenor. Teaching will be supplemented by classes and seminars where appropriate according to student interest, staff teaching and research activity, at the discretion of the Module Convenor and Programme Director.

Assessment and teaching terms are as follows:

Term	Code	Module title	Assessment	Credits	Level
1	ARME1	Essay Module 1	5,000 word essay	20	7
1-2	ARME2	Essay Module 2	5,000 word essay	20	7
2	ARME3	Essay Module 3	5,000 word essay	20	7
1	ARMSP1	Seminar Presentation	Presentation	10	7
2	ARMDW	Dissertation Workshops	Dissertation proposal and presentation	10	7
3	ARMRD	Dissertation	25,000 words	100	7
3	ARMRP	Dissertation for Postgraduate Diploma	20,000 words	80	7
3	ARMRE	Extended Essay for Postgraduate Diploma	9,000 words	50	7

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Mark Interpretation
70 – 100% Distinction
60 – 69% Merit
50 – 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:
40 – 49% Work below threshold standard
0 – 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees
To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diplomas
To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate
To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.*

* The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied his or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Admission requirements

For acceptance onto the course, a student must already possess a good degree from a U.K. University (normally at least a 2.1 standard and in Archaeology) or have equivalent qualifications or experience from elsewhere.

Admissions Tutor: Professor Bob Chapman

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme.

Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online (www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student Diary (given to students at enrolment) or on the Student website (www.reading.ac.uk/student).

The Departmental Handbook issued to MA Archaeology students provides extensive information on resources and study skills. The Department occupies a purpose-built structure with further shared facilities providing a research laboratory, teaching laboratories, computer laboratories, and space for postgraduates to work in the Department. There are also traditional and digital drawing office facilities; geophysical and tacheometric survey equipment; excavation equipment; soil and sediment coring equipment; audio-visual resources; and a minibus. The University Library is well stocked with works relating to many different aspects of Archaeology.

Students will be a member of one of the Department of Archaeology Research Groups and encouraged to take an active role in these.

Career prospects

The MA Research in Archaeology at Reading provides an excellent foundation for students wishing to pursue further research at higher degree level. It also provides an opportunity for those already employed in Archaeology to develop research in particular areas of interest at postgraduate level and to acquire skills for professional advancement. The MA also forms the basis for other careers in the areas of the arts, media, management, administration, the civil service, local government, commerce, law, publishing, librarianship and teaching. A significant number of Archaeology graduates have found positions in UK and European Archaeology, either directly from their Masters degree, or following further postgraduate study.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

None.

Educational aims of the programme

The MA Research in Archaeology aims to foster an advanced understanding of the human past through study and interpretation of archaeological evidence, and an ability to engage in independent research. On successful completion of the programme students will have acquired: an extended range, depth and sophistication of knowledge regarding selected aspects of Archaeology which reflect their specifics interests, through a progression from essay modules to dissertation research; abilities to synthesise and evaluate critically archaeological evidence and propose interpretations; skills for independent research appropriate for Masters dissertations and as preparation for doctoral study; and an ability to recognise current weaknesses in our understanding of the past, either due to lack of evidence, poor methodology or inappropriate theory, and to propose means by which such weaknesses can be rectified.

Programme Outcomes

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

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding:

1. A comprehensive, systematic, and up-to-date knowledge of :
a. selected aspects of human societies from our earliest ancestors to the medieval period, particularly in Europe and the Mediterranean and Near East
b. the diverse sources of evidence used by archaeologists, their variability and reliability;

2. A critical awareness of a wide range of:
a. past and current methods by which archaeologists acquire, date and analyse their primary evidence
b. interpretative approaches applied to archaeological evidence in their historical, political and social context, including the most recent approaches;

3. A comprehensive understanding of a specific topic through writing of a dissertation

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

- individual supervision of essays and dissertation
- small group discussion in seminars and classes led by one or more members of staff
- Dissertation Conference presentation prepared with the assistance of the supervisor and Dissertation Workshops

Assessment
- Essays
- Seminar presentation
- Dissertation proposal and presentation
- Dissertation

B. Intellectual skills – Students will be able:

1. to integrate and synthesise large quantities of archaeological and other data from multiple and diverse sources both systematically and creatively;
2. to make sophisticated and informed judgements in the absence of complete data;
3. to recognise and evaluate critically past and current theoretical approaches and competing interpretations;
4. to formulate individual research questions at a sophisticated level and identify strategies for exploring them;
5. to think critically and independently, and to propose new hypotheses as appropriate;
6. to synthesise and articulate arguments effectively, and to communicate the conclusions clearly;
7. to develop a critical self-awareness as a working archaeologist

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These skills are developed throughout the individual supervision of essays and Dissertation, seminars, and Dissertation Workshops. All essay modules deal with questions of evidence and interpretation, through tutorials and essays which require analysis and debate of intellectual problems. Awareness of current approaches is encouraged and essay modules are usually linked to lecturers' research interests.

Independent research skills are developed through essays and the dissertation, including the formulation of topics and the identification of methodologies, for which initial preparation and regular support are provided. Individual feedback is provided on content and organisation of coursework, and a formal oral presentation is part of the dissertation. Particular emphasis is on self-directed learning facilitated through the use of research-based teaching materials and methods.

Assessment

Intellectual skills are tested entirely by coursework, especially the dissertation, with oral presentations making some contribution.

C. Practical skills – students will be able:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. to locate, extract and appraise critically archaeological information in published sources and on the WWW; 2. to select and apply appropriate methodologies in assessing the meaning and significance of evidence or data 3. to plan and carry out a primary research project, working independently 4. to engage in individual and group discussion and debate on archaeological issues	These skills are taught through the essay tutorials and in dissertation workshops, and developed by application to the essay modules and dissertation. Discussion forms a part of most modules. Attendance on the Masters Research Resources and Skills Module and Technical Modules are additional non-assessed options, at the discretion of student supervisor, Module Convenor, Programme Director, and dependent on student number. *Assessment* Skills 1-4 are assessed indirectly through coursework and the dissertation.

D. Transferable skills – Students will be able:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. to communicate complex data and ideas clearly and effectively in speech and in a variety of types of writing; 2. to deal effectively with a variety of numerical data and visual material, using the most appropriate and up-to-date techniques; 3. to demonstrate self direction and originality in devising strategies for solving problems, even in complex and unpredictable situations; 4. manage time effectively and prioritise workloads 5. to continue to develop their knowledge and understanding to a high level; 6. to exercise their own initiative and personal responsibility.	All these skills are essential for the successful completion of the programme. Skill 1 is developed throughout the programme in the writing of essays and the dissertation, and by participation in seminar module and a formal dissertation presentation. Skills 2-6 are developed through the essays and dissertation, and supported by the dissertation workshops. *Assessment* These skills are assessed throughout the programme by a combination of essays, oral presentations, and dissertation.

Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.