

## Programme Specification 2019-20

### MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

<b>Awarding body</b>	University of Cambridge
<b>Teaching institution</b>	Department of History and Philosophy of Science
<b>Accreditation details</b>	None
<b>Name of final award</b>	Master of Philosophy
<b>Programme title</b>	History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine
<b>HECoS code(s)</b>	100307 (History of science) 100338 (philosophy of science)
<b>Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)</b>	History/Philosophy/History of Science, Technology and Medicine
<b>Qualifications framework level</b>	7 (Masters)
<b>Date specification was produced</b>	July 2019

#### Educational aims

The M.Phil is offered by the Department of History and Philosophy of Science as a full-time period of research and introduces students to research skills and specialist knowledge. Its main aims are:

- to give students with relevant training at first-degree level the opportunity to carry out focused research in History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine under close supervision;
- to give students the opportunity to acquire or develop skills and expertise relevant to their research interests;
- to enable students to acquire a critical and well informed understanding of the roles of the sciences in society; and
- to help students intending to go on to doctoral work to acquire the requisite research skills and to prepare a well-planned and focused PhD proposal.

By:

- i) giving students the experience and guidance necessary for them to be able to formulate a realistic research proposal, and to prepare written work based on such a proposal to a strict timetable;
- ii) introducing students to relevant research resources, including the department's Research Methods handbook which is available on the HPS website;
- iii) giving students the experience of presenting their own work and discussing the issues that arise from it with an audience of their peers and senior members of the department;
- iv) providing lectures, supervisions and research seminars in a range of technical/specialist subjects central to research in the different areas of History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine, and giving students the opportunity to base some of their essays or dissertation on such teaching.

Research topics must be chosen from the following subject areas:

1. Ancient, medieval and early modern sciences
2. Ancient, medieval and early modern medicine
3. Sciences in the age of empire, c. 1750–1900

4. Modern medicine and biomedical sciences
5. Modern sciences
6. Metaphysics, epistemology and the sciences
7. Ethics and politics of medicine and the sciences
8. Philosophy of the physical sciences
9. Philosophy of biology and the life sciences
10. Philosophy of social and cognitive sciences

### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will have:

#### Knowledge and Understanding:

- 1 developed a deeper knowledge of their chosen areas of History and Philosophy of Science and Medicine, and of the critical debates within them;
- 2 acquired a conceptual understanding that enables the evaluation of current research and methodologies;
- 3 formed a critical view of the roles of the sciences in society.

#### Skills and other attributes

- 4 acquired or consolidated historiographic, linguistic, technical and ancillary skills appropriate for research in their chosen area;
- 5 demonstrated independent judgement, based on their own research;
- 6 presented their own ideas in a public forum and learned to contribute constructively within an international environment.

#### Teaching and Learning

(1) and (2) are developed through:

- personal study;
- participation in the weekly MPhil seminar, the departmental seminar, and other seminars, graduate training workshops and reading groups;
- attendance at lectures;
- regular one-to-one supervisions;
- general supervision of the student's studies by the MPhil Manager, and in the case of students intending to go on to the PhD, by the Departmental Director of Graduate Studies.

(3) through:

- basic research methods are taught through the graduate training programme and through supervision.
- students requiring Latin are directed to the relevant classes in the Classics Faculty and take part in the Department's Latin Therapy group;
- students requiring other linguistic skills are directed to the relevant University Language Centre classes;
- students working on scientific instruments receive specialist training from the Whipple Museum Curator and Museum Staff;

(4) is developed through personal study and individual supervision for the essays and dissertation;

(5) is developed through preparation for and feedback from presentation of papers at weekly seminar.

#### Assessment

(1) to (3) are assessed through three essays, and a dissertation.

(4) is assessed by the essays and dissertation;

(5) is assessed on the basis of the student's presentation of their own work and their comments on set readings, at the weekly MPhil seminar.

### **Programme structure**

The MPhil is a 9 month full-time programme and involves minimal formal teaching: students are integrated into the research culture of the Department by joining seminars and reading groups. They should also attend the Department's graduate training programme. Informal opportunities to develop research skills also exist through mentoring by fellow students and members of staff.

