



# **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR**

## **BA IN HISTORY**

<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching institution</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	<b>not applicable</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Final award</b>	<b>BA (Hons)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>History</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>UCAS code</b>	<b>V130</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Relevant subject benchmark statement</b>	<b>History</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation</b>	<b>13 December 2002</b>  <b>Amended by Undergraduate Studies Committee 1 March 2011</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Educational aims of the programme</b>	
<p>The programme aims to enable its students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acquire a knowledge and understanding of the past, characterised by range, depth and conceptual sophistication;</li> <li>• engage and enhance their critical skills, imagination and creativity as an intrinsic part of an intense learning experience;</li> <li>• develop the skill of independent thinking, drawing on technical skill in historical investigation and exposition, and increased sensitivity to the human issues at the heart of the analysis of the past;</li> <li>• promote skills of relevance to the continued professional development of historical understanding, and which are transferable to a wide range of employment contexts and life experiences.</li> </ul>		

<b>10</b>	<b>Programme outcomes</b>		
	<b>A</b>	<i>Knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>a broad knowledge of past societies and of historical processes in terms of both chronological and geographical range;</b>	Breadth of knowledge and understanding is ensured primarily by the broad time-frame and the focus on more than one society and its culture of the required British and General History courses. This is enhanced by the extensive list of optional subjects, involving a variety of approaches to historical enquiry. Chronological range is also formally secured by requiring the student to take at least one paper of British or General [i.e. European and World] History from each of the medieval, early modern and modern periods.
	<b>2</b>	<b>how primary evidence is employed in historical argument;</b>	Primary materials may be the subject of discussion in any of the courses. But detailed study of contemporary texts, works of art, films, photographs, and other artefacts are essential to several elements of the course e.g. nos. 3, 7, 8 and 11 noted in section 11. In such courses students must master a range of assigned contemporary documentation and other evidence, which becomes the subject of class discussion and the basis of weekly tutorial work.
	<b>3</b>	<b>the development of History as a subject and its intellectual standing in different societies, the role played by conceptual frameworks and models in the investigation of the past, and the theoretical foundations of the discipline;</b>	Two elements of the programme are dedicated to methodological issues (nos. 4 and 10 noted in section 11). But all courses contain significant opportunities for historiographical reflection, and certain courses that employ evidence from literature or works of art oblige it.
	<b>4</b>	<b>wherever appropriate and possible, relevant linguistic skills and their application to historical studies.</b>	Linguistic skills are developed and employed in the text-based courses that may be taken as part of the first year course (no.4 in section 11), and in the Special Subjects that concentrate on subjects in Modern European History (no.8-9 in section 11).  Dedicated courses in reading French, Russian, and Italian for historians are offered. Students also have recourse to general language training at Oxford University Language Centre.
<p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Most aspects of the required knowledge and understanding are tested through written examinations, held during the course of the third and the ninth terms of the programme, and two pieces of written work (a 6,000 word essay, and a 12,000 word thesis). Extensive preparation for the organisation and communication of such knowledge and understanding is provided in weekly tutorials, in classes, and practice examinations. Understanding is particularly assessed on a continuous formative basis through the weekly tutorial, and oral presentations in classes.</i></p>			

<b>B</b>	<b>Intellectual skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>exercise critical judgement and undertake sophisticated analysis;</b>	There is emphasis throughout the programme on the skills relevant to the careful and critical reading and exegesis of secondary studies and primary texts, and the ability to gather, sift, synthesise and interpret data. These are recognised as making a particular contribution to the development of sophisticated analytical skills.
<b>2</b>	<b>argue persuasively;</b>	Practical written and rhetorical skills are honed within the weekly tutorial context, and in the classes associated with several elements of the course. Presentations in tutorials and classes from students must demonstrate the ability to identify issues, to formulate questions that are susceptible to demonstration, and to marshal evidence and analysis in a logical and coherent way.
<b>3</b>	<b>approach problems with creativity and imagination;</b>	Developing the creativity and human sympathy of all students is integral to the programme. These attributes, allied to the exercise of disciplined imagination, are regarded as essential if students are to comprehend the often alien values and expectations of past societies and cultures.
<b>4</b>	<b>develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticise accepted opinion.</b>	All our learning strategies are designed to inculcate these skills, most particularly the vigorous argument that we seek to encourage in our frequent tutorials.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The formative assessment provided by tutorials and by classes is critical to the development and monitoring of the intellectual skills set out here. Students are subjected to weekly scrutiny on these skills through presentation and defence of written essay material in front of an established academic historian and one or more of the student's peer group.</i></p>		
<b>C</b>	<b>Practical skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>write well for a variety of audiences and in a variety of contexts;</b>	Continuous scrutiny of written work, whether produced for tutorial, class presentation or for written examination, aims to promote well-structured and coherent argument, in a prose that is clear, fluent and elegant.

