

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures

MA by Research
French, German, Hispanic Studies, Italian

PROGRAMME GUIDE

2011-2012b

Programme Director:
Dr Sarah Wright

INTRODUCTION

The programme aims to:

- provide training in the methodologies and techniques needed for research leading to MPhil/PhD
- offer an independent course of study at Masters level in an attractive form which will permit students to do Masters work who would be unable to attend a taught MA. This might include, for example, teachers and other professionals who are in full-time work, or those who live too far away from College regularly to attend
- widen access to differing kinds of students, offer students the chance to pursue a course of studies that fits in with the demands of their work, and with their personal aspirations
- examine critically current knowledge, and the essential concepts and theories that inform advanced study in the humanities
- provide the opportunity for advanced study of specialised topics
- examine critically current techniques of enquiry and research in the humanities
- foster the ability to learn independently, whether for further research or for personal intellectual development
- develop the written and oral presentation skills needed for effective communication of research findings at postgraduate level

DEGREE STRUCTURE

The MA by Research has a deliberately simple structure, in line with the aim of making the course as accessible as possible. There are two main components:

I. Research Methodology Training

II. Individual Supervision by specialist supervisor(s)

I. Research Methodology Training will consist of a number of sessions, which will generally be of two hours duration, organized either in Royal Holloway or at the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies. Two of these may sometimes be carried out on the same day, given the aim of reducing need for student attendance at fixed times. You should discuss with your supervisor which are the most appropriate courses for you to attend.

Full details of the types of training which are available to students as well as training opportunities available at other institutions are detailed on the

Research Skills Programme webpage. This page also includes a guide to web registration, details on how to book, FAQs and a Research Skills Programme Handbook.

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/pgstudents/forstudents/gsp/home.aspx>

Individual Supervision: Students should expect to see their supervisor once every two weeks, for a maximum of 1-1.5 hours, during the first two terms for full-time students, half this number of meetings for part-time students. Phone and e-mail contact may take the place of face to face supervision for students who have difficulties attending College. Written work should be produced regularly to be discussed with the supervisor. The School will monitor and take action regarding students who fail to have regular contact with their supervisor, whatever their mode of communication. A plan of the whole dissertation, with a bibliography, should be submitted after two terms full-time, four terms part-time study. The plan and bibliography will be approved by the supervisor and a further member of the School. The bibliography will detail major sources for the research, and contain a list of other research resources other than libraries, as well as a brief review of the main work already done in the area. Production of the bibliography and the plan is a formal condition of proceeding to the dissertation, and these must be approved by the supervisor. Failure to gain this approval will require plans to be submitted until such time as the Department is sure the project is viable.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The MA is administered and run by a Programme Director, Dr Sarah Wright, in conjunction with the other members of the School.

The Programme Director is the person to whom all students with general administrative queries should turn. Other problems should be referred to the student's Personal Advisor (see below). Ann Hobbs in the School Office should be your port of call for general inquiries.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Each MA student is allocated a Personal Advisor from amongst the academic staff of the School. Where the advisor is also the supervisor of the dissertation, you may, if you wish, ask for a new Personal Advisor.

It is the responsibility of the Personal Advisor to see you at the beginning of the first term and as often thereafter as is necessary to discuss pastoral issues that may arise at any stage of the course. At least two sessions per term should be held with the Personal Advisor.

It is the role of your supervisor to ensure that you are made aware of any performance that is placing the passing of the degree in jeopardy.

In conjunction with the supervisor of the dissertation, your Personal Advisor will also be responsible for help and advice with applications for further (e.g. doctoral) study.

- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources are available in the College libraries and in the Computer Centre.
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/postgraduate/facilitiesandacademicsupport.aspx>
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/libraryresourcesandit/home.aspx>
- Students enjoy access to the College Careers Service
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/careers/home.aspx>
- Students enjoy access to all College and University support services, including the Student Counselling Service, the Health Centre, and the Education Support Unit for students with special needs
<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/home.aspx>

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studentlife/supporthealthandwelfare/eso.aspx>

If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty impairment and wish to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the final examination (viva) you should consult Section 16 of the **Research Degree Regulations**

Regulations

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/academicregulations/home.aspx> for details of how to make such a request.

