

Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For students starting in Academic Year 2024/25

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	MRes Philosophy
Award type	Taught Masters
Mode of study	Full-time Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	One year full-time / two years part-time
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	N/A
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	<p>UK students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2024/25 is £9,800</p> <p>Part-time fee for 2024/25 is £5,400*</p> <p>International students:</p> <p>Full-time fee for 2024/25 is £19,500</p>

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

2. Overview of the Programme

The educational aims of the MRes in Philosophy are to provide students with an intensive period of study in which they can engage with specific issues in a systematic and disciplined manner, and for students to gain a thorough grounding in the theoretical and practical issues underpinning study and research in Philosophy. Given the nature of an MRes programme, particular emphasis is put on research: with a high component of dedicated research training modules designed to equip students with additional skills required to carry out research in Philosophy and a 20,000-word dissertation to be completed by the end of the programme.

The modules in the School of Social, Political and Global Studies (SPGS) are taught by research specialists, offering students their subject-specific knowledge and delivering the programme in engaging ways. The programmes will provide students with the opportunity to develop their own research and study interests, while also providing students with access to learning about a broader range of important issues in Philosophy.

This programme offers students the opportunity to produce a substantial piece of independent research and

writing, and to develop research skills in Philosophy. It forms an excellent foundation to doctoral (PhD) work. It is also ideal for students who wish to undertake an independent research project in Philosophy for personal and professional development. It encourages practical, analytic and critical research skills and project management capacity relevant to a variety of professional and intellectual contexts.

3. Aims of the programme

The MRes in Philosophy offers students the opportunity to produce a substantial piece of independent research and writing under the supervision of specialised scholars, and to undertake systematic training in research skills in Philosophy. Students will plan, research and write an extended dissertation, locating their respective topic within the context of relevant debates within Philosophy and the social sciences and humanities more generally. The course is an ideal preparation for students who wish to proceed to doctoral research in Philosophy, and also develops practical, critical and analytic research skills that can be deployed in a variety of professional and intellectual contexts. It also provides students with the opportunities to enhance their oral and written communication skills, as well as their team-working and individual organisational capabilities.

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- discuss and comment upon important issues in core areas of philosophy, including metaphilosophy.
- develop advanced understanding of a range of philosophical traditions.
- critically reflect upon different approaches to philosophy associated with various movements in the past and present, and appreciate their attendant methodologies.

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- locate the place of a specific research topic within current debates and methodologies within philosophy and social sciences and humanities more generally.
- apply key research methodologies and research strategies in order to develop their own subject-specific interests and to undertake independent research work
- construct, develop and write an extended dissertation based on independent research.
- understand and critically use sources and resources available for the dissertation and the methodological debates relevant to it.

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- manage the project of an extended dissertation, including defining and planning the project, meeting deadlines, and recording and reflecting on outcomes.
- manage their own time effectively.
- develop their communication skills (written and oral).
- enhance their group-work skills.

The Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical awareness**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development

goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

The MRes in Philosophy is delivered through taught sessions for each module, and comprises lectures, large and small group work and guided independent study.

The taught sessions are critical to the delivery of the programmes as they provide a forum to:

- Develop a structure for the critical analysis of debates around specific issues of interests within philosophy;
- Pursue further various key elements within the programme of study;
- Share ideas with tutors and fellow students;
- Develop further, in a supportive atmosphere, research skills, including knowledge of significant methodologies within Philosophy and more generally social sciences and humanities;
- Learn co-operatively in a general forum for active learning, discussion and debate.

Further support is provided through self-study materials that comprise both traditional text-based and electronic resources that are accessed through the Keele Learning Environment; this latter resource will also be used to enhance student support during the period of the course.

An innovative feature of this programme is the module 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences', which is a compulsory core for the programme. This is a year-long module. In the first part, students become familiar with significant methodological issues within social sciences and humanities more generally. In the second part of the module, students undertake guided reflection on the methodological issues relevant to their dissertation topic.

The second core module, 'Metaphilosophy' enables students to reflect on, and gain knowledge and experience of, the nature of philosophy and the main methodological issues relevant for philosophical debates. In addition to the 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' Module, the 'Metaphilosophy' Module will enable students to gain further knowledge of research methods in philosophy, which is an important learning outcome of the programme.