The MPhil seminars are the core teaching resource for this course. In the first part of year these seminars are led by different senior members of the Department and focus on selected readings. During the rest of the year the seminars provide opportunities for MPhil students to present their own work.

Students are encouraged to attend the lectures, research seminars, workshops and reading groups that make the Department a hive of intellectual activity. The Department also offers graduate training workshops, which focus on key research, presentation, publication and employment skills.

### **Assessment methods**

The examination is divided into two parts: three essays of no more than 5,000 words each and a dissertation of up to 12,000 words.

The three essays must cover a range of topics and, taken together, must show evidence of a broad knowledge of history, philosophy and sociology of science, technology and medicine; they are not required to present original research. In order to pass, the dissertation must be clearly written, take account of previously published work on the subject, and represent a contribution to learning. It must show evidence of independent research.

The following mark scheme is employed in the Department:

- 80 and above Starred Distinction
- 75-79 Distinction
- 70-74 boundary for PhD
- 65-69 High Performance
- 60-64 Pass
- 59 and below Fail

The minimum pass level for the examination is the equivalent of Class II.I in Part II of a Tripos, extrapolated for one year of graduate study.

Candidates are required to pass in each part of the examination separately (i.e. the essays, which together account for 50% of the marks and the dissertation, which accounts for 50% of the marks), except in the following special circumstances:

- (a) a candidate whose failure in the essays is marginal should be allowed to submit a dissertation, and a *high* performance in the dissertation may be taken into account by the Degree Committee in determining their recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies;

- (b) where a candidate's failure in the dissertation is *marginal*, a *high performance* in the essays may be taken into consideration by the Degree Committee in determining their recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies.
- (c) Many MPhil graduates carry on to read for a PhD. A first class mark in the MPhil is normally necessary for continuation as a PhD student in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science.

### **Student support**

The Department conforms to the University's Code of Practice for Research Students.

All students are members of a College as well as the Department and have access to learning support from both College and University. The course is overseen by the MPhil Manager who is the overall supervisor for each student and who gives advice on planning the year's work. Individual supervisors are assigned to the essays and dissertation.

Progress is monitored through the three assessed essays which are marked almost straight after they have been submitted and on which the Degree Committee via the MPhil Manager will give feedback. The Department's Director of Graduate Studies can also offer advice. The College Tutor for Graduates will play a role in induction, support and guidance.

A programme of graduate training workshops helps students to develop research expertise, employability and transferrable skills. An MPhil Handbook is available on the departmental website, which includes an unofficial guide produced by students themselves.

The Department's learning resources include a library which constitutes the main working collection for MPhil students; a computer facility for graduate students; and a Museum of the History of Science.

Further information about student support may be obtained on request to the Department.

### **Management of teaching quality and standards**

The University ensures high standards of teaching and learning in the following ways:

- The completion of Annual Quality Updates by each Faculty and Department, to enable central overview of provision and assist in dissemination of good practice
- Scrutiny of the reports of External Examiners for all teaching programmes
- Encouraging student engagement at both the local level, through involvement in Faculty and Departmental Committees, and at a central level by participation in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)
- Holding reflective, centrally-coordinated, Learning and Teaching Reviews for all teaching institutions every six years to explore provision and suggest constructive courses of action
- Mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of staff, and encouraging staff participation in personal development programmes

Research Environment is rated at 100% and feedback states that the Department provides an exemplary research environment, in particular in the number of active research groups, the level and use of research income and the provisions for postgraduate students.

The pass rate in all courses approaches 100%. Around a quarter of the Department's MPhil students go on to study for a PhD and around 80% of the Department's PhD students go on to work in the field of HPS.

## Graduate employability

The Careers Service maintains links with relevant employers and takes into account employer needs and opinions in the services which it provides for students. The Careers Service also allocates a Careers Adviser to each College, faculty and department to act as a point of contact.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academic year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the *Reporter*. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academic year.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>