- The College's Graduate School offers courses on academic writing, which can count towards your annual research skills training requirement. Royal Holloway International (RHI) offers additional support for research students whose first language is not English. These courses do not, however, count towards your training requirements. Details of these courses and additional support are available on the **Research Skills Programme** webpage <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/pgstudents/forstudents/gsp/home.aspx>

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The programme consists of the methodology seminars and the sessions with

the individual supervisor, as detailed above. You are encouraged to attend, where possible, any of the Humanities and Arts Research Centre seminars and lectures, and any seminars and lectures relevant to your research held in College and in the rest of the University of London.

Procedure to the Dissertation

The production and submission of the dissertation is conditional on the successful production and submission of the following:

1. A 5,000 word formative assessed essay, to be produced by full-time students during the Autumn term and submitted in Week 11 (by part-time students in Week 22). It is expected that this will include a brief review of the main work already done in the area.
2. A commented bibliography of major sources for the research, and a list of other research resources other than libraries, to be produced at a specified date (for full-time students no later than the first week of the Spring term).
3. A dissertation plan for formal approval, to be submitted at the end of the second term of study for full-time students, or at the end of the first term of the second year of study for part-time students.

Failure to produce and submit either the essay or the commented bibliography or the dissertation plan will mean that the student cannot proceed to the dissertation. The essay and commented bibliography will be given marks, which together constitute 15% of the assessment of this degree. The remaining 85% is made up by the dissertation.

The Dissertation

This is a substantial dissertation of 30,000 minimum, 35,000 words maximum. The dissertation must be word-processed and supported with full references, bibliography, and appropriate documentation.

A summary of marking criteria for dissertations is attached.

Submission deadline

The dissertation will be submitted after 50 weeks of full-time, 102 weeks of part-time study on 17th September 2012. Two copies must be submitted to the Chairman of Examiners firmly bound, each with a cover sheet (supplied by Mrs Ann Hobbs, School Office) including a signed statement to the effect that the dissertation is your own work.

PLAGIARISM

All work submitted by students as part of the requirements for any examination or other assessment must be expressed in their own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgements. Plagiarism – that is, the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as though they were one's own – must be avoided, with particular care to be taken in coursework and essays and reports written in students' own time. Deliberate plagiarism in coursework is as serious as deliberate cheating in an examination. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of others must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Use of another's computer program or data without acknowledgement also constitutes plagiarism. Equally, a summary of another person's ideas or judgments, must be referred to and the work referred to included in the bibliography. Failure to observe these rules may result in an allegation of cheating. Students should therefore consult their tutor or course director if they are in any doubt about what is permissible.

PLAGIARISM

The College takes the issue of plagiarism and other assessment offences very seriously. Details of what constitutes an assessment offence (eg. plagiarism, collusion, falsification) as well as the procedures to be followed for the investigation of an alleged assessment offence and possible outcomes, etc are outlined in the College's **Regulations on Assessment Offences**
[http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Registry/academic_regulations/Examination Assessment Offences.html](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Registry/academic_regulations/Examination_Assessment_Offences.html)

EXAMINING REGULATIONS

Classification will be determined by the Board of Examiners for the MA Programme, dissertation supervisors, and the external examiner. The Board of Examiners will have its final meeting approximately one month after the dissertation submission deadline.

Marking

The dissertations will be marked independently by two examiners who will agree a provisional mark. A viva voce examination will then be held to assist examiners in confirming or revising the provisional marks previously allocated to the dissertation. Vivas are to be held as a standard element of the programme. Marks will, though, not be awarded specifically for performance

in the viva. The viva will remind candidates of the importance of developing transferable skills of oral presentation and argument. The viva is also intended to prevent plagiarism, which is an evident danger in a programme of this nature. There will be one external examiner for the Programme, who will mark any work in his or her wider field of expertise and who will oversee issues of comparability, etc.

