

**MA in Archaeology of Medieval Europe (full-time)  
For students entering in 2014/5**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	Archaeology
Faculty:	Science Faculty
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	09/Sep/2014
Programme Director:	Prof Grenville Astill
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	MA in Archaeology
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The programme aims to provide a systematic, advanced understanding of the Middle Ages through the study and interpretation of archaeological evidence, with a strong emphasis on independent research. It is designed to give students the opportunity to develop their specific interests in the medieval archaeology of Britain and Europe (through a wide range of specialist options, with some additional optional modules in bioarchaeology and environmental archaeology), with an emphasis on multidisciplinary approaches to social archaeology. Students also gain vocational training by taking a technical module and can gain work experience through a placement module: it is also possible to study (via the Erasmus scheme) at another international centre of medieval studies in Europe. In the course of this programme, students will gain an ability to recognise current weaknesses in our understanding of the Middle Ages, either due to lack of evidence, poor methodology or inappropriate theory, and to propose means by which such weaknesses can be rectified, and strengths enhanced. It also aims to prepare students for doctoral study.

**Transferable skills**

In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop their skills relating to oral and written communication, data collection and analysis, and information technology to a high level providing the independent learning ability that is essential for future professional development. They will gain vocational training which will enhance students' employability. Students will also develop skills in the critical analysis of archaeological evidence, and be able to think comparatively and recognise the interrelationship between archaeology and other disciplines associated with the study of the medieval period. They will be able to exercise their own initiative, and make decisions in complex situations.

**Programme content**

The following profile states which modules must be taken (the compulsory part) together with one or more lists of modules from which the student must make a selection (the option modules). Students can choose such additional modules as they wish, in consultation with their programme adviser, to make 180 credits. Students must take four 10-credit modules including HEM01 *Research Skills and Careers Learning* and ARMR4D *Issues and Debates in Medieval Archaeology*, and two technical optional modules and one of the (20-credit) Social World of Medieval Archaeology modules (60 credits overall); two further specialist optional modules of 20 credits each (40 credits overall, and chosen from either the Social World of Medieval Archaeology, or Bioarchaeology or Environmental Archaeology or the Cross-disciplinary options); and write a dissertation (80 credits). Students who have not previously studied Archaeology are advised to take ARMTAA *Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology* as one of the optional technical modules. A language module of 20 credits can be taken with the Institution-Wide Language Programme (IWLP) in place of two technical option modules where appropriate.

**Compulsory modules:**

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ARMR4D	Issues and Debates in Medieval Archaeology	10	7
HEM01	Research Skills and Careers Learning	10	7
ARMDIS	Dissertation	80	7

One of the 20-credit optional specialist modules in the section Social Archaeology of the Medieval World (below)

**Optional technical modules (all 10 credits and Level 7)**

Please note that not all optional modules will be taught every year. The range of optional modules is subject to availability of staff and each will require a minimum number of participants. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

TWO of:

ARMTAA	Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology
ARMR3D	Archaeological Graphics
ARMTML	The Medieval Landscape (cannot be taken with ARMML)
ARMIZO	Introduction to Archaeozoology (cannot be taken with ARMGZO)
ARMSHB	Introduction to Human Bioarchaeology (cannot be taken with ARMS10)
ARMGFC	Food and Culture
ARMEMP	Research and Enterprise Micro-Placement (cannot be taken with ARMREP)

### Optional specialist modules (all 20 credits and Level 7)

Please note that not all optional modules will be taught every year. The range of optional modules is subject to availability of staff and each will require a minimum number of participants. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

#### *The Social World of Medieval Archaeology*

ARMM01	Dark Age Societies AD400-1000
ARMM02	Viking Interactions in the West
ARMM03	Encountering the Twelfth Century
ARMO55D	The Artefacts of Medieval Daily Life
ARMM06	Colonisation and Cultural Transformation: the archaeology of crusading
ARMML	Medieval European Landscapes (cannot be taken with ARMTML)
ARMREP	Research and Enterprise Placement (cannot be taken with ARMEREPE)
ARMINT	International Study (Erasmus)

#### *Bioarchaeology*

ARMS10	Human Bioarchaeology (cannot be taken with ARMSHB)
ARMGBC	Archaeological Bone Chemistry (cannot be taken with ARMIBC)
ARMGZO	Archaeozoology (cannot be taken with ARMIZO)

#### *Environmental Archaeology*

ARMICM	<i>Coastal and Maritime Geoarchaeology</i>
ARMAMA	<i>Applications of Micromorphological Analysis</i>
ARMO44D	<i>Vegetation History and Archaeobotany</i>

### Cross-Disciplinary Options (both 20 credits and Level 7)

One of the following modules taught in the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies can be taken instead of a specialist module:

MSMLPA	Medieval Latin and Palaeography
MSMSPTA	Special Topic

### Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme may be taken over two years on a part-time basis. Selection of modules between the two years will be agreed between the student and the Programme Director at the start of the programme. HEM01 *Research Skills and Career Learning* is taken in the first term of the programme. Participation in the Dissertation Workshop and submission of the Dissertation proposal is required in Year 1. The *Dissertation* is submitted at the end of the second year. It is anticipated that students will normally complete at least 70 credits' worth of modules in Year 1. Modules will be assessed in the year that they are taken. The programme may also be taken on a modular basis, with HEM01 *Research Skills and Careers Learning* being taken in the first term and the *Dissertation* being taken in the final year.

