

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **Honours Degree programmes in History**. For Joint and Combined Honours Degree Programmes, please also refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2008**.

The aims of all Honours Degree programmes in History are:

- to give a sound and extensive basis for the study of History;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which students are able to gain knowledge, understanding and appropriate skills relating to distinctive research specialisms, which provide a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research;
- to develop in students a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond higher education, the ability to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

Programmes are delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits). The degree 'with an International year' comprises an extra-curricular year between the second and third stages which contributes to the final marks of students on the four year programme. The programmes are characterised by clear academic and intellectual progression and by opportunities for specialisation throughout, including the possibility of taking courses offered by other History departments within the University of London. The first stage of the programmes provides both a stimulating general introduction and lays the foundations for later, more specialised, study. In stage two, students explore periods and themes of history in greater depth, with the opportunity to undertake guided independent research or study. In the third stage, students follow courses which closely reflect the research interests of members of staff, and also research and write a 10,000 word dissertation, which is seen as the climax of the stage-by-stage training in research techniques, analysis and presentation.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- the concepts of continuity and change over an extended time span and across more than one society and culture;
- the broad range of historical issues and events and the different approaches that may be employed in understanding or interpreting them;
- the complexity and variety of situations, events and past mentalities;
- the diversity of specialisms in the discipline;
- the significance of cultural, social, economic and political factors in initiating and/or influencing important historical issues and events;
- the role of key individuals, groups and institutions in initiating and/or influencing important historical issues and events;
- the key sources of evidence and methods of enquiry employed in historical research.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to understand human behaviour in the context of the past;
- gathering, sifting, organising and interpreting evidence and source material;
- interpretation and evaluation of a variety of historical texts and other source materials;
- construction and use of historical databases;
- research skills needed to plan and execute a project on a defined topic, and produce a coherent, extended piece of written work;*
- independent thought and study;*
- written and oral presentation of arguments and debate;*
- information technology, including word-processing and conducting on-line searches;*
- time-management;*
- ability to work with others and respect their reasoned views;*
- synthesis and critical analysis of information;*
- imaginative insight and the ability to propose creative solutions.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching takes place in lectures, large and small seminar groups, and occasionally in one-to-one tutorials. Lectures are primarily used to provide a broad introduction to themes and issues, and to expand a student's knowledge base (e.g. Foundation and Gateway Courses). Oral presentation skills are developed in small to medium sized groups. The chance to study historical texts occurs throughout the degree, but especially in the third year courses and the dissertation. The dissertation also provides the opportunity for guided independent research. Students are introduced to computing skills in the first year introduction to computing courses. As students progress through the programme, they develop a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of their skills in general, through their application and interpretation in particular historical and sub-disciplinary contexts.

Assessment of knowledge, understanding and discipline-specific skills is by formal unseen written examinations, coursework essays and other exercises, oral presentations and the independent dissertation. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

Single Honours Degree programmes

Stage one:

Students must take four Foundation half unit courses:

HS1002: History and Meanings: Part 1

HS1005: History and Meanings: Part 2

HS1007: Doing History: Part 1

HS1008: Doing History: Part 2

Subject to agreement, students may substitute one of these Foundation half units (HS1008) with one of the following options:

HS1111 Introductory Latin for Historians (½ unit)

HS2111 Further Latin for Historians (½ unit)

All students may also substitute one or two half-units of modern foreign language study for an equivalent number of Foundation units at the rate of one half-unit per term, subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. No student may substitute other courses for more than two Foundation half units.

Students must take two Gateway whole unit courses

The current listing of Gateway courses can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

Students may also take a course in another discipline in place of one Gateway course, subject to the approval of the First Year Tutor or Director of Undergraduate Studies, and provided that the modern language elective has not already been taken.

Part-time students must take:

Year 1: HS1002, HS1005 and one Gateway course

Year 2: HS1007, HS1008 and one Gateway course

Stage two:

Students must take:

HS2300 Independent Essay of 5,000 Words (½ unit)

This essay is freestanding. The subject of the essay must be outside the direct remit of the various Group 1 and Group 2 taught courses that the student is taking. Work on the essay takes place in Term One and Term Two.

In addition, students must take five of the Group 1 half unit courses:

In Term One students must take three Group 1 half unit courses, with at least one coming from each of two baskets (A & B)

In Term Two students must take two Group 1 half unit courses.

The current listing of Group 1 half unit courses (and their baskets in Term One) can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at

http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

Term Two Group 1 marked with an asterisk (*) are attached to Term One courses, which must be taken as a pre-requisite.

Students **also** take one Group 2 whole unit courses.

The current listing of Group 2 whole unit courses can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

N.B. Students may also choose Group 2 papers taught at other Colleges and Schools of the University of London.

Students may also substitute half-unit in a modern foreign language at the appropriate level, or a half-unit taught in another department subject to the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, for a Group 1 course, or take one of the following options in Latin taught in History:

HS1111 Introductory Latin for Historians (½ unit)

HS2111 Further Latin for Historians (½ unit)

Part-time students must take:

Year 3 Term 1: Group 1 course (basket A), Group 1 course (basket B)

Year 3 Term 2: Two Group 1 courses

Year 4: One Group 2 course, one Group 1 course, HS2300

Stage three:

Students must take one Group 3 course. Group 3 courses are taught in two parts, as two annual courses in parallel. They are worth two units, one for the examination whole unit course, and one for the linked whole unit dissertation.

The current listing of Group 3 whole unit courses (both the examination courses and the linked dissertations) can be found via the History Department's undergraduate course catalogue online, at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/undergrad/undergrad_coursecatalogue.html.