2	<b>engage in oral discussion and argument with others, in a way that advances understanding of the problems at issue and the appropriate approaches and solutions to them;</b>	Tutorials and other classes provide ample opportunity to develop and refine high level skills in oral discussion and presentation.
3	<b>ensure, often working independently, that the fullest range of evidence and opinion can be brought to bear on a problem; develop research skills to this end.</b>	Students are trained to show a familiarity with the variety of bibliographical resources – library catalogues and electronic information systems – and to demonstrate an ability to identify and retrieve materials and commentary.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Formative assessment through the weekly tutorial and other opportunities for class or seminar presentation enables a continuous monitoring of the development of practical skills. Termly reports identify points of excellence and of concern, e.g. the ability to present and defend an argument or thesis convincingly and cogently. More formal assessment through college practice examinations ('collections') provide opportunities to assess and provide feedback on skills associated with timed written examinations.</i></p>		
<i>D</i>	<i>Transferable skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
1	<b>find information, organise and deploy it;</b>	Information retrieval is integral to all aspects of the programme. The opportunities presented by ICT are particularly emphasised. Subject-specific training on bibliographic resources, electronic datasets and texts, statistical methods, and collation and presentation tools is offered to all students, in association with Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS) and Oxford University Library Services (OULS).
2	<b>draw on such information, and with a trained analytical intelligence, to consider and solve complex problems, in ways that are imaginative, yet sensitive to the needs and cultural expectations of others;</b>	These are the skills at the heart of our programme. They are eminently transferable to contexts beyond the university.
3	<b>work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others;</b>	Self-direction is encouraged by the preparation of weekly essays, and particularly by the extended essay and thesis. Classes, organised by the faculty and within colleges, encourage collaboration.
4	<b>effectively structure and communicate their ideas in a variety of written and oral formats;</b>	The ability to present ideas effectively and to respond to the ideas of others constructively is integral to the programme. Formats used are: written weekly essay, extended essay, gobbet commentary, thesis and oral presentation. The ability to structure and communicate ideas in written form under time pressure is practised through termly collections.
5	<b>plan and organise the use of time effectively;</b>	The ability to produce material within time constraints and against tight deadlines, whether

		within the framework of the written examination or in the programme of tutorials, is essential. Longer term planning is required for the thesis and extended essay.
<b>6</b>	<b>where relevant, make appropriate use of language skills.</b>	See also Section 10 A 4
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The transferable skills identified in 1-5 above are essential elements of the programme. As such their presence or absence is the focus of much of the regular comment provided by tutors in their weekly contacts with students; and in the varying modes of formal feedback provided to students throughout the course.</i></p>		
<p><b>General teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>Each of the students' ten assessed courses [see below, <b>section 11</b>] has a different teaching strategy. This depends in part on the nature of the subject matter, in part on its place in the cumulative process of learning over the three years. All involve the interweaving, in slightly different proportions, of three kinds of learning experience: lectures, classes and tutorials.</p>		
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Lectures:</b> these are associated with all first-year courses [items 1-4 in <b>Section 11</b>] and with the British and General History papers and the Disciplines of History paper [items 5, 6 and 10 in <b>Section 11</b>] taken in the second and third years of the programme. Most obviously they provide knowledge of the past and of the historiography generated by its study. But they are not merely 'talking text-books'. Lectures provide examples of how complex materials can be organised into intellectually persuasive patterns, and so enhance the development of intellectual and practical skills.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Classes:</b> these, organised either within individual Colleges or by the Faculty, are important elements of courses involving focussed discussion of methodological themes [items 4 and 10 in <b>Section 11</b>] or those concentrating on the advanced discussion of texts and other historical artefacts [items 7 and 8-9 in <b>Section 11</b>]. While all learning outcomes can be enhanced by classes, they have a particular purpose in the programme, since it is in making presentations to such classes, and in engaging in the discussion generated by them, that students gain their most sustained and formal experience of working co-operatively in groups.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Tutorials:</b> The tutorial - usually a weekly meeting between one member of the academic staff, expert in the subject matter of the course, with two students each of whom prepares an essay on an agreed topic from within the course syllabus - is at the heart of the learning experience in this programme. Essays are written after the provision of a full reading list, supported by the faculty bibliographies that are produced for each course. The essays are criticised rigorously and constructively in terms of substance and style; the themes that they raise are explored in an open, in-depth discussion. The tutorial is the major vehicle in which the learning outcomes of this programme are secured: the students' acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of their intellectual qualities and their practical skills</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Programme Structures and Features</b>	
<p>Progression through this three-year programme is a process of interlinked consolidation and development. The base line is provided by student performance at the highest level prior to admission (<i>see Section 13 below</i>)</p> <p>On admission students will have demonstrated the ability:</p>		