### Progression requirements

N/A

### Summary of Teaching and Assessment

The MA in Medieval Archaeology is assessed entirely by coursework, unless students are taking the *Medieval Latin and Palaeography* module which will involve a written examination. *Research Skills and Career Learning* and *Issues and Debates in Medieval Archaeology* are taught through a series of workshops and seminars, and are assessed. The *Optional Technical Modules* are taught through practical classes and assessed by written reports and/or portfolio. The specific teaching and learning methods vary between specialist optional

modules, but all are based on a mixture of lectures, workshops, seminars and tutorials, and each module is assessed by a major essay and in some cases by a variety of other types of coursework, including oral presentation and critical review. The *Dissertation* comprises a piece of independent research, directed through dissertation workshops plus a series of one-to-one tutorials, and is assessed by coursework and an oral presentation.

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 the Masters Degree**

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 the PG Diploma**

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 the 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.

**Admission requirements**

For acceptance onto the course, a student must already possess a good degree from a U.K. University (normally at least a high 2.2 standard) or have equivalent qualifications from elsewhere.

**Admissions Tutor:** Professor Grenville Astill

**Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. 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 and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

The Departmental Handbook issued to MA in Medieval 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 and related disciplines.

### **Career prospects**

The Masters in Medieval Archaeology at Reading is both a route into archaeology (including field archaeology, museums and heritage management), and an excellent foundation for students wishing to pursue further research at higher degree level. It 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 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**

There are opportunities to participate in departmental research projects, including fieldwork and post-excavation; and students will have the chance to work with QUEST. Quaternary Scientific is the commercial arm of the School of Archaeology, Geography and Environmental Science, providing archaeological, forensic and environmental scientific services to industry. Students have the opportunity to take either ARMEMP Research and Enterprise Micro-Placement or ARMREP Research and Enterprise Placement modules. International placement opportunities are available particularly for students interested in medieval Central and Eastern European archaeology. Our Erasmus exchange agreements, with the Department of Medieval Studies at the Central European University in Budapest, as well as the institutes of archaeology at the University of Lund (Sweden) and Torun (Poland), enable students to take advantage of courses and facilities focusing on the interdisciplinary study of the Middle Ages. Placements are also available on excavations taking place in the UK and in north-eastern Europe associated with major departmental projects, focusing on the Baltic Crusades and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism.

### **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 of:**

1. A comprehensive, systematic, and up-to-date knowledge of :  
selected aspects of medieval society for Britain in the context of northern Europe  
the diverse sources of evidence used by archaeologists, their variability and reliability;
2. A critical awareness of a wide range of:  
past and current methods by which medieval archaeologists acquire, date and analyse their primary evidence and of the relationship between archaeology and related disciplines  
interpretative approaches applied to archaeological evidence in their historical, political and social context, including the most recent approaches;
3. A comprehensive understanding of a range of technical skills and/or methodologies, applicable to their specific research projects.

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

All areas are taught primarily through seminars and problem-oriented classwork, based on independent reading initially structured by bibliographies issued for each module.

##### *Assessment*

All knowledge and understanding is tested entirely by coursework, including the dissertation, with oral presentations making some contribution.

#### **Skills and other attributes**

### **B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

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

### **C. Practical skills - able to:**

1. to locate, extract and appraise critically archaeological information in published sources and on the WWW;
2. to acquire, select and apply appropriate technical skills for specific archaeological tasks and/or research projects;
3. to select and apply appropriate methodologies in assessing the meaning and significance of evidence or data
4. to plan and carry out a primary research project, working independently
5. to engage in group discussion and debate on archaeological issues

### **D. Transferable skills - able to:**

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. to continue to develop their knowledge, technical skills, and understanding to a high level;
5. to exercise their own initiative and personal responsibility

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are developed throughout the programme, culminating in the dissertation. All option modules deal with questions of evidence and interpretation, through seminars, essays, and other coursework which require analysis and debate of intellectual problems. Awareness of current approaches is encouraged as options 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.

#### *Assessment*

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

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are taught through the research methods modules and in dissertation workshops, and developed by application to the option modules and dissertation. Group discussion forms an essential part of most modules.

#### *Assessment*

Skills 1-4 are assessed indirectly through coursework and the dissertation. Technical and research skills are also assessed through classwork exercises and short reports.

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

All these skills are essential for the successful completion of the programme. Skill 1 is developed throughout the programme in the writing of essays, critiques and the dissertation, and by participation in seminars and a formal dissertation presentation. Skills 2, 3 and 5 are developed through the major essays and dissertation, and supported by the research methods and dissertation workshops. Skill 4 is particularly developed through the research methods and technical skills modules.

#### *Assessment*

These skills are assessed throughout the programme by a combination of coursework, 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**