N.B. Students may also choose Group 3 papers taught at other Colleges and Schools of the University of London.

and one Group 2 course (as listed above, at Stage two)

and HS3103 Comparative History (½ unit)

and HS3105 Dissertation Research Methods (½ unit)

Part-time students must take:

Year 5: One Group 2 course, HS3105 and HS3103

Year 6: Group 3 course (exam and dissertation)

Single Honours Degree with an International Year (four years)

Pathway one – for students going overseas to an Erasmus or Student Exchange Programme partner where they are a native speaker of the language of tuition at their nominated institution:

Stage one:

As Stage one, listed above.

Stage two:

As Stage two, listed above.

Stage three, part 1 - Extra-curricular year:

Students must take courses at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus or Student Exchange Programmes. The equivalent of a full academic load at the overseas university must be taken. The courses to be taken overseas are to be agreed with the Tutor for International Studies in History. The marks achieved are converted into equivalent College marks and count as a thirteenth unit, HS3400. This will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks.

Stage three, part 2 - Final year in the History Department:

As Stage three, listed above. These courses will contribute 80% to the final stage three marks.

Pathway two – for students going overseas to an Erasmus partner where they are not a native speaker of the language of tuition at their nominated institution:

Stage one:

Students must take:

Foundation Courses

HS1002 History and Meanings Part 1 (½ unit)

HS1008 Doing History Part 2 (½ unit)

Subject to agreement, students may substitute HS1008 with one of the following options:

HS1111 Introductory Latin for Historians (½ unit)

HS2111 Further Latin for Historians (½ unit)

Students must take one Gateway Course, as listed above (Stage one for the three-year single honours degree) (1 unit)

Courses to the value of one unit in the language of the country in which the year abroad will be spent (1 unit)

Courses to the value of one unit on the culture of the country in which the year abroad will be spent (1 unit)

Stage two:

HS2300 Independent Essay of 5,000 Words (½ unit); three Group 1 courses (one from each basket in Term One, and a third course in Term Two) and one Group 2 course, as listed above (Stage two for the three-year single honours degree) (3 units)

Courses to the value of one unit in the language of the country in which the year abroad will be spent (1 unit)

Stage three, part 1 - Extra-curricular year:

Students must take courses at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus Programme. The equivalent of a full academic load at the overseas university must be taken. The courses to be taken overseas are to be agreed with the Tutor for International Studies in History. The marks achieved are converted into equivalent College marks and count as a thirteenth unit, HS3400. This will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks.

Stage three, part 2 - Final year in the History Department:

As Stage three, listed above. These courses will contribute 80% to the final stage three marks.

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Progression and award requirements

The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. Students doing an international year must have a mark for that year. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title (see programme structure above). Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. Marks achieved during an international year are converted into equivalent College marks and count as a thirteenth unit. The thirteenth unit is counted as a final year unit, with the year average calculated from the five units taken in the third and final years. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%. The Department reserves the right to review any student's registration on the History with an International Year (Pathway Two) degree if they fail to achieve pass marks in their first and second year language units and first year culture unit(s), and to move the students on to the single honours degree at the end of Stage two.

In addition, with effect from September 2010, all first year students on single, joint or combined honours programmes offered by the Department of History are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Certificates of Merit are awarded to students who achieve at least 80% in the quiz. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [College's Undergraduate Regulations](#) (Section: *Conditions for progression to the next stage*) but fail to pass

the Moodle-based quiz will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

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Student support and guidance

- Week-long Induction Programme at the beginning of the first year, providing College and departmental orientation
- Personal Tutors: All students are allocated a personal tutor who meets with them regularly through the programme (joint degree students are allocated a tutor in each of the two departments responsible for the programme). The role of the tutor(s) is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- The First Year Tutor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies provides a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- All staff available and accessible through dedicated office hours system.
- Departmental Student-Staff Committee
- Detailed student handbook and course resources.
- Dedicated Student Common room.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries and computer centre.
- College Careers Service.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Education Support Unit for students with special needs.
- Student History Society, providing a range of activities.

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Admission requirements

The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the [Course Catalogue](#) web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

N.B. students applying for a degree 'with an International Year (Pathway Two)' also need to have met certain language requirements, as specified by the language department concerned.

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Further learning and career opportunities

As well as providing a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research, and History-related careers, this degree programme will provide you with skills that are transferable to a wide variety of employment positions. In recent years our graduates have found employment in accountancy, the law, teaching, the music business, the police, the army, retail and personnel management, market research, computer programming, landscape gardening, publishing and journalism. The College Careers Service provides expert advice on opportunities for historians. The Department offers Masters programmes in with a range of options in History, include Public History. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

A Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency in November 1993 rated the Department's educational provision as 'excellent'. In designing and delivering its programmes, the Department draws extensively upon the research activities and expertise of its staff, particularly in final year undergraduate course units and dissertations, and postgraduate programmes.

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or

internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research. The Department of History was ranked joint 10th in the top 10 universities in the country in terms of proportion of 3* and 4* research. Sixty percent (60%) of the Department's research profile is of 3* and 4* standard. A further eight departments are in the top 10 ranked by proportion of 3* & 4* research: Biological Sciences (joint 3rd), Drama (joint 9th), Earth Sciences (joint 7th), Economics (joint 9th), Geography (joint 9th), German (joint 5th), Media Arts (joint 6th) and Psychology (joint 5th).

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List of Single Honours Degree programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in History are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statement in History describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Single Honours Degree programmes in History

BA History (V100)

BA History with an International Year (V101)

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