

**MRes Archaeology (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2015/6**

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:	24/Aug/2015
Programme Director:	
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	MA in Archaeology
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The MRes 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 MRes in Archaeology aims to enable students to:

- deepen their knowledge and understanding of the substantive and conceptual issues in their chosen aspects of Archaeology
- 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
- 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
- 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.
- gain specialist skills and training in specific archaeological methods and scientific analyses in optional modules

**Transferable skills**

In following this programme students will have had the opportunity to develop and enhance their skills in 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 MRes in Archaeology will enable students to develop key research skills, especially in:

- 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
- learning and applying specific specialist skills and scientific analyses if desired in optional modules
- 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**

**MRes in Archaeology (180 credits)**

Students take the following compulsory modules (total 160 credits):

<i>Code</i>	<i>Module title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
ARMRES1	Research Paper 1	20	7
ARMRES2	Research Paper 2	20	7
ARMSP2	Seminar Presentation	10	7
HEM01	Research Skills and Career Learning	10	7
ARMRESD	Dissertation	100	7

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

Prehistoric Archaeology  
Roman Archaeology  
Medieval European Archaeology  
Archaeology of the Middle East  
Environmental Archaeology  
Ancient Diet  
Palaeopathology  
Geoarchaeology  
Bioarchaeology  
Social Archaeology

Students may also select two 10-credit optional modules or one 20-credit optional module from those available in the Department of Archaeology (total 20 credits), or write a third optional essay (ARMRES3, Research Paper 3, 20-credits). A language module of 20-credits can be taken with the Institution-Wide Language Programme (IWLP) where appropriate. In some circumstances, and subject to approval by the Programme Director, students may choose to take 30 credits of optional modules.

#### **Postgraduate Diploma in Archaeology (120 credits)**

Students take the following compulsory modules (total 120 credits):

ARMRES1	Research Paper 1	20	7
ARMSP2	Seminar Presentation	10	7
HEM01	Research Skills and Career Learning	10	7
ARMRP	Dissertation	80	7

*Or*

Students take the following compulsory modules (total 100 credits):

ARMRES1	Research Paper 1	20	7
HEM01	Research Skills and Career Learning	10	7
ARMSP2	Seminar Presentation	10	7
ARMRE	Extended Research Paper	60	7

*And*

Students may also select a further 20 credits by taking either two 10-credit optional modules or one 20-credit optional module from those available in the Department of Archaeology (total 20 credits), or write a second optional essay (ARMRES2, 20 credits)

#### **Postgraduate Certificate in Archaeology (60 credits)**

Students take the following compulsory modules (total 40 credits):

ARMRES1	Research Paper 1	20	7
ARMSP2	Seminar Presentation	10	7
HEM01	Research Skills and Career Learning	10	7

Students may also select two 10-credit optional modules or one 20-credit optional module from those available in the Department of Archaeology (total 20 credits), or write a second research paper (ARMRES2, 20 credits)

#### **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 60 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**

### Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Teaching is primarily by means of individually supervised essays (Research Projects) with regular tutorials and a supervised dissertation. Staff with relevant expertise in the subject area and the Seminar Presentation Module Convenor will provide support and teaching for the Seminar Presentation module. Classes and seminars will supplement teaching 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:

<i>Term</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
1	ARMRES1	Research Paper 1	5,000 word essay	20	7
1	ARMRES2	Research Paper 2	5,000 word essay	20	7
1	ARMSP2	Seminar Presentation	Presentation	10	7
1	HEM01	Research Skills and Career Learning	Article critique Research proposal/business plan	10	7
			CV and job application		
1/2		Optional module(s)	Various	20	7
2/3	ARMDRES	Dissertation	25,000 words	100	7
			Dissertation proposal;		
			Conference presentation		
2/3	ARMRP	Dissertation	15,000 words	80	7
			Dissertation proposal;		
			Conference presentation		
2/3	ARMRE	Extended Research Paper	10,000 words	60	7
			Dissertation proposal		
			Conference 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 MRes in Archaeology

**Distinction:** A weighted average mark of 70 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation AND no mark below 40.

OR

A weighted average mark of 68 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 70 or more in 90 credits AND no mark below 40.

**Merit:** A weighted average mark of 60 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND no mark below 40

OR

A weighted average mark of 58 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 60 or more in 90 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND no mark below 40

**Passed:** A weighted average mark of 50 or more over 180 credits AND a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation AND no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits)

**Failed:** A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

### **For PG Diplomas**

**Distinction:** A weighted average mark of 70 or more over 120 credits AND no mark below 40

OR

A weighted average mark of 68 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 70 or more in 60 credits AND no mark below 40.

**Merit:** A weighted average mark of 60 or more over 120 credits AND no mark below 40.

OR

A weighted average mark of 58 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 60 or more in 60 credits AND no mark below 40.

**Passed:** A weighted average mark of 50 or more over 120 credits AND no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).

OR

A weighted average mark of 48 or more over 120 credits AND a mark of 50 or more in 60 credits AND no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).

**Failed:** A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

### **For PG Certificate**

Passed and Failed categories only will be awarded for PG Certificates as follows:

**Passed:** A weighted average mark of 50 or more over 60 credits AND no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 10 credits).

OR

A weighted average mark of 48 or more over 60 credits AND a mark of 50 or more in 30 credits AND no absolute weakness (ie the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 10 credits).

**Failed:** A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

### **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 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)

## Career prospects

The MRes 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 MRes 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

There is the opportunity to do the fieldwork part of the dissertation project abroad. However, students are expected to make the necessary arrangements for this with advice from staff. The students also have the opportunity either to undertake the assessed placement option modules: either *ARMREP Research Enterprise Placement (20 credits)*, or *ARMEMP Research and Enterprise Micro-Placement (10 credits)*, or an 'ad-hoc' work experience placement with staff in the Department of Archaeology.

## Programme Outcomes

The MRes 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 specific interests, through a progression from essay modules, optional specialist or scientific 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
- 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.

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 human societies from our earliest ancestors to the medieval period, particularly in Europe and the Mediterranean and Near East  
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 archaeologists acquire, date and analyse their primary evidence  
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

1. individual supervision of essays and dissertation
2. small group discussion in seminars and classes led by one or more members of staff
3. optional specialist or scientific modules
4. Dissertation Conference presentation prepared with the assistance of the supervisor and Dissertation Workshops

#### Assessment

1. Essays
2. Seminar presentation
3. Dissertation proposal and presentation
4. Dissertation

### 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

#### 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

- 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 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

### **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. 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.

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.

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

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.

### **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 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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**