- to distinguish and assess different points of view;
- to think in causal terms;
- to master the technical skills of essay-writing, including the clear presentation of relevant material;
- and to analyse the significance of such material in relation to a given problem.

The course draws on this foundation, which is then reinforced by a series of introductory sessions in the student's first term. The programme expands students' knowledge, and cumulatively enhances their skills and intellectual qualities. Alongside a constant pattern of formative assessment, the basic rhythm of the programme is provided by formal procedures of assessment at the end of the first year (Preliminary Examination) and then at the end of the third year (Final Honour School).

A	<p><i>Learning in the first year</i></p> <p>Students work on four courses during the year; their performance is assessed in the Preliminary Examination at the end of it.</p>	
	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	<p><b>A period of British History [chosen from seven periods]</b></p>	<p>All seven periods require students to consider the history of the societies which have made up the British Isles over an extended period of time. They aim to encourage appreciation of the underlying continuities as well as the dramatic discontinuities within periods, and to explore the relation between the political, economic, social and cultural developments in determining the paths followed by the societies of Britain, severally and together.</p>
2	<p><b>A period of general (essentially European) History [chosen from four periods]</b></p>	<p>All four courses combine the study of an extended period with geographical range. They are approached more thematically than British History, with an emphasis on the conceptual categories – of economy, culture, state and religion – which promote understanding of what European nations have had in common and where they have differed.</p>
3	<p><b>An optional subject [chosen from a list of papers updated annually in the Preliminary Examination Handbook]</b></p>	<p>All the subjects have a more focussed chronological and geographical range, requiring the intensive study of a selection of contemporary texts. They also provide the opportunity to engage with a number of more specialist approaches to understanding the past.</p>
4	<p><b>A supplementary subject [chosen from ten subjects]</b></p>	<p>All ten subjects encourage students to reflect critically on methodological issues raised by the practice of history. Some of these subjects additionally develop specific practical skills, as in that on Quantification in History, or any of the seven options in which the study of</p>

		important historical works is undertaken in their original language (option 4 c) Foreign Texts).
<p>Common to all these four elements is the assumption that students will build on their previous training, and that the path to a more advanced historical enquiry and discourse should not be too steep in its initial stages. All courses have demanding bibliographies, concentrating on the monograph and the article rather than on the text book or 'problem' studies of pre-University work. These bibliographies are carefully designed and focussed, rather than exhaustive. All, save the smaller language-based courses have dedicated lecture series designed to elucidate the key themes that bind the period and make it more than an arbitrary chunk of years, or that introduce the key conceptual assumptions and historiographies that underpin the course. The themes of the lectures form the basis of tutorial work, and also form the foundation of the questions set in examination papers.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Students' progress will be monitored continuously in tutorials. The regularity and relative informality of the weekly tutorials give students easy access to assistance if they encounter academic or personal problems. At the beginning of the second and third terms students will be set a practice examination in their colleges on the work done in the preceding term and receive diagnostic feedback from their tutors. The examination at the end of the year on all four papers provides a sound assessment of the students' achievements and progress in the first year in relation to the Learning Outcomes set out in Section 10.</i></p> <p><i>The criteria against which papers are examined pull together the Learning Outcomes detailed under Section 10 under the headings of engagement (i.e. effectiveness in addressing the question), argument, deployment of information, and organization and presentation. The criteria are presented in detail in the Handbook for the Preliminary Examination.</i></p>		
<b>B</b>	<p><b><i>Learning in the second and third years</i></b></p> <p>Students work on five courses and a thesis in their second and third years; their progress is evaluated in an examination (Final Honour School) involving five three-hour papers and the assessment of two substantial pieces of written work at the end of the third year. The courses are:</p>	
	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>A period of British History (chosen from seven periods)</b></p>	<p>While the periods are the same as those defined for the first year [1 above], with a similar intention of gaining a breadth of understanding through the study of the closely-related societies of the British Isles across long but coherent periods of time, expectations concerning learning outcomes are significantly different.</p> <p>The bibliographies provided for these courses are fuller, and students will be expected to read more widely in the monographic literature in which the problems that they address have been debated, refined and transformed, and to show more historiographic awareness in their thinking. Lectures engage more precisely with specific issues within the period. Students, in discussion with their tutors, will have more latitude to pursue the themes and topics that interest them. Students will build on the skills they have developed in the First Year to enhance the sophistication of the critical and analytical skills displayed in their writing and their</p>

