

MSc Human Osteology and Palaeopathology Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/human-osteology-and-palaeopathology/>

Academic Year: 2021/22

Degree Awarding Body: **The University of Bradford**

Target award: **Degree of Master of Science [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level 7]**

Interim awards: **Postgraduate Diploma [FHEQ Level 7]; Postgraduate Certificate [FHEQ Level 7]**

Programme Admissions: **September**

Programme duration: **1 year full-time or 2+ years part-time**

Date last approved by Faculty Board: **June 2021**

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Minor Modifications Schedule

1. December 2020: Updated for temporary January start
2. February 2021: Specification made accessible
3. June 2021: Updates to delivery periods to revert to Sept start for 2021 intake. Added commercial osteology route. Updated Admissions and Study Abroad. Specification reformatted

Introduction

The MSc Human Osteology and Palaeopathology emphasises the study of archaeological human remains within their funerary context. It builds upon the School of Archaeology and Forensic Sciences' extensive research expertise in biological anthropology, funerary archaeology, molecular archaeology and archaeological biogeochemistry.

Archaeology engages the entire human past in all its temporal and spatial dimensions. It is fundamental to our understanding of how we evolved, and our communities developed, and how we study, preserve and interpret our past. At Bradford, our distinctive approach emphasises the integration of the natural and physical sciences in this enquiry.

In accordance with the University's mission, 'Making knowledge work', the School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences aims to provide excellence in a comprehensive range of archaeological topics, with emphasis on both teaching ('Excellent' in the last Subject Review) and research (ranked 7th place nationally for 4* research and 3rd place nationally for research impact, REF 2014), believing in the two activities to be mutually dependent.

The programme can be used either as vocational training or as a foundation from which to commence further research. The programme is offered on a full-time basis or part-time over up to 5 years. Individual modules are available to candidates wishing to enhance their specialist knowledge in a particular area. Students can choose to undertake a substantial

individual research dissertation, either from a choice of topics or developed from their own research interests or they can alternatively select a non-dissertation route which includes a substantial research and writing assignment that requires advanced level academic writing skills and a population level analysis that meets the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Management of Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) and associated professional standards (by CIfA, and BABAO).

Among the distinctive features of this programme is access to a world-renowned collection of reference material and hands-on experience in the School's laboratories and the Faculty's Integrated Learning Centre for Life Sciences. The Human Remains teaching team won a Vice Chancellor's Teaching Award in 2014 and we have excellent PTES results (90% student satisfaction, MSc HOP, 2015).

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

- Provide graduates in archaeology, anthropology, biosciences and related subjects with advanced practical and theoretical instruction in the analysis and interpretation of human remains within their archaeological and/or forensic context, through the integration of biological and contextual evidence.
- Provide a flexible programme of study that reflects areas of staff expertise.
- Encourage development of independent learning skills, by providing a supportive, structured environment.
- Develop high-level subject knowledge and understanding and provide training in discipline skills to enable graduates to pursue further research or careers in biological anthropology.
- Develop critical and analytical problem-solving skills and personal transferable skills to prepare students for careers in non-cognate fields.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 award of Postgraduate Certificate, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the theory and practice in the osteological analysis of skeletonised human remains by appreciating the relevant underlying anatomical, biomechanical and taphonomic principles.
2. Use appropriate methods and techniques within human osteology and palaeopathology and interpret the generated data.
3. Understand and apply methods and techniques in the wider context of the discipline.
4. Possess advanced skills in the identification, description and recording of human remains.
5. Critically evaluate professional literature in a chosen area and related disciplines

6. Communicate conclusions in writing and orally to specialist and non-specialist audiences, working effectively in groups, manage and appraise their own learning and research.
7. Manage their time effectively when undertaking complex and extended tasks.
8. Confidently use information technology to critically review, synthesise and carry forward professional research in a specialised area.
9. Identify individual learning needs and carry out an achievable learning plan to meet them.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 award of Postgraduate Diploma, students will be able to:

10. Confidently identify faunal remains.
11. Possess advanced skills in the analysis and interpretation of pathological conditions.
12. Confidently interrogate clinical data when investigating palaeopathology.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 Degree award of Master, students will be able to:

13. Design and complete a substantial work of independent study.

Curriculum

The programme is offered full-time (1 year) and part-time (up to 5 years). It comprises core compulsory modules that contain a blend of theoretical and practical applications in the analysis of archaeological human and animal remains in Semester One (Musculo-skeletal and Comparative Anatomy, Analysis of Human Remains), complemented by Professional Development, which allows students to develop an individual learning plan and programme of study (10+10 linked module).

A significant element of Semester Two is the 30-credit module on pathological alterations in human remains (Palaeopathology). Optional modules provide opportunities for students to acquaint themselves with a wide range of analytical approaches to the study of human remains (Archaeometry) or an appreciation of the mortuary evidence through time (Grave Concerns).

For those students who choose to complete the programme through the research project (dissertation route); the semester two component of Professional Development prepares students for their research project. The final element of this programme route is a dissertation (approx. 15,000 words).

For those students who choose to complete the programme through the non-dissertation route; the semester two component of Professional Development provides the opportunity to practice independent source-based research, for example by writing a professional quality briefing document. During the summer students complete an osteological assessment and full skeletal report in the Advanced Skeletal Report module, following the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Management of Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) and associated professional standards (e.g. by CIfA and BBAO).

