

**MA Medieval Studies (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2017/8**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	15/Aug/2017
Programme Director:	Dr Rebecca Rist
Board of Studies:	Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies

**Summary of programme aims**

The MA programme aims:

- to provide graduate students with a thorough grounding in contemporary approaches to key aspects of the culture of the Middle Ages;
- to equip them with the tools for further research by developing their critical and conceptual understanding;
- To give grounding in a multidisciplinary approach (via a compulsory core module, Researching the Middle Ages, which gives students thorough and wide-ranging training in all areas relevant to medieval studies);
- To offer the opportunity to develop linguistic and palaeographic skills;
- To promote independent study and research skills, and to support the career development of graduates.
- To provide training and wide ranging experience and skills, transferable to relevant careers.

**Transferable skills**

During the course of their studies at Reading, all students will be expected to enhance their academic and personal transferable skills. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to develop such skills, in particular relating to handling wide-ranging sources; working in a group; and communicating effectively and will have been encouraged to further develop and enhance the full set of skills through a variety of opportunities available outside the curriculum.

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working and use of information technology. In addition, the programme aims to enhance students' personal and interpersonal skills in relation to future employment: in particular, to promote the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; to develop the ability to make decisions and to communicate effectively as both communicator and recipient; and to encourage the faculty of independent learning with a view to continuing professional development.

**Programme content**

All students take the core module, Researching the Middle Ages, introducing skills and approaches across the field of medieval studies. A further optional module (30 credits) gives training in Medieval Latin and Medieval Palaeography. Students may instead take the Advanced Study and Source Analysis module (30 credits). Three Options (20 credits each) are chosen from a broad range, offering the opportunity for individual research, supervised by a scholar in the field. One Option may be replaced by a module offered in another MA programme; and One Option may take the form of learning a modern or medieval vernacular language. The Dissertation (70 credits, 14,000 words) provides for extensive independent research, and is individually supervised.

**MA, 180 credits**

Compulsory modules:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
MSMRM2	Researching the Middle Ages	20	7
MSMSD7	Dissertation	70	7
MSMSTA	Option A	20	7
MSMSTB	Option B	20	7
MSMSTC	Option C	20	7
MSMLP or MSMSSA	Medieval Latin and Palaeography  Advanced Study and Source Analysis	30  30	7  7

Three Options to be selected from the list, one to be taken as Option A and taught in the Autumn term, the others as Options B and C and taught in the Spring term. One Option may be replaced by a module from another MA programme at the discretion of the Director. Option C should support and develop work on the Dissertation.  
**Postgraduate Diploma in Medieval Studies (120 credits)**

Students take the following modules:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
MSMRM2	Researching the Middle Ages	20	7
MSMLP	Medieval Latin and Palaeography	30	7
MSMSTA	Option A	20	7
MSMSTB	Option B	20	7
MSMSSA	Advanced Study and Source Analysis	30	7

**Certificate in Medieval Studies (60 credits)**

Students take the following modules:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
MSMRM2	Researching the Middle Ages	20	7
MSMSTA	Option A	20	7
MSMSTB	Option B	20	7

**Part-time or modular arrangements**

This programme may be taken over two years of part-time study. The normal pattern will be for Researching the Middle Ages, Palaeography and Medieval Latin/Source Study, and Options A and B to be taken in the first year. Option C and the Dissertation will then be taken in the second year; but this may be varied if required.

The programme may also be taken in modular form over up to five years. The recommended order is: Researching the Middle Ages; Palaeography and Medieval Latin/Source Study; Options; Dissertation, but this may be varied by agreement.

**Progression requirements**

Classification will follow the University's taught postgraduate marks classification. To pass the degree of Master 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 of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits. Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and who 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 who have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

The Pickering Prize is awarded annually for the best Dissertation in Medieval Studies.

**Fail marks** A mark of 40-49 denotes work below the threshold standard; and 0-39 denotes work of Unsatisfactory standard.

Students have the right to one re-sit of any failed element (below 40) for a Pass mark of 50. Where a mark of 40-49 has been awarded students may choose to re-sit, but are not required to do so. Taught modules will normally be re-examined during the term of original submission, and not later than September. A failed Dissertation is due for re-submission within one year of the original submission date.

For the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more, and the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits. In addition, the total value of all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.

For the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more, and the credit value of modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.

**Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

The compulsory modules are delivered through small group teaching. The Latin and Palaeography module is assessed through a mixture of written assignments and timed tests. The Researching the Middle Ages module is assessed through an appropriate exercise, its precise form depending upon the field of study chosen. MSMSSA (Advanced Study and Source Analysis) is assessed by two pieces of written work: firstly, an essay of 3,000

words on context and methodology; secondly a 3,000-word analysis of a primary source selected in discussion with the supervisor.

The Options and the Dissertation are supervised on an individual basis. Each Option is normally assessed by an essay of 4,000 words, OR, where learning a language is involved, by coursework and relevant tests. The Dissertation, of 14,000 words, excluding footnotes, bibliography and appropriate appendices, is submitted in September. A Methodological Study, of 3,000 words, is to be submitted by the end of the Summer term, and will contribute 10% of the marks. Where required, Option C may take the form of training in skills required for the dissertation research, such as database or digital humanities training, or foreign language work. Where this is the case, assessment will be by appropriate coursework and test.

### **Admission requirements**

The qualifications of students will be assessed on an individual basis. Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained upper second class in an undergraduate degree or an equivalent qualification. Overseas students are also required to fulfil the university standards of English language proficiency.

**Admissions Tutor:** The Director, Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, School of History  
(GCMS@reading.ac.uk)

### **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, In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

In addition, the GCMS has its own dedicated room offering a private study area supported by its own specialised library, with access to microfilm as well as access to printers.

### **Career prospects**

Our postgraduates are trained in clear analysis, research skills, time management, and effective communication. Additionally, they are experienced in locating, analysing and utilising a wide variety of information, in widely varying forms, whilst also assessing its value and reliability, and communicating it to others. This fits graduates for a wide range of careers, both in the 'knowledge economy' and in managing and dealing with people. More specifically, the programme is a useful training for students wishing to pursue careers in archival work, and in the Heritage industry. Recent postgraduates have also gone on to pursue careers in teaching.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

Where appropriate, opportunities are open to individual students to study in France in the University of Paris VII, with which the School of History has links. The Erasmus Programme makes many other options available. Further details are available via the programme director.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. Medieval history, literature and culture approached through selected aspects of topics.
2. Specific areas and topics of the student's choice;

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

Knowledge and understanding are gained through formal teaching (seminars, tutorials), organised visits (to archive collections), informal activities

- choice and researched in greater depth
3. Key issues of contemporary debate and scholarly enquiry
  4. A range of current critical approaches and methodologies
  5. A range of research techniques drawn from different areas of theoretical and a practical level of application
  6. Specific linguistic and/or palaeographic skills

(attendance at Centre lecture and seminar series), independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

Knowledge and understanding assessed through a range of oral and written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation.

### **Skills and other attributes**

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

Able to:

1. engage in analytical and evaluative discussion on a range of texts and sources
2. estimate the relevance of specific arguments and interpretations
3. discriminate between opposing theories and interpretations
4. formulate and present judgements, both orally and in written form, on the basis of evidence and argument
4. follow original lines of thought and investigation and propose new hypotheses as appropriate

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

Intellectual skills are developed through formal teaching, participation in informal activities, independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

Intellectual skills are assessed informally through discussion and formally through a range of oral and written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation.

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

Able to:

1. gather, organise and deploy evidence in and information, and make judgements in the absence of complete data
2. deal with complex issues systematically and creatively, showing critical judgement and applying appropriate methodologies
3. communicate conclusions effectively in oral or written form to specialist and non-specialist audiences
4. have effective bibliographical and library research skills
5. demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems

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

Practical skills are developed through participation in formal and informal activities, independent research, presentations, and the writing of essays and a dissertation.

#### *Assessment*

Practical skills are assessed through a range of written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation, and through participation in a range of formal and informal activities.

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

Able to:

1. present material in a written form, with discrimination and lucidity in the use of language, professional referencing and clear layout
2. present material orally in a clear and effective manner
3. act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks
4. work creatively, flexibly and adaptably with others
5. display the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

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

Transferable skills are acquired through participation in seminars, tutorials, attendance at lectures and seminars with internal and external speakers, and applied in self-study and the writing of assignments.

#### *Assessment*

Transferable skills are assessed formally through a range of written assignments, including timed tests, essays and a dissertation, and informally through participation in Centre activities.

**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.**