		discussion.
<b>6</b>	<b>A period of General History (chosen from eighteen periods, which cover the whole of European history and its engagement with the non-European world from the fall of Rome until 1973, with additional papers in American history and the history of the wider world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries)</b>	All these periods are studied at greater depth than in the First Year General History courses [2 above], and the expectations embodied in the lectures and bibliographies conform to those for the British History options [5 above]. Tutorial essays and discussion will concentrate on the elucidation of the distinctive features of individual societies, in the context of a grasp of the broader themes raised by the period.
<b>7</b>	<b>A further subject (chosen from a list of papers updated annually in the Final Honours School Handbook)</b>	These are designed to extend and deepen students' understanding of particular subject areas, topics, and themes. Students engage with a range of texts, documents and artefacts relevant to the subject, in order to elucidate their significance and to relate them to scholarly literature. Classes, taught by members of the Faculty who are actively engaged in research in the relevant fields, class presentations by students, and class discussion are an integral part of these courses. The classes provide an invaluable opportunity to enhance the skills of working effectively as part of a group.
<b>8-9</b>	<b>A special subject [2 papers] (chosen from a list of papers updated annually in the Final Honours School Handbook)</b>	In these courses students master the original sources on which historical scholarship is based: all post-medieval subjects that are not purely British or American in their focus, require language skills. Students construct their own understanding of the subject from this primary evidence. As in the Further Subjects (above) classes, again taught by members of the Faculty who are actively engaged in research in the area, play a central role in these courses. This element of the syllabus is assessed by a paper which usually requires detailed commentary on passages from the prescribed texts or images; the other requirement for this course is the production of an Extended Essay of 6,000 words, the questions for which invite the students to employ their familiarity with the set-texts to illuminate broader issues raised by the subject. This exercise is designed to encourage students to develop practical and presentation techniques, and to demonstrate their ability to marshal evidence and to sustain argument in an extended piece of writing. Short-term Special Subjects run for the life of a postholder's specific research project (eg for 5 years), enabling undergraduates to gain first hand experience of an academic's research process.
<b>10</b>	<b>A course, <i>Disciplines of History, in Comparative History and Historical Argumentation</i></b>	This builds on the methodological course studied in the First Year [4 above], and develops a more advanced discussion of the theoretical issues raised by the writing of history. Lectures are offered on the themes set out in the syllabus,

