

## Programme Specification

MA by Research Philosophy (full-time)

PFTZPHILOXHS

MA by Research Philosophy (part-time)

PPTZPHILOXHS

**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 by Research Philosophy (full-time) - 12 months<br>MA by Research Philosophy (part-time) - 24 months |
| Accreditation                  | N/A                                                                                                    |
| Programme Start Dates          | September                                                                                              |
| QAA Subject Benchmarking Group | N/A                                                                                                    |

### Programme information and content

The MA by Research programme in philosophy aims to enable students

- to build on their undergraduate studies, deepening their knowledge and understanding of chosen aspects of Philosophy;
- to discuss research issues with practising researchers, so as to become aware of current research in Philosophy;
- to develop their research skills and prepare them, where appropriate, for a PhD.

MA by Research Philosophy is an intensive but flexible research-based philosophy programme for graduates looking to further their studies.

Broaden your philosophical knowledge in an intensive but flexible research-based programme for graduates looking to further their studies.

Learn through a combination of classes, seminars, reading groups, lectures and guest speaker events; and focus your research into your chosen area of study. Our MA by Research programme is ideal preparation if you are considering undertaking future doctoral research.

The flexibility of our MA by Research programme enables you to pursue your interests. Structured into weekly seminars where all students present their ongoing work to peers and academics, the course offers regular, individual supervision with expert members of staff in your chosen field. You'll study in a stimulating research environment where 100% of our research is of international standing. (REF 2021, combining 4\*, 3\* and 2\* submissions – Philosophy)

This course will provide you with valuable skills and the knowledge to succeed, whether you're looking to further your studies or pave the way for a change of career. You will gain a firm philosophical grounding and mastery of specialised areas of study, as well as the ability to critically engage with, and reflect upon, current philosophical debates.

We run a number of events throughout the year dedicated to stimulating and fostering research. These include a full visiting speaker programme, a work-in-progress programme, a graduate seminar, a regular staff-student reading group, and the highly regarded annual [Ratio Conference](#). Our dynamic student and staff community is a vital part of our department, and you will be supported throughout your studies by our dedicated teaching staff and friendly support staff.

For more information, please visit the [Philosophy website](#).

### Programme Learning Outcomes

-MA by Research Philosophy (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 | Ability to think clearly                |
| 2 | Ability to conduct independent research |
| 3 | Improve Writing Skills                  |
| 4 | Improve Presenting Skills               |
| 5 | Ability to develop arguments            |

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 MA by Research involves three essay modules (obligatory, but all contents chosen by students individually):

(a) **Three** individually supervised essays:

Module 1: Essay 1: 5-6,000 words (20 credits),

Module 2: Essay 2: 5-6,000 words (20 credits),

Module 3: Essay 3: 7-8,000 words (30 credits),

Module 4: (b) A formal oral presentation of your work (10 credits) in

Module 5: (c) A dissertation of **not more than 20,000 words** (100 credits)

It is completed in 1 year full time or 2 years part time.

The following is the list of areas from which you must choose your essays:

- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Action
- Epistemology
- Metaphysics
- Philosophy of Science
- Philosophy of Mathematics
- Aesthetics
- Ethics
- Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of Law
- Philosophy of Religion
- Plato
- Aristotle
- Early Modern Philosophy (Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume)
- Kant
- Schopenhauer
- Nietzsche
- Wittgenstein
- Continental Philosophy
- Indian Philosophy
- An area of research not listed above but which fits in with the research interests of a member of staff.

The Department encourages students to spread their interests over different areas, for their own benefit. So while students are allowed to do all their essays from only one of these areas, the Department strongly encourages wider coverage. If essays are done from only one area, coverage of disparate topics within those areas is of course required.

In addition you **must** attend classes in Research Methods held at the beginning of the year.

The MA by Research can be studied on a **part time** basis over 2 years. Part-time students are expected to be in the Department once a week (with rare exceptions), to attend the MA by Research seminar. Other events that take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays may be attended at the student's discretion.

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

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### **Compulsory modules**

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| Module  | Name                 | Credits | Level |
|---------|----------------------|---------|-------|
| PPMDISS | Dissertation         | 100     | M     |
| PPME1   | Essay Module 1       | 20      | M     |
| PPME2   | Essay module 2       | 20      | M     |
| PPME3   | Essay module 3       | 30      | M     |
| PPMSP   | Seminar presentation | 10      | M     |

### Part-time or flexible modular arrangements

Part-time option: spreading **modules** over two years.

The MA by Research can be studied on a **part time** basis over 2 years. Part-time students are expected to be in the Department once a week (with rare exceptions), to attend the MA by Research seminar. Other events that take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays may be attended at the student's discretion.

### Placement opportunities

N/A

### Study abroad opportunities

N/A

### Optional modules

N/A

### Teaching and learning delivery

Teaching is primarily by means of individually supervised research essays and supervised dissertation, supplemented by classes according to student interest and staff research activity. Total study hours for your programme will be 1800 hours. The contact hours for your programme will depend upon your voluntary attendance of additional classes, seminars, and talks. They would be likely to amount to 6-10 hrs/week. In addition to your scheduled contact hours, you will be expected to undertake guided independent study and research.

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.

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>Accreditation details</b> |
| N/A                          |

|                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Assessment</b>                                                                                          |
| Assessment is by written research work (3 essays and a dissertation) and an assessed seminar presentation. |

|                    |
|--------------------|
| <b>Progression</b> |
| N/A                |

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| <b>Classification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:</p> <p><b>Mark Interpretation</b></p> <p>70 - 100% Distinction<br/>60 - 69% Merit<br/>50 - 59% Good standard (Pass)</p> <p><b>Failing categories:</b><br/>40 - 49% Work below threshold standard<br/>0 - 39% Unsatisfactory Work</p> <p><b>For Master's Degree</b></p> <p>The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:</p> <p><b>Award of a Master's degree</b></p> <p>(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits<br/>(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits<br/>(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%<br/>(iv) a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation</p> <p>In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following <b>further</b> conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:</p> <p><b>Distinction</b></p> <p>An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits<br/>OR<br/>an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits<br/>AND<br/>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</p> |

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 Philosophy. 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 research topics chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations.

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 by Research Philosophy (full-time) for students entering in session 2027/28  
30 July 2026

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