The time-bound nature of the module replicates the pressures of a challenging commercial environment. In addition, they complete an extended research essay on a topic of their choice (Osteology Research Paper).

The curriculum may change, subject to the University's programme approval, monitoring and review procedures.

Taught component

Students study 100 core credits and select 20 credits of options in Semester 2:

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Module Credit	FHEQ Level	Study Period
ARC7008-B	Analysis of Human Remains	Core	20	7	1
ARC7037-C	Musculo-skeletal and Comparative Anatomy	Core	30	7	1
ARC7041-B	Professional Development	Core	20	7	1&2
ARC7029-C	Palaeopathology	Core	30	7	2
ARC7035-B	Archaeometry	Option	20	7	2
ARC7036-B	Grave Concerns: Investigating the Archaeology of Death and Burial	Option	20	7	2

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes (LO1-9). Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes (LO1-12).

Independent study component

Students study 60 credits in Semester 3 as an extended dissertation or a skeletal report plus extended research essay depending on the route they have selected:

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Module Credit	FHEQ Level	Study Period
ARC7034-E	Dissertation	Option	60	7	3
ARC7042-B	Osteology Research Paper	Option	20	7	3
ARC7043-D	Advanced Skeletal Report	Option	40	7	3

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed at least 180 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes (LO1-13).

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The teaching and learning strategy takes into consideration the learning outcomes, the nature of the subject, and the need for students to take responsibility for their own learning as part of this advanced taught programme.

The programme draws heavily on areas of world-leading research expertise and facilities in the School of Archaeological and Forensic Science. The thematic modules are delivered in a combination of formal lectures, student-led intensive seminars/tutorials and extensive practical instruction.

The degree progresses through a spiral curriculum, with each teaching / assessment block developing and building on prior learning. The module in Professional Development starts by guiding students to identify their own learning needs and the resources to address them and goes on to prepare students for their research project, including planning of dissertation research (dissertation route) or prepares them for the non-dissertation route where they compile a professional briefing document. This module encompasses research/project design, time keeping, ethics, and health and safety.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is designed to support the learning outcomes of each specific module. It uses a wide range of assessment methods, including coursework (critiques, laboratory reports, research design, professional briefs, essays), exams (practical tests), and oral presentations (group and individual).

Assessment elements are regularly structured in a way that allows MSc candidates to benefit from formative learning and formative assessment towards summative assessment. Formative assessments are embedded in the first semester modules Analysis of Human remains and Musculoskeletal and Comparative Anatomy, to help students transition from undergraduate to postgraduate learning.

Written assessment will consist of summative skeletal reports and formative assessment of skills acquisition via in-class or online student presentations/ discussion on bone identification. Coursework (e.g. laboratory reports, critiques, worksheets) is geared towards demonstrating relevant knowledge, understanding and professional skills in principal approaches to the analysis and interpretation of archaeological human remains and the application of scientific methods or archaeological theory. Communication skills are tested in both written and oral form in several modules.

The final element of the programme is a c.15,000-word dissertation or an extensive, population-level skeletal report (c. 8000 words) plus an extended research essay (Osteology Research Paper). It is expected that students who successfully complete their dissertation route will be fully prepared to undertake research at MPhil or PhD level; non-dissertation route graduates would meet all aspects of the CIFA competency matrix for human osteology and are particularly well prepared for a career in commercial osteoarchaeology.

Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations which are available at: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations/>

Study Abroad

This programme is not eligible for in-session Study Abroad opportunities. Students are welcome to explore available short-form and summer opportunities via our International Opportunities team: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/exchanges/current-students/>

Admission Requirements

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to thrive at university and beyond.

Academic Admission Requirements

The standard entry requirements for this postgraduate programme are that all applicants have at least a Bachelor's degree with honours classified as lower second-class (2:2, or equivalent) in a related discipline. Other relevant qualifications and previous experience will also be considered for admission to the programme.

Admission will be judged on an individual basis for overseas students, at an equivalent level to UK entry requirements. For North American students, normally a GPA of at least 3.0 on a scale of 4.0 is required, or an equivalent. Applicants with a lower second-class degree, or equivalent (e.g. 2.5 GPA in North America), with demonstrable relevant experience will also be considered.

Admissions are made on the basis of demonstrated ability, qualifications, experience, references, and, occasionally, interviews. A completed application form, references, official transcripts, or a list of programmes/modules and grades/marks stamped by the applicant's undergraduate department or student registry (where these are relied on for admission) are required of all applicants.

Language Competency

As the programme is taught in English, all applicants are required to have GCSE Grade 4 (national grade C) or above in English Language. Alternative RQF Level 2 qualifications such as Key Skills are also acceptable if equivalent. For international students, the standard postgraduate English language requirements for the University apply and these are listed at: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/>

Access and Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are welcome from students with non-traditional qualifications, or with significant personal and professional experience.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme: www.bradford.ac.uk/teaching-quality/prior-learning/

The University of Bradford has always welcomed applications from disabled students. To discuss adjustments or to find out more about support and access, you may wish to contact the Disability Service before you apply: www.bradford.ac.uk/disability/before/