		and these are the focus of college-based classes and tutorials.
<b>11</b>	<b>A thesis</b>	The writing of a thesis develops and demonstrates similar skills to the required Extended Essay [8 above], but it offers students the opportunity to undertake primary research in a topic of their own choosing, and to work as historical scholars in their own right. Students are provided with Faculty-organised lectures and classes to assist in the general planning of dissertations, the selection of topics, the assessment of potential sources. The faculty runs a “thesis fair” involving librarians, archivists and museologists, where students can discuss intentions and plans. This is followed by a series of workshops where students have first-hand experience of using primary sources, including gaining relevant IT skills. They have individual meetings with advisers to assist in focussing the work and reviewing its progress.
<b>12</b>	<b>An Optional Additional Thesis</b>	Students may choose to write an Optional Additional Thesis of the same length as the compulsory thesis, on a different topic and with a later submission date. In such cases the Final Honour School Examiners will arrive at a formal degree result by taking the highest seven marks out of the eight papers (including the optional thesis) submitted.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>As in the First Year, students’ progress will be monitored continuously in tutorials. Students will receive a great deal of commentary on their contributions, in relation both to their class-presentations and their engagement in general discussion, from the leaders of the various classes. At the beginning of each term students will sit practice examinations in college on the work done in the previous term and receive diagnostic feedback.</i></p> <p><i>The examination at the end of the final year, consisting of five unseen papers, the Extended Essay on the Special Subject, and the Thesis, provides a robust assessment of students’ achievements and progress through the programme in relation to the Learning Outcomes discussed in Section 10. The requirement that all students undertake both an Extended Essay and a Thesis introduces a particularly important additional component into the range of assessment utilized in the programme.</i></p> <p><i>The criteria against which papers are examined pull together the Learning Outcomes detailed under Section 10 under the headings of engagement (i.e. effectiveness in addressing the question), argument, deployment of information, and organization and presentation. The criteria are presented in detail in the Handbook for the Final Honours School.</i></p>		
<b>12</b>	<b>Support for students and their learning</b>	
<b>A</b>	<b>Libraries</b>	<p>Reflecting the nature of History as primarily a text-based discipline History students at Oxford have access to an extraordinary array of library resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Bodleian Library, with its world-class holdings of both printed and manuscript</li> </ul>

	<p>materials;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Radcliffe Camera (part of the Bodleian), with its large History holdings on open shelf;</li> <li>• the History Faculty Library which provides borrowing facilities, multiple copies, and reference works;</li> <li>• the Indian Institute Library (Indian and South Asian History);</li> <li>• Rhodes House Library (British Empire and Commonwealth);</li> <li>• the Vere Harmsworth Library at the Rothermere American Institute (USA);</li> <li>• the Taylor Institute (European languages and Literature);</li> <li>• the Sackler Library (Western Art, Ancient History and Classical Archaeology);</li> <li>• the Nissan Institute (Japanese Studies).</li> </ul> <p>Students also have access to the Libraries of other Faculties, whose holdings are relevant to particular options that they are studying. The OLIS cataloguing system incorporates the holdings of all major and most College libraries.</p> <p>Students have access, via OULS, to a vast range of electronic resources, such as journals, databases, and other electronically available texts.</p> <p>The range of general and specialised Library resources, and the quality of holdings and accessibility support the breadth of the outline papers and the range of Optional, Further, and Special Subjects in the syllabus.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>Museums</b></p> <p>A number of our specialised Optional, Further and Special Subjects employ the resources of the Ashmolean Museum and the Museum of the History of Science, and the expertise of the staffs of those institutions.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>IT resources</b></p> <p>There is an extensive network of IT resources and support within Oxford, with web-based information (accessible from most faculty, college, library, and common areas). Comprehensive use of the internet and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is made for teaching and learning.</p> <p>Colleges provide excellent IT resources and Support Officers prepared to train and assist students.</p> <p>The OUCS also provides facilities for undergraduates, and a variety of training programmes, several of which are specifically geared to students in the Humanities and Social Sciences.</p> <p>The faculty has a 20-seat ICT teaching room: this is used for bibliographical training, quantitative methods, and specific software training. Students can also attend a range of courses on software packages at OUCS. The use of ICT within the undergraduate degree course is central to course delivery and continues to develop. All course information provided by the faculty is available on-line, including faculty bibliographies.</p>

