



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR the MA (THEOLOGY)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: Theology**
- 6) **UCAS Code: QVV6**
Relevant QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s): Theology & Religious Studies
- 7) **Postholder with overall responsibility for QA: Head of School**
- 8) **Date of production/revision: July 2012**
- 9) **External Summary (200-250 words)**

The MA (Theology) offers academic study in Christianity in relation to other religions. Students have the opportunity to focus on specific areas: Biblical Studies; Christian Theology, Ethics, and Practice; the historical development of Christianity in a global context; Religious Studies. Students work with international scholars to acquire knowledge of chosen areas of interest, and develop research-associated methods and skills. The degree programme intends:

- Development of knowledge and understanding in the chosen areas, from introductory to advanced levels
- Acquaintance with historical, textual, and interpretative approaches to the study of Christianity, and critical engagement with, and evaluation of, texts, issues, and arguments.
- Fair and accurate formulation of research questions which respect other traditions and religions
- Ability to engage in argument and apologetics through various written, speaking, listening, and electronic skills
- Interactive skills which involve working with others and an ability to address diverse audiences (peer, semi-formal, academic, popular) from a range of backgrounds.

10) **Educational aims of programme:**

The MA (Theology) offers academic study in Christianity in its various branches: Biblical Studies, Christian Theology, Ethics, and Practice, the historical development of Christianity in a global context, and wider Religious Studies. The programme responds to various career aspirations, and provides a platform for further postgraduate study. Key aims are staged development of knowledge and skills from introductory (level 8) courses to advanced (level 10) courses. This involves critical and comprehensive knowledge acquisition through a diet of lectures and tutorials, personal

¹ Previously known as MA (Divinity). 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.

research, and personal engagement with course providers, and also the ability to communicate knowledge by word, speech, and e-forms of learning and teaching.

The key aims of the programme are:

- A comprehensive introduction to the study of Christianity
- A clearly designed programme which enables progress, on the basis of prerequisites, to further study.
- Providing a platform, through acquired methodological skills and tools, for on-going and further research
- Enabling students to study additional subjects outside of the School of Divinity as a part of their degree programme until the third year of study (level 10)
- Critical and interactive skills;
- Provide a platform for a variety of careers, further academic study, and life-long learning.

11) Programme outcomes:

11a) Knowledge and understanding

Successful completion of the MA (Theology) equips students with:

- Progressive and enhanced knowledge of intended and co-related subject areas and disciplines, within and beyond the Christian tradition.
- Tools, skills, and methods of engagement with texts.
- Inter-personal skills through co-learning, and academic oversight.
- E-learning and dialogical e-learning skills through on-line networks.

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

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

- Gather and analyse evidence from a wide range of primary and secondary sources.
- Evaluate and critique primary and secondary resources.
- Formulate a research question and a methodology.
- Deploy an argument which gathers together evidence, research, and a viable research proposal.

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

By engaging with and completing the degree in 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 others.
- Engage with issues involving the intersection of inter-religious beliefs and practices 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 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 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 Theology; and
- Work independently on the creation of essays and research based dissertations using the standards current in the academic field of 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 (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. Students can focus on one area/discipline within the Christian tradition, such as Biblical Studies, or take combinations of subjects, such as Theology and History of Christianity, or Theology and Ethics, or Religious Studies. Other concentrations/combinations of subjects offered in the School of Divinity can also be proposed for approval.

Courses within Theology are taught for a total of eleven weeks (worth 20 credits). In years one and two teaching is largely lecture-based, augmented by small group tutorials. Honours teaching is largely seminar based in small group classes of usually two hour 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 any concentration/combination, first-year courses provide a broad introduction and foundation in knowledge and relevant skills. Second-year courses build on this foundation, focusing on particular subjects, texts, and topics. Students also have opportunity to commence study of biblical Hebrew and/or Greek from their first year, especially in the Biblical Studies concentration. In first and second years students can also take courses in a subject outside of the School of Divinity. This opportunity is also available in third year. (This permits students to modify their initial choice of degree programme as late as the second year of study.) In addition, students must complete a one year, non-credit course on Academic Literacies, which provides providing all students with the basic skills they require for their studies.

In years three and four, a wide array of advanced-level Honours courses is available. A major dissertation (10,000 words) is required in the final year of the MA Theology with Honours. Supervision for the dissertation 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.

Students may elect to take a “general” degree instead (as distinguished from an Honours degree), the B.A. Divinity, three-years (full-time) study, courses totalling 360 credits, at least one School of Divinity subject studied at three progressive levels, with a variety of patterns possible.

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

15) Career Opportunities

Graduates of Theology and Religious Studies will develop skills suitable for careers in ministry, counselling, the voluntary sector and the armed forces. You will also acquire transferable skills that can be applied to careers in unrelated areas such as finance, management, banking, the Civil Service 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 the wider collections in the Main Library. More information about the School can be found at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity>.