



The University of Edinburgh

Programme Specification for:
Bachelor of Divinity with Honours ¹

- 1) **Awarding Institution: University of Edinburgh**
- 2) **Teaching Institution: University of Edinburgh**
- 3) **Programme accredited by: N/A**
- 4) **Final Award: BD Honours**
- 5) **Programme Title: Bachelor of Divinity with Honours**
- 6) **UCAS Code: V600**
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s):
- 7) **Postholder with overall responsibility for QA: Head of School**
- 8) **Date of production/revision: June 2012**
- 9) **External Summary (200-250 words)**

Since the foundation of the University in 1583, candidates for the ministry of the Church of Scotland have been trained in the core disciplines of the Divinity degree. In recent times, students have also been trained for ministry in other churches, including the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. In Edinburgh, the BD degree is taught within the School of Divinity situated in the historic buildings of New College overlooking the city centre. New College boasts a large common hall with its own catering facilities and one of the largest single site theological libraries in the UK. The School has a strong corporate life, with several social events being held during each academic year. Here students are able to combine the benefits of a collegiate atmosphere with those of belonging to a large and internationally distinguished University. The BD degree equips students with a broad competence in the traditional areas of Christian theological study – Bible, church history, doctrine, ethics and pastoral studies – while setting these within the context of contemporary challenges such as the growth of world Christianity, the secularisation of western societies, religious pluralism and the environmental crisis. This degree programme provides students with a rounded theological education that will serve them well in a variety of church-based ministries as well as the wider voluntary sector. The degree programme is often supplemented by a programme of church-based practical work for those who are formally recognised by their churches as candidates in training for ministry.

10) Educational aims of programme:

The B.D. Honours provides breadth of study in all the subjects/disciplines that comprise the academic study of Christian tradition (its scriptures, beliefs, history/development, and practice), plus opportunity for more advanced study in selected areas, particularly through the production of a dissertation in the final year of study. The programme is designed to provide good academic preparation for those who aim to serve in the ordained ministry of churches, although it is flexible enough to accommodate students with some other career aspirations, e.g. school teaching. If

¹ The information contained in this Programme Specification should be used as a guide to the content of a degree programme and should not be interpreted as a contract.

taken as a full-time, first degree, the B.D. Honours is a four-year programme. For those with a previous university degree, the B.D. Honours can be completed in three years of full-time study. The following are key programme aims:

- to provide breadth of acquaintance with the disciplines/subject areas that make up the academic study of Christian 'theology', including the scholarly issues and approaches involved, the optional study of ancient languages (Biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek) and more advanced study/knowledge of selected disciplines/subject areas, according to the students' interests, abilities and preferences;
- to orient students to Christianity as a 'world religion', through a historical approach that takes account of Christianity in various cultures and its presence across the world today;
- to provide students with opportunities to reflect on Christianity's historic and continuing encounter with other major world religions and also with secular humanism;
- to develop students' experience and abilities in researching, comprehension, analysis, critical thinking, and oral and written communication;
- for those hoping/intending to enter the ordained ministry of Christian churches, to provide rounded academic training to equip them for reflective practice of ministry;
- to equip students for ordained ministry or a variety of other appropriate careers or further academic study in one or more of the core disciplines.

11) Programme outcomes:

11a) Knowledge and understanding

Successful completion of the programme will equip students with the following:

- the major types of writings in the Christian Bible (Old Testament and New Testament), contents, their basic literary characteristics, major figures and religious themes, current scholarly approaches and major accepted results of scholarly investigations;
- the history of Christianity from beginnings through to the current period, and with the spread and diversification of Christianity in various cultures world-wide (Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia);
- the major traditional doctrines and issues in Christian theology, including key historic figures and the ideas with which they are associated, and acquaintance with critical reflection on Christian theology: creeds, controversies, figures, developments;
- issues and approaches involved in critical discussion of Christian ethics including human sexuality, the environment, peace-making, and biotechnology;
- the practice of Christian faith in various settings: church, society/politics, worship; devotion;
- the encounter between Christianity and other major religions, philosophies and secular humanism, with special reference to the contemporary context, including key examples of theological approaches to religious pluralism, politics, art, film, literature, and the natural sciences.
- advanced knowledge and understanding of selected subject areas/disciplines in theological studies (e.g., New Testament, Old Testament, Christian Ethics & Practical Theology, Ecclesiastical History, Systematic Theology).

How this is accomplished:

- lectures and tutorial/seminar sessions in required courses in first two years in all major subject areas/disciplines; advanced knowledge provided in Honours-level courses;
- from second year onward, students identify areas/disciplines for advanced studies at Honours level, and in their Honours years select appropriate courses;
- course essays allow opportunities to focus on specific topics, issues and problems;
- course seminar/tutorial groups (esp. in 1st & 2nd level courses) encourage students to identify issues, and engage in critical analysis;
- in Honours courses, required readings and more intensive seminar-format teaching encourages further/advanced development of knowledge and engagement.

- the preparation of a dissertation encourages a greater degree of concentration on a specialist topic facilitated by individual supervision and by extended reading and writing.