<b>D</b>	<p><b>Advice concerning the Syllabus</b></p> <p>Guidance to the range of options available to students in this course is readily available.</p> <p>The structure of the course, and short descriptions of its various elements, are available from the faculty's New Weblearn site, covering both the First Year (Preliminary Examination) work, the other outlining the Second and Third Year (Final Honours School) Course.</p> <p>Guidance concerning the syllabus and choices within it is primarily provided in a more personal forum, by the student's College tutor. The tasks that fall to the tutors are wide-ranging, though all involve easy access and informal but informed discussion. Tutors have a pastoral role if students have academic or personal difficulties; they may advise on future employment; but their key responsibility is to realise the student's full intellectual potential within the course. To this end, they monitor their students' progress through the syllabus, they help them in the choice of courses, and they arrange the teaching for the courses that they have selected.</p>
<b>E</b>	<p><b>Other support available</b></p> <p>The University Language Centre offers all students taught classes in general language in six modern languages, and materials for private study. In addition the Language Centre offers a course specifically for Historians in their second year: <i>Reading French for Historians</i>.</p> <p>The Oxford University Counselling Service provides free, confidential support to all students.</p> <p>College support structures: in addition to college tutors, colleges have other support structures for students. They vary from college to college but may include the appointment of personal tutors, access to college chaplains or other welfare advisers, and support structures provided via the Junior Common Room.</p> <p>There are complaints procedures for students within the History Faculty, within their college or via the University Proctors' Office. These are fully detailed in the course documentation provided on the Faculty's New Weblearn site for the First Year students and Second/Third Year students.</p>
<b>13</b>	<b>Criteria for admission</b>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>School/College leavers</b></p> <p>Applications are made to the Colleges of the University, not to the Faculty but selection is made using common criteria. Applicants who are offered places will usually be required to attain minimum grades of AAB at A-level, or equivalent marks on the Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers, or the EB or IB. Offers are made on the basis of students' academic record, the recommendations of their teachers, and their performance in interviews held in the Colleges in December. To qualify for an interview, applicants are asked to take the History Aptitude Test under exam conditions in their own schools or a test centre; this is marked as a gathered field. On being invited to interview, candidates are invited to submit an example of their work in History to the College, and the interviewers – the History tutors in the College to which a student has made an application and in many cases those in a second college – will discuss this work, as well as the students' personal statements on their application forms. The purpose of the interviews is to select those students, from an excellent cadre of applicants who have already proved themselves to have an aptitude for history, who might best benefit from the intensive, tutorially based learning methods employed in the University (see <b>10 E. 3</b> above). The admissions criteria adopted by the History Faculty are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual curiosity</li> <li>• Conceptual clarity</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Accuracy and attention to detail</li> <li>• Critical engagement</li> <li>• Capacity for hard work</li> <li>• Enthusiasm for History</li> <li>• Evidence of historical imagination and understanding</li> </ul>

<b>B</b>	<p><b>Mature and overseas students</b></p> <p>Applicants in these groups, and those who have completed the Foundation Certificate in Modern History course offered at the Department of Continuing Education, are also required to take the HAT, but are then considered on an individual basis; the submission of written work, and its discussion in interview is equally important to the Admissions process. For overseas students, a command of English equivalent to IELTS 7.5 or TOEFL 650 (275 in the computer-based TOEFL test) is recommended. English language support is available at the University.</p>
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<b>14</b>	<p><b>Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning</b></p>
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Student feedback on lectures and seminars is requested, and the comments are reviewed by the lecturer or by the course co-ordinator, who report to the Faculty's Undergraduate Studies Committee. Students are also invited to comment, with full anonymity if they wish, on any aspects of the course for consideration by the appropriate committee of the Faculty. Student concerns are also discussed in the termly meetings of the History Joint Consultative Committee, formed by student representatives and by the officers of the Faculty, and the students' opinions on new course proposals or suggested changes to the curriculum are solicited and given serious consideration.

Student comment on tutorial provision is requested by their colleges and is reviewed by the Senior Tutors of the Colleges.

All new academic staff are provided with guidance on teaching within the Oxford environment by two experienced postholders, one acting as assessor, one as mentor. Formal review takes place in the second and fifth years of appointment. Teaching by all academic staff is reviewed annually by two peers (including the mentor in the case of new appointees), through the History Faculty's Career Development Review. The Faculty runs internal workshops on lecturing and small class teaching.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Faculty encourages and approves the introduction of new courses, and organises a regular, five-year cycle of reviews of all courses. The course co-ordinators are asked to comment on student take-up and feedback, on Library provision, on the provision of teaching, and on any alterations to the course, such as changes to the set-texts, that might be desirable. These reports are discussed by the Faculty's Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Suggestions for changes to the content of the programme are discussed among the interested parties in a wide range of fora, in terms of intellectual interest, and of library and teaching provision. Major changes to the curriculum are also widely discussed. It is usual in these cases for an ad hoc committee to be established, instructed to embody the ideas that have emerged in preliminary discussion in a document that will become the focus of analysis and debate in the Faculty, at the Joint Consultative Committee, among the Subject Groups, and at the Faculty Board and its Committees.

