



The University of Edinburgh

Programme Specification for:
MA in Philosophy and Theology with Honours ¹

- 1) **Awarding Institution: University of Edinburgh**
- 2) **Teaching Institution: University of Edinburgh**
- 3) **Programme accredited by: N/A**
- 4) **Final Award: MA (Honours)**
- 5) **Programme Title: Philosophy and Theology**
- 6) **UCAS Code:VV56**
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s): Theology and Religious Studies
- 7) **Postholder with overall responsibility for QA: Head of School (Divinity)**
- 8) **Date of production/revision: July 2012**
- 9) **External Summary (200-250 words)**

The subject areas of philosophy and theology overlap in many significant ways, both with regard to philosophers who have asked questions of the nature of existence and agency, and to theologians who have written theology with a firm eye on the development of the various philosophical traditions. The MA (Philosophy and Theology) provides an opportunity for the analytic study of the metaphysical, ethical and theological traditions that have shaped contemporary thinking. Students work with international scholars to acquire knowledge of chosen areas of interest, and develop research-associated methods and skills.

Studying Philosophy and Theology at Edinburgh allows students to develop:

- Knowledge and understanding in chosen areas of philosophical and theological traditions, from introductory to advanced levels
- Acquaintance with a range of approaches to the study of philosophy and theology, and critical engagement with, and evaluation of, texts, issues, and arguments.
- Ability to formulate research questions and develop arguments which represent different positions and attitudes fairly
- Ability to engage with the views of others and to articulate ideas and arguments clearly whether orally, in writing or using electronic media
- Interactive skills in working with others from a range of backgrounds and an ability to address diverse audiences: peer, semi-formal, academic, and popular.

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.

10) Educational aims of programme:

The MA (Philosophy and Theology) programme at the University of Edinburgh offers a range of options for exploring the overlapping worlds of philosophy and theology. This wide ranging programme allows students to address questions about such diverse areas as morality, rationality, language, ethics, doctrine, time, self, agency, and will. The programme can serve as an intensive basis for the study of philosophical and/or theological matters at postgraduate level.

The main programme aims are:

- To offer study in the traditional disciplines of philosophy and theology that have comprised the academic study of theology, metaphysics, ontology and ethics, from introductory through advanced levels.
- To allow students to tackle theology and philosophy in an integrative manner.
- To provide students with opportunities to reflect on the nature of thinking.
- To develop students' experience and abilities in researching, comprehension, analysis, critical thinking, self-presentation and communication.
- To permit students to study additional subjects outside of Philosophy and Theology as a part of their degree programme.

11) Programme outcomes:

11a) Knowledge and understanding

The programme has the following outcomes for all students:

- To introduce students to the complex and diverse approaches to theological and philosophical reflection.
- To provide students of religions with an understanding of how such variation can be and has been approached through various interpretative models and theories.
- To allow students to engage productively with the research literature on interactions between religions, philosophies, literatures and society in the present and the past.
- To equip students with the knowledge and practical and theoretical skills to carry out independent research.
- To enable students to develop communication skills, initiative, professionalism and the ability to work independently as well as with others.

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

Successful completion of the MA (Philosophy and Theology) enables graduates to:

- Gather and analyse evidence from a wide range of primary and secondary sources in both Philosophy and Theology.
- Evaluate and critique primary and secondary resources in both disciplines.
- Formulate a research question, develop a methodology and structure an argument through an extended and complex piece of work such as a final dissertation or extended essay.
- Deploy an argument which gathers together a viable research proposal, evidence, and research.

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

By engaging with and completing the degree in Philosophy and Theology, graduates will be able to:

- Organise and structure lengthy arguments and draw these together into a coherent conclusion.
- Summarise, interpret and critique the work of scholars in Philosophy and Theology.
- Engage with issues involving the intersection between religions, philosophies, and society within a historically and culturally conditioned context, using evidence-based research, and reach conclusions.

11d) Graduate Attributes: Skills and abilities in Communication

By engaging with and completing the degree in Philosophy and Theology, graduates will be able to:

- Formulate a coherent written, electronic or oral presentation on the basis of material gathered and organised independently on a given topic;
- Express clearly ideas and arguments, orally, in writing, and in electronic media;
- Use group discussions and joint seminar presentations to research and present work collaboratively; and
- Develop oral presentation and participation skills during seminars and group-work, and in written form through online blogs and other e- learning tools, dissertations and essays.

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

By engaging with and completing the degree in Philosophy and Theology, graduates will be able to:

- Collaborate efficiently and productively with others in the process of learning and presentation of conclusions – this includes those with a range of backgrounds and knowledge bases, such as fellow-students, tutors and supervisors;
- Organise their own learning, manage workload and work to a timetable;
- Effectively plan, and possess the confidence to undertake and to present scholarly work that demonstrates an understanding of the aims, methods and theoretical considerations relevant to Philosophy and Theology; and
- Work independently on the creation of essays, extended essays and research based dissertations using the standards current in the academic fields of Philosophy and Theology.

11f) Technical/practical skills

Not applicable

12) Programme structure and features

Full details of course structures are given in the School of Divinity section of the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study.

The MA (Philosophy and Theology) degree is an Honours degree taken over four years. It consists of two years of pre-Honours courses totalling 240 credits at SQCF level 8 and two years of Honours courses also totalling 240 credits at SQCF level 10.

Courses within the School of Divinity (worth 20 credits) are taught for a total of eleven weeks. In years one and two, teaching is largely lecture-based, augmented by small group tutorials. Honours teaching, in years three and four, is largely seminar based in small group classes of usually two hours duration. Assessment is variable but is normally one in course essay and other course work

(blogs, tutorial sheets, presentations etc), making up 40% of the final mark and one two hour exam at the end of the course, making up 60% of the final mark.

In the first and second years, all students attend two specified courses in Philosophy (40 credits) and two in Theology (40 Credits) plus further courses (40 credits) which can be drawn from a wide variety of courses available in Divinity and other Schools across the university. In addition, in first year, students must complete a one year, non-credit course on Academic Literacies providing all students with the basic skills they require for their studies.

In year three (Junior Honours), a wide array of advanced-level Honours courses is available. At this point, students begin to build their own study path by choosing courses which particularly interest them, taking 40 credits in Philosophy and 40 credits in Theology. The final third of courses (40 credits) may be taken in either Philosophy or Theology.

Final year Honours students take 40 credits in each of Philosophy and Theology. They then choose to undertake either a dissertation (40 credits) in Theology (10,000 words) or a dissertation in Philosophy (8,000 words plus a Philosophy dissertation course taken in year three) or two further option courses in Philosophy to be examined by extended essays (5,000 words). Supervision for dissertations is provided by members of academic staff. The Honours degree classification is based on all final marks for work done in years three and four.

Further information on the content and rationale of individual courses is contained in the First, Second and Honours Handbooks of the School of Divinity, see <http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity>. Through the School's quality assurance and enhancement procedures the teaching and learning processes are closely monitored, this includes feedback from students through staff/student liaison meetings and course monitoring forms.

The School has adopted a policy on Equality, Diversity and Respect in the School of Divinity covering all students and staff in the School.

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

One to one meetings with lecturers/personal tutors.

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 which provides space outwith the curriculum for staff and students to explore new learning activities. Some examples of the types of activities held in the School of Divinity were 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 can be assessed by a diverse range of methods and often takes the form of formative work which provides 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 or extended essays

15) Career Opportunities

Graduates of Divinity and Religious Studies will develop skills suitable for a wide range of careers for example, in the voluntary sector, Civil Service, finance, management, law, counselling, banking, ministry and human resources. You may also choose to continue your studies at Edinburgh or another institution or pursue a career in teaching or research.

16) Other Items

Opportunities for studying abroad for one semester in the 3rd year of study are available to students, for example to Dartmouth College (U.S.A.), Bayreuth (Germany) and Nijmegen (The Netherlands).

Students in the programme have access to the School of Divinity's excellent computing facilities. Their studies are supported by a dedicated site Library at New College which has extensive holdings in the field of Theology and Ethics, and the wider collections in the Main Library.

More information about the School can be found at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity>.