11b) Graduate attributes: Skills and abilities in Research and Enquiry

The capacity to use library resources effectively in order to access and assimilate relevant resources for a set assignment, e.g. essay, examination or oral presentation.

The capacity to use IT appropriately to access online course materials, identify relevant electronic resources for assignments, completion of essays and creation of visual aids for seminar presentations.

The ability to express ideas, analyse concepts and argue rigorously towards reasoned conclusions.

11c) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Personal and Intellectual Autonomy

Capacity to work independently and in collaboration and dialogue with others through submission of individual assignments, participation in group discussions, and delivery of presentations in small teams with the use of IT where appropriate.

Development of critical skills in evaluating sources, theories and arguments through study of texts, key thinkers, historical phenomena, intellectual movements and ethical problems.

11d) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Communication

Oral communication through delivery and assessment of regular presentations in class and participation in group discussion.

Written communication in the production of worksheets, essays, examinations and a dissertation.

11e) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Personal Effectiveness

Management of time in attending classes, preparing for seminars and submitting assignments in accordance with set deadlines.

Development of inter-personal skills in working alongside others in seminar groups and class discussion, and working under supervision.

Capacity for self-motivation, discipline and initiative in activities such as selecting appropriate essay topics, developing a dissertation proposal, identifying resources, raising relevant questions, and initiating discussion.

11f) Technical/practical skills

Ability to interpret the Christian faith in its contemporary settings

Intellectual skills for Christian ministry.

12) Programme structure and features

For students with no previous degree **this is a four-year qualification** when taken full-time. In each year, there are six courses of study, worth 20 credits each, with the exception of the final year of study which requires a 40-credit dissertation. The completion of the 4-year degree requires 480 credits, including 240 credits at level 10.

Year 1 120 credits from first-year courses in Biblical Studies (including Hebrew and New Testament Greek); History of Christianity; and Theology & Ethics.

Year 2 120 credits from second-year courses in Biblical Studies (including Hebrew and New Testament Greek); History of Christianity; and Theology & Ethics. (With the exception of the practical theology course, entry to all second year courses normally requires completion of the relevant subject in first year.)

Years 3 and 4 Ten advanced courses (i.e. 200 credits) in ONE or more of the following subjects areas: Biblical Studies; History of Christianity, Theology & Ethics, and a Dissertation (40 credits) on a topic to be selected and approved by the end of Year 3.

For students with a previous degree, the BD Honours (Graduate Entry) **is a three-year qualification** when taken full time.

Year 1 160 credits from first-year and second-year courses in Biblical Studies (including Hebrew and New Testament Greek); History of Christianity; and Theology & Ethics.

Year 2 140 credits in second-year and advanced courses in ONE or more of Biblical Studies; History of Christianity; and Theology & Ethics.

Year 3 Four further courses (i.e. 80 credits) at level 10 in ONE or more of Biblical Studies; History of Christianity; and Theology & Ethics, and a Dissertation (40 credits) on a topic to be selected and approved by the end of Year 2.

13) Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies

Teaching and Learning strategies employed at the University of Edinburgh consist of a variety of different methods appropriate to the programme aims. The graduate attributes listed above are met through a teaching and learning framework (detailed below) which is appropriate to the level and content of the course.

Teaching and Learning Activities

In Year 1

Lectures

Tutorials

One to one meetings with lecturers/personal tutors.

In Year 2

Lectures

Tutorials

One to one meetings with lecturers/personal tutors.

In Year 3

Seminars

One to one meetings with lecturers/personal tutors.

In Year 4

Seminars

One to one meetings with lecturers/personal tutors and dissertation supervisor.

Innovative Learning Week

The University of Edinburgh Innovative Learning Week is scheduled in Week 6 of Semester 2. During this week 'normal' teaching is suspended in order to provide space outwith the curriculum for staff and students to explore new learning activities. Examples of the types of activity held in the School of Divinity are workshops on public speaking skills, debates, trips to places of significant religious interest and viewings of religious artefacts and paintings.

14) Assessment Methods and Strategies

Assessment

Courses are assessed by a diverse range of methods. These provide the student with on-going feedback as well as summative assessment which is submitted for credit.

In Year 1

Class Tests
Oral Presentations
Participation in tutorials
Weekly tutorial sheets
Blogs
Essays
Written Examinations (seen and unseen)

In Year 2

Class Tests
Oral Presentations
Participation in tutorials
Weekly tutorial sheets
Blogs
Essays
Written Examinations (seen and unseen)

In Year 3

Oral Presentations
Participation
Blogs
Essays
Written Examinations (seen and unseen)

In Year 4

Oral Presentations
Participation
Blogs
Essays
Written Examinations (seen and unseen)
Dissertation

15) Career Opportunities

Graduates of Divinity and Religious Studies will develop skills suitable for careers in ministry, counselling, school teaching and the voluntary sector. You will also acquire transferable skills that can be applied to careers in unrelated areas such as finance, management, banking, journalism, social work, nursing, the armed forces, the Civil Service and human resources. You may also choose to continue your studies at Edinburgh or at another institution or to pursue a career in teaching or research.

16) Other Items

Students wishing to undertake practical placement work in a local church are encouraged to explore this with the Principal of New College.