Programme Specification

Programme award and title: BA with Honours in History

UCAS code: V100

SCQF Qualification Level: Level 10  SCQF Credit Value: 484

Educational aims of the programme:
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

The general aim of the various History degree programmes is to provide high-quality undergraduate teaching that progressively develops a range of intellectual and transferable skills and, through the acquisition of the requisite knowledge and understanding, a firm foundation for understanding the contemporary world.

As the choice of programmes indicates, students may study History and Scottish History in a wide range of degree programmes. The undergraduate curriculum is therefore designed to meet the needs of a variety of students, from those for whom History and Scottish History form a major component of their programme, to those who may study the subjects for only one semester or a few semesters. A key educational aim is to provide flexibility and choice, enabling students to adjust their programmes of studies while balancing this with the need to maintain academic coherence within subjects.

The more specific aims of the History programmes are:
- To provide through a study of many different approaches to the past knowledge and understanding of the varieties of historical experience and the complexities of the modern world
- To develop history-specific skills
- To foster a range of transferable skills

Intended programme learning outcomes:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student's personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

Knowledge and understanding
The intention of the History programmes is to give students an understanding of people and processes in the past through a study of the following central requirements:
• Continuity and change over an extended time span
• A variety of different past societies
• An understanding of the variety of approaches to the past, and the interconnections between them
• Understanding some themes and topics in depth
• Contemporary source materials
• Historiographical issues reflected in secondary sources

Subject-specific skills and other attributes
History, like all disciplines, involves the mastery of subject-specific skills:
• An understanding of the problematic nature of the past
• An appreciation of the complexity and the diversity of the past
• An understanding of the limitations of historical knowledge
• A capacity to collect evidence to test or support a historical case
• Awareness of the importance of debate in history
• The formulation and sustaining of a research project or extended piece of work
• The ability to evaluate source material critically

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem-solving abilities) and other attributes
History also imparts generic qualities and abilities, which help prepare students for employment:
The ability to argue a persuasive case
A capacity for working independently and in groups, and for effective time management
Literature searching skills
An ability to analyse and solve problems
A capacity for organisation, clarity and fluency in written expression
Oral communication skills
Inter-personal skills
The opportunity to develop Information Technology skills

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features

To achieve the learning outcomes of the History programmes, teaching and learning strategies have been developed. Programmes draw on a variety of methods of assessment to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes.

Teaching and Learning
Varied teaching methods appropriate to the curriculum are used to deliver the programmes of study. They seek to provide students with the range and depth of learning required by the degree as a whole. They are designed to facilitate the students’ progressive development and acquisition of skills through the degree.

Acquisition of knowledge and understanding, as set out under Learning Outcomes, is achieved through lectures, tutorials (one hour long) and seminars (two or three hours long), together with guided and independent reading, as well as by computer laboratories where appropriate. The concept of continuity and change over time, an understanding of the variety of approaches to the past and the interconnections between them, as well as historiographical issues reflected in secondary sources, are inculcated by a broad range of courses, which are set out in the Curriculum. Understanding some themes and topics in depth and the handling of contemporary source materials are mastered by means of the dissertation and special subject, which are taken in the final honours year.

Intellectual skills are developed by means of lectures, tutorials and seminars, reading, essays and examinations. Students’ written work is regarded as a most significant part of the process. Essays are commented upon by course tutors, who use the departmental report form, and return essays at personal meetings with students. These interviews, as well as the University’s system of course progress reports, are utilised to point out areas of improvement on the students’ part. In semester 6, course HIS9X6, Approaches and Methods in History, is designed to inculcate the subject-specific skills. In the final honours year the compulsory dissertation and the special subject provide students with the opportunity to develop in a higher form than hitherto the intellectual skills already mastered.

The transferable skills are acquired through the media of the tutorials, seminars, reading, essays, examinations and dissertations. Working to deadlines for the submission of essays or of presentations in class helps students to develop self-motivation and self-management. Written work aids the improvement of expression on paper and literature-searching skills. Oral communication skills and inter-personal skills are cultivated in tutorials and seminars, where students contribute presentations of various kinds and participate in focused discussions.

Assessment
Assessment is linked to the teaching and learning process. In line with the University’s policy of periodic testing, assessment of knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, and transferable skills is carried out through a variety of forms: essays; examinations (seen and unseen); dissertations; and oral assessment. In no course does the examination account for more than 50% of the total assessment and some courses have no examination at all.

Knowledge and Understanding are assessed through the medium of full-length essays and examinations. In semesters 1 to 6 the various forms of written work test all skills. Whilst the use of contemporary materials is not formally assessed as such in all the modules in semesters 1 to 6, some courses do have essay choices on primary documents. Class presentations, too, help in the evaluation of historical understanding. In the final year the compulsory dissertation in particular tests the ability of the students to show mastery of a mass of complex material as well as the use of contemporary source materials.

The mastery of intellectual skills is tested through the full panoply of assessment procedures. Students are able to demonstrate these skills through written assignments, on which feedback is given by means of the essay report form and an individual interview. These are utilised to point out areas of improvement on the student’s part.
Examinations allow students to display the use of their skills under pressure. The skill of formulating and sustaining a research project is tested in the final year dissertation.

Transferable skills are measured by various forms of assessment. The ability to argue a persuasive case, literature searching skills, an ability to analyse and solve problems, a capacity for organisation, clarity and fluency in written expression are all assessed by the course work, presentations, seen and unseen examinations, and the dissertation. Oral communication is assessed in every course and accounts for 10% of the final course grade. Effective time management is inculcated by the University system of penalties for the late submission of essays. Information Technology skills are measured only in course HIS9G6: Social History of the Victorian City: Computer Approaches. Inter-personal skills are not directly assessed.

Reference Points
The following reference points were used in drafting the programme specifications:
- History Benchmark Statement
- Teaching Quality Assessment Report, 1995
- Quality Assurance Agency Subject Review, 2002
- Departmental Reviews
- External Examiners’ Reports
- University Teaching and Learning Policies

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<th>Professional/statutory body accreditation or recognition:</th>
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Further details:
Entry requirements: http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/undergrad/entry_reqs/index.php
Programme structure: http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/
Relevant Subject Benchmark statement: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: http://www.scqf.org.uk/the_framework.asp
Introduction/revision date: