

Programme Specification

MA History (full-time)

PFTZHISTXXHM

MA History (flexible-modular)

PPTZHISTXXFM

MA History (part-time)

PPTZHISTXXHM

For students entering in 2027/28

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	MA History (full-time) - 12 months MA History (flexible-modular) - 5 years MA History (part-time) - 2 years
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

The Master of Arts (MA) in History offers a stimulating and challenging programme for anybody looking to fulfil their intellectual curiosity and to follow their research interests, in any period of history from the medieval to the present. You may choose to specialise, following a medieval or modern pathway through the degree, and you will be supported to gain the specific skills needed for your own chosen research area, such as digital skills, languages, or palaeography.

In the first semester you will be encouraged to discuss historical theories, methodologies, and themes which span historical periods, getting to know all your fellow students and learning from their different perspectives and interests. During this first semester you will be supported to develop your skills as a historian and a researcher, building up your academic writing and analytical skills through essays on core and option modules. You will also deepen your knowledge of your own chosen specialisms through the in-depth classes within your core course and your option.

In the second semester of the MA you will gain deeper understanding of specific research skills and methods and apply them to the study of an item from a local archive or collection. You will also consider the differences between academic history and history aimed at a wider audience, looking at public history and non-academic writing and gaining an insight into careers related to history. A further option module will deepen your specialist knowledge.

You will be guided throughout the year as you develop your own original research project for the dissertation, and will work increasingly independently to carry out and write up this project (completing it over the summer period), with your supervisor's support.

The MA is designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge base, and understanding of professional contexts which you need to undertake doctoral research in History or enter other History-related careers such as education, or working in museums, collections, and archives. These skills will also benefit you in a wide range of other professions.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MA History (full-time)

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of your chosen topics.
2	Describe and analyse primary source material, and apply specific skills relevant to your chosen types of primary material (e.g. language skills, palaeography, bibliographical skills, visual analysis, etc).
3	Communicate ideas and evidence clearly and effectively, both orally and in academic writing.
4	Discuss and critique secondary literature in your chosen fields of history.
5	Devise, plan, and successfully carry out an extended piece of academic historical research.
6	Differentiate between academic and public history, and be able to produce materials tailored to audiences outside academia.
7	Explore and develop the skills and knowledge required to make informed choices towards your continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.
8	Critically evaluate historical methodologies, debates, and theories, and their application to your chosen topics and more broadly within the discipline.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

Module information

The programme comprises 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Compulsory modules

Module	Name	Credits	Level
HSMDSS	Dissertation	80	M
HSMHCL	Working with Historical Collections: Sources and Audiences	20	M
HSMTTD	Towards the Dissertation	20	M

Students must select one of the following compulsory modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
HSMBHT	Becoming a Historian: Theory and Themes	20	M
or			
HSMBHM	Becoming a Historian: Theory and Themes in Medieval History	20	M

In addition to these core modules, students will take two further 20-credit modules. HSMOP1 and HSMOP2 will each offer a choice of options in History; students may take a 20-credit module from an approved list of modules outside History in place of one of these options. This includes a Latin module provided by the Classics department, which may be of particular interest to students developing a specialism in medieval history.

Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

The programme may be taken part-time over two years or in flexible modular form over three, four or five years. Part time and modular students take the same modules as full-time students, and normally in the same order. Modular students are expected to take at least one module per year apart from the final year of dissertation submission.

Placement opportunities

The intensive nature of the full-time course means that it is not tailored to any period of study abroad. Those taking the course part-time or on a modular basis over 3-5 years may have the opportunity to study abroad as part of the Socrates scheme. This is arranged on an ad hominem basis.

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

Optional modules

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery

You will be taught through lectures, seminars, workshops and individual supervision. Assessment takes a variety of formats, such as essays, blogs, v-logs and presentations.

There are no examinations. At the end of the year, students will submit a 20,000 word dissertation.

Total study hours for your programme will be 1800 hours. The contact hours for your programme will depend upon your module combination; an average for a typical set of modules on this programme is 6 hours per week.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

Assessment is by means of coursework and one presentation.

Progression

N/A

Classification

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 Master's Degree

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits
- (ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits
- (iii) no credits with a mark below 40%
- (iv) a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits

AND

Where the dissertation is included in the conditions for the award of a Master's degree, a mark of at least 60% in the dissertation

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 180 credits and marks of 60% in at least 90 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

- (i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits
- (ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits
- (iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 credits

(ii) No credits with a mark below 40%.

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Master's, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate

Please note that there may be a specific version for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

There are no textbooks which you must buy and students are encouraged to discuss the purchase of textbooks or other resources with the module convenor before purchasing. Some books may be available second-hand, which will reduce costs. A range of resources to support your curriculum, including textbooks, electronic resources and computer facilities, are available through the library and through the Department of History.

Printing and photocopying facilities are available on campus at a cost per A4 page of £0.05 (black and white) and £0.30 (colour). Essential costs in this area will be low as most coursework is submitted electronically.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

MA History (full-time) for students entering in session 2027/28

28 July 2026

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