A further innovative feature is the compulsory core module 'Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy'. This module encourages students, through independent work guided by the dissertation supervisor, to develop independent strategies for managing their own academic interests and research. Through this module, students start research in a topic which will represent some of the background for their dissertation. Together with the 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' Module, this Module contributes to the research training provided to students as part of the MRes Programme.

6. Teaching Staff

Teaching staff in SPGS and other schools, who have research interests in philosophy or at the intersection of philosophy and other disciplines are available to contribute to teaching on the MRes in Philosophy, as either convenors of modules, contributors to team-taught courses, or as prospective supervisors for individual dissertations.

The staff group has extensive experience of teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and at conducting supervision at Masters and PhD level, in universities in the UK and continental Europe. All of the teaching staff contributing to the MRes have completed training as part of their induction to University teaching. All are members or associates of the Higher Education Academy and/or have a formal teaching qualification.

Further information about the Philosophy staff teaching on the programme can be found at: www.keele.ac.uk/spgs/staff/. Political philosophers from the Politics and IR Programmes or social philosophers from Sociology might also contribute to teaching and supervision.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

All students take four compulsory modules (for a total of 90 credits): Metaphilosophy (30 credits); Philosophy of the Social Sciences I and II (30 credits); Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy (30 credits). All these modules are dedicated MRes modules designed to equip the students with additional skills in research.

In order to graduate with an MRes degree, students must undertake a dissertation on a topic in Philosophy. This is part of the 'Dissertation' Module (90 credits).

There will be two entry points: September and January.

Full-time students will begin the academic year in the Autumn Semester and complete it in the Summer Semester. Students joining the programme in January will begin the academic year in the Spring Semester and complete it in the Autumn Semester.

Autumn semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Metaphilosophy (30 Credits)	Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy (30 Credits)	Dissertation (90 Credits: 20,000 words)
Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Part I) (15 Credits)	Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Part II) (15 Credits)	

Pathways for students registered on the part-time MRes

Part-time students registered on the MRes will typically take the four compulsory modules in the autumn and spring semesters of two academic years and will complete the Dissertation Module in the summer of the second academic year.

The part-time MRes structure in tabular form

There will be two entry points: September and January.

Part-time students will begin the academic year in the Autumn Semester and complete it in the Summer Semester. Students joining the programme in January will begin the academic year in the Spring Semester and complete it in the Autumn Semester.

Autumn Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Year One		
Metaphilosophy (30 Credits)	Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy (30 Credits)	
Year Two		
Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Part I) (15 Credits)	Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Part II) (15 Credits)	Dissertation (90 credits: 20,000 words)

Module Lists

Level 7

All students take four compulsory core modules (for a total of 90 credits):

- Metaphilosophy (30 credits)
- Philosophy of the Social Sciences I and II (30 credits)
- Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy (30 credits)

All these modules are dedicated MRes modules designed to equip the students with additional skills in research.

In order to graduate with an MRes degree, students must also undertake a 20,000-word dissertation on a topic in Philosophy. This is part of the 'Dissertation' Module (90 credits).

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Metaphilosophy	PHI-40004	30	Semester 1
Philosophy of the Social Sciences (I)	PHI-40009	15	Semester 1
Dissertation - Philosophy 90	PHI-40002	90	Semester 1-2
Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy	PHI-40006	30	Semester 2
Philosophy of the Social Sciences (II)	PHI-40011	15	Semester 2

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Learning Outcome) used
Demonstrate systematic knowledge of and critically evaluate advanced scholarship and recent research in philosophical themes, issues, theories and debates, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline	All modules	Essays, dissertation
Demonstrate systematic knowledge of, and critically evaluate, the methodologies applicable to research and advanced scholarship in philosophy	Metaphilosophy Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy Dissertation	Essays, dissertation
Demonstrate systematic knowledge of, and critically evaluate, the methodologies applicable to research and advanced scholarship in philosophy, and social sciences and humanities more generally	Philosophy of the Social Sciences Metaphilosophy	Essays
Systematically and creatively assess the relationships between methods of and approaches to knowledge generation and interpretations of that knowledge in philosophical themes, issues, theories and debates	Metaphilosophy Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy	Essays
Demonstrate self-direction and originality in employing strategies to address philosophical problems, issues, theories or debates	All modules	Essays, dissertation
Systematically evaluate complex issues and critically evaluate arguments about a chosen research topic or philosophy in general	All modules	Essays, dissertation
Communicate appropriately through use of higher level writing skills, aimed at specialist and non-specialist audiences, with appropriate use of academic referencing	All modules	Essays, dissertation