Any changes to the programme agreed by the Faculty have to be reviewed and approved by the Humanities Divisional Board. This reports to the Educational Policy and Standards Committee which ultimately approves all significant programme changes.

The success rates for students are monitored through Examiners' Reports and their consideration by the Committees of the History Faculty. Since 2008, the faculty has monitored Final Honours School performance against performance in the History Aptitude Test. The University Careers Service provides an annual report to Faculties, detailing the destination of new graduates in History.

<b>15</b>	<p><b>Regulation of assessment</b></p>
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The Board of the History Faculty, advised by its Examinations Committee, and within the framework established by the Humanities Division, is responsible for establishing the marking and classification conventions for all taught degrees, and for publishing these. The Committee also appoints the internal Examination Boards for each of its degrees, and nominates External Examiners subject to the approval of the History Faculty Board, the Proctors and the Vice-Chancellor.

Boards of Examiners, under their elected Chairs, are responsible for arranging the setting of all papers, and the marking of the scripts and submitted work of the examination candidates, deploying postholders

and other Faculty members as Assessors for these tasks alongside the Examiners. They may appoint Assessors to assist in the setting and marking of the more specialist papers, where the subject matter is not within the expertise of two of the examiners. Each FHS script and piece of submitted work is blind-marked by two examiners or assessors, who will then meet to agree every mark. If they are unable to agree, a third examiner will be asked to read the script and give it a mark. After scripts have been marked, the Board of Examiners meets to classify the students in accordance with the rules established by the Examinations Committee.

Examination candidates are anonymous through the allocation of candidate numbers. Marking criteria are published in the course documentation (published in New Weblearn) and made available to students prior to the examination. The Faculty uses the standardized marking conventions of the Humanities Division. Complaints procedures in examination matters through the University Proctors' Office are detailed in the course documentation and on the Faculty New Weblearn site and University website.

A key role in this process is played by the External Examiners. They act as impartial advisors, providing the History Faculty and the University with informed comment on two major issues.

1. To verify that standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards of comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and otherwise appropriate.
2. To ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards has been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board. This will entail signing the Class List as an endorsement that the processes of examination and classification have been fairly conducted.

External Examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover all the following points

- the standards demonstrated by the students
- the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award
- the design, structure and marking of assessments
- the procedures for assessment and examinations
- whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgments
- students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses
- the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them
- the basis and rationale for any comparisons made
- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort
- the quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance

The Report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and will be considered by the Humanities Board and by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee of the University.

The Report will also be scrutinised by the Faculty Board of History and its various Committees, particularly the Examinations Committee; it will also be discussed by the Faculty as a whole, and by its constituent Groups.

Where an External Examiner's Report contains particular suggestions or criticisms, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Board to ensure that full consideration is given to these, to institute further

	discussion or action, and to inform the External Examiner within a reasonable time of what is done.
<b>16</b>	<b>Indicators of quality and standards</b>
	<p>The Humanities Division and EPSC Joint Review of the Faculty of History, Hilary Term 2008, found "The syllabus retains required chronological and geographical spread in its 'outline' papers [...and] a diversity of specialist choices [...] The result is a course rich in options." The Review members also stated that "The History Faculty offers, in a number of respects, an example from which lessons can be learned, not just by other parts of the Humanities Division but across the University more generally". The EPSC/Divisional Review Report of 2008 commented specifically on the successful addition of the compulsory thesis to the curriculum, stating that 'the quality of some of the work done by students is outstanding'.</p> <p>Reports from Examining Boards regularly address issues relating to quality and standards.</p> <p>The History Faculty's External Advisory Panel reviews quality and standards and provides valuable feedback from the world of other academic institutions and the world of business, the professions and secondary education.</p> <p>A review of the Final Honours School performance takes place each year.</p> <p>A less formal measure of the quality of the graduates from this programme is the success that they enjoy in all aspects of the job-market, in securing training and contracts, and in admission to funding for graduate courses in History and in other academic fields.</p> <p>In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, the History Faculty was ranked =2 out of 83 UK History departments, and most of its research activity was rated as outstanding. Our high quality research helps bring high quality teaching.</p>