Late/Non-submission of work

A dissertation not submitted by the published deadlines will not be accepted and a mark of zero will be recorded. The Course Director (*not* the Supervisor) may exceptionally grant an extension upon receipt of a written request from the student, stating medical or extenuating personal reasons. Notification of any extensions granted must be submitted to the Chairman of Examiners, via Ann Hobbs. Dissertation extensions of more than two weeks will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances, and only by the MA Panel in consultation with the supervisor.

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Students are directed to the Programme Specification for information about classification relating to the course:

[http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/modernlanguages/pg/programmespecification-genericmabyresearch\(french,german,italian,orhispanicstudies\)2011-12.pdf](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/modernlanguages/pg/programmespecification-genericmabyresearch(french,german,italian,orhispanicstudies)2011-12.pdf)

ANONYMOUS MARKING

Work to be assessed will be submitted anonymously, and will be identified by the candidate number of the candidate.

COURSE MONITORING

Feedback from students is an important element in identifying areas for future development. All students are asked to complete a brief questionnaire at the end of the Spring Term: this will ask for opinions on administrative procedures, supervision, course content and delivery.

ILLNESS AND OTHER EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Read these with the [Instructions to Candidates](#) issued by the Examinations and Research Degrees Office and Sections 9 and 16 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#) <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/registry/Examinations/Essential-info.html> and

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/academicregulations/home.aspx>

Academic Appeals

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/academicappeals/home.aspx> or in Section 21 and 22 the **[Research Degree Regulations](#)**

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/academicregulations/home.aspx>

[Complaints Procedures for Students](#)

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/studying/complaintsprocedure.aspx> .

NON-ACADEMIC POLICIES

Please see the **[Codes and Regulations](#)** webpage

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/regulations/home.aspx> which includes information on non-academic policies, regulations, and codes of practice as well as the **[Student Charter](#)**.

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/aboutus/governancematters/studentcharter.aspx>

Health and Safety Information

Code of practice on harassment for students

This can be found on the student home pages under codes and regulations

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/forstudents/documents/pdf/codesandregulations/studentharassment.pdf>

APPENDIX – Assessment Criteria (see programme specification for details of the award of Distinction, Merit and Pass
[http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/modernlanguages/pg/programmespecification-genericmabyresearch\(french,german,italian,orhispanicstudies\)2011-12.pdf](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/modernlanguages/pg/programmespecification-genericmabyresearch(french,german,italian,orhispanicstudies)2011-12.pdf))

90-100

A publishable dissertation, showing outstanding originality, exceptional knowledge of primary and secondary material (including standard works and recent work on the subject), an ability to present the various facets of an argument in an exceptionally coherent and sophisticated fashion and come to independent conclusions, outstanding clarity and organisation of argument. The best possible dissertation that could reasonably be expected from an outstanding candidate.

80-89

An excellent dissertation, showing some originality, thorough and detailed knowledge of primary material and an awareness of issues raised by secondary material, a high degree of clarity and organisation of argument, an ability to present the various facets of an argument in a highly coherent and sophisticated fashion and come to independent conclusions. An exceptional dissertation.

70-79

A very good dissertation, showing penetration of thought, thorough and detailed knowledge of primary and secondary material, clarity and organisation of argument, an ability to present the various facets of an argument in a coherent and sophisticated fashion.

60-69%

A good dissertation, above average, showing evidence of depth of thought, knowledge of primary and an awareness of secondary material, clarity and organisation of argument, an ability to present the various facets of an argument in a coherent and convincing fashion.

50-59%

An average dissertation, showing a fair knowledge of primary and secondary material and evidence of the ability to organise an argument coherently.

40-49

A dissertation showing a poor to mediocre knowledge of primary and secondary material, little evidence of organisation of argument, irrelevance, lacking in depth or critical ability.

30-39

A dissertation showing very poor knowledge of the subject, considerable irrelevance, very little evidence of organisation of argument, substantially lacking in ability.

20-29

A dissertation showing scant knowledge of the subject and/or major irrelevance, no evidence of organisation of argument, seriously lacking in ability.

0-19

A dissertation showing extremely scant knowledge of the subject and (usually) major irrelevance, no discernible argument, severely lacking in ability.