Communicate appropriately, convincingly and fluently, in oral presentation	Metaphilosophy Philosophy of the Social Sciences Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy	Presentations Contributions to class debates
Systematically apply research or methodological skills and knowledge in order further to advance knowledge of a chosen research area	Dissertation	Dissertation

8. Final and intermediate awards

MRes in Philosophy

A student can be awarded an MRes if they complete 180 credits at Level 7 including the dissertation.

Postgraduate Certificate in Philosophy

A student can be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate when they have successfully accumulated 90 credits at Level 7. This could be achieved by completing the three compulsory modules of the programme.

Dissertation credits are excluded from the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

9. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

The programme is primarily assessed through written work, mainly essays on particular topics and the dissertation. The written work enables assessment of the student's understanding of the module content, of the student's analytical abilities, as well as evaluation of particular debates, arguments or ideas. Some of the essays and the dissertation facilitate assessment of the student's ability to select, apply and evaluate appropriate research methodologies to a chosen field of study.

The essay for Part I of the 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' Module will be an opportunity to discuss a methodological school or an issue related to a particular methodology in social sciences and humanities more generally. The essay for 'Metaphilosophy' will focus on a specific methodological issue in philosophy, particularly an issue concerning the nature of philosophy. Assessment for these modules will be an opportunity to address subject knowledge concerning research methods, but also generic study skills issues such as referencing, quoting, selecting relevant material, answering the question set, and any issues of written English that may arise.

Students are specifically supported in the preparation of their dissertation by Part II of the module 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' and by the module 'Individual Research Orientation in Philosophy'. In the second part of the 'Philosophy of the Social Sciences' Module, students will focus on the specific topic of their dissertation and will reflect with the guidance from their prospective supervisor on the methodological issues raised by it. The 'Individual Research Orientation' Module will enable students to carry out guided research on a background issue for their dissertation.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

10. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/>

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director.

The University's guidelines on this can be found here:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

13. How are students supported on the programme?

Each student is allocated a member of the programme team as an Academic Mentor. Meetings are arranged for the mentee to meet with their tutor, normally face to face, to review overall progress. Extra meetings can be scheduled following the completion of the formative assessment in the first semester in order to discuss any issues that arise.

A named tutor will also be available to provide pastoral support for students registered on the programme.

Students are given written feedback on their written work, and are encouraged to meet with their module tutor to discuss the feedback. Students can also consult their Academic Mentor about any feedback or any academic issue about which they require further clarification.

Students whose first language is not English are offered language classes, facilities and services by the University's Language Centre. In addition to credit-bearing modules on English for academic study, students also have access to one-to-one tutorials for individual help and advice, and to a wealth of resources for self-study and practice.

14. Learning Resources

The main body of the course is delivered through self-study materials, which comprise mainly traditional text-based resources available in the library and through e-journals, supported by, where appropriate, electronic resources accessed through the Keele Learning Environment.

15. Other Learning Opportunities

Each academic year, SPGS and Philosophy in particular organise a series of research seminars at which researchers present their work. Students are encouraged to attend in order to access current research in a range of areas. The programmes for this are published in the autumn and new year. SPGS students are also able to attend the renowned World Affairs series, at which nationally and internationally recognised speakers give lectures on international and political topics. Other lectures and research seminars take place within the School and the Research Centres within the University that may also prove interesting for the students.

Of particular interest for the MRes in Philosophy students are the events organised by the Forum for Philosophical Research and the Keele-Oxford-St Andrews Kantian (KOSAK) Research Centre. The Forum and KOSAK are research centres for philosophy, which organise the Royal Institute of Philosophy Invited Lecture Series, the postgraduate research seminars series, the 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau' Annual Lecture and Conference, the Summer School in Methods in Normative Political Philosophy, reading groups and other special lectures. Students will be kept informed of such events via their Keele email addresses.

16. Additional Costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring,

review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

18. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 11 June 2024

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2023/24	JONATHAN HEAD	18 April 2023	
1	2022/23	JONATHAN HEAD	11 August 2022	