

Annex A: Approval of New Research Programmes

1.1 Award and Title

MA by Research (History)

1.2 Length and Mode of Registration

See also **1.9d** below

1.3 Entry Requirements

A candidate should normally have a 2:1 degree or higher. However, candidates who have not followed a conventional education path will be considered if they are deemed of a satisfactory standard by the potential supervisory panel and Director of Research.

1.4 Anticipated Total Student Registrations

1.5 Programme Management

Overall administration and management is the responsibility of the Director of Research. The Director of Research devolves direct supervision to the supervisory panel. The Director of Research is a member of the Faculty Research Committee. Issues needing wider discussion or development can therefore be raised in these committees.

1.6 Proposed Start Date

Academic year 2003-04

1.7 Opportunity and Need

The interpretation of the past is dependent on dynamic and rigorous research and reappraisal of sources. The School of History is committed to providing students of quality capable of undertaking such a task.

Historical research does not provide a direct career path, however it offers many advantages to students and employers. It provides the following skills:

- 1) an ability for clear expression both oral and written
- 2) putting forward arguments and ideas in a concise manner
- 3) gathering and assessing material, facts, ideas and arguments
- 4) the ability to draw conclusions from research and to synthesise complex ideas

Such qualities are much in demand in the modern information and skills based economy.

History Research degrees open the gateway to a career as an academic, but are also relevant to careers in the Civil Service, archival and museum work, journalism, commercial and business worlds.

The departmental plan commits the School to develop further its postgraduate numbers and offerings in order to develop the research quality of the department. This is within the remit of the University plan, which states: 'We intend to continue to offer postgraduate opportunities of quality across our subject range'.

1.8 Aims and Objectives

Aims:

- 1) To provide students with the ability to demonstrate a systematic knowledge, and critical awareness of the current issues debated and explored within their specific area of the discipline of History.
- 2) To provide a comprehensive understanding of the techniques applicable to the research of Historical matters.
- 3) To provide students with the ability to research independently and instil the confidence to formulate their own conclusions.
- 4) To provide students with advanced skills in dealing with primary and secondary sources.
- 5) To provide students with the skills to choose between and deploy differing methodological approaches with confidence.

Objectives:

- 1) Students with the ability to deal with complex issues in a systematic and creative way, allowing them to make sound and defensible judgements and conclusions. They will be able to communicate these findings in an accessible manner to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- 2) Students capable of planning, undertaking and investigating problems and issues independently and with confidence.
- 3) Students with the skills necessary to advance knowledge at a high level.
- 4) Students with skills and qualities capable of transferring to many fields of employment.
- 5) Students with the ability and confidence to make decisions, assess complex situations and devise robust solutions.

(Specifications in agreement with the relevant QAA statements. See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI/default.asp#annex1>)

1.9 Programme Outline

A brief overview of the core components of the programme (eg: Research Training, School Seminars) to include:

1.9a Students will be expected to attend and complete HI863 *Methods and Interpretations in Historical Research*. This module introduces students to advanced approaches to History and tests them via coursework assignments.

1.9b Incorporated into the School's HI863 *Methods and Interpretations in Historical Research* module are elements introducing students to the library, UELT, presentation and organisational skills.

1.9c Students are also encouraged to attend the Faculty's Postgraduate Training Programme (see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/human/pg/index.html>).

1.9d The MA by Research is normally conducted over one or two academic years and is a degree in its own right. Candidates looking to build on their research can apply for upgrading to MPhil. This process will be activated only if both supervisory panel and student are in agreement that the case is a strong one. Candidates are required to submit a sample of work to a panel convened by the Director of Research. This panel studies the work and interviews the candidate before making a final decision. Students are also

required to successfully complete HI863 *Methods and Interpretations in Historical Research* in order to upgrade. Additional time/writing-up period can be granted by the Dean if supported by evidence from the candidate, supervisory panel and Director of Research.

1.9e Assessment is by 40,000 word thesis submitted to both internal and external examiners.

Under current conventions examiners have the right to refer an unsatisfactory MA for improvement and resubmission within a set time; to recommend the award of PG Diploma; to recommend that no award be made. These regulations are given at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/registry/quality/regulations/research/mares.html> 7.4

1.10 Approved Supervisors

Appointment of supervisors is overseen by the Director of Research, in line with the Faculty of Humanities Code of Practice (www.kent.ac.uk/human/pg/codeofpractice.html). The Director of Research takes into account the research profile, teaching and administrative loads of staff before passing on applications. All research students are allocated a supervisory panel of specialists (consisting of first and second or co-supervisor), who comply with clearly defined roles.

Internal candidates often make informal contact with potential supervisors during the third year of undergraduate study and research plans are sketched out. This contact often improves the initial proposal but it is not axiomatic that the staff member who has assisted will be appointed supervisor, as the final decision is with the Director of Research.

1.11 Research Environment

The School of History has a lively research environment which includes 21 research active staff from a total of 22. In addition there are 2 associated research staff. The School has its own dedicated postgraduate room which includes six networked computers and a laser printer.

The university library contains a wide array of research materials, both primary and secondary. These include a large newspaper and journal archive, an important film, newsreel and documentary collection, one of the country's most important cartoon archives, and an impressive collection of British governmental and official publications. In addition, the university has access to the unique Canterbury Cathedral archive and has close links with the local archaeological units.

The School supports a research seminar programme in which external and internal speakers present papers. A specialist History of Science and Medicine seminar programme is also organised by the School. Members of the School are also convenors of Institute of Historical Research seminars, and all postgraduates are encouraged to attend and give papers in the IHR seminar closest to their research interests. Our research students are in the vanguard of the recently established South East Postgraduate Hub for History Conference and the School also organises an annual War and History Postgraduate Colloquium.

1.12 Student Support and Guidance

Students must undergo formal reviews of progress at key stages in their programme of study. The review stages are:

Induction - takes place shortly after registration and focuses on initial targets for the student

Probation - takes place on completion of induction and training and ensures that the student has begun their research

Upgrading (if appropriate) - takes place at least 6 months prior to the end of registration
Submission - takes place 3 months prior to the end of registration and is to ensure that the student will be able to submit within the allotted time.

Full details of the function of these reviews can be found in [Annex K of the University's Code of Practice](#).

Students should meet their supervisors at least once a month. Students are advised to contact their supervisors to discuss any issue of concern to them. The School supplies supervisors and students with a supervision log form allowing both to make an independent note of the date, length and nature of the meeting.

Both students and supervisors assess each other in bi-annual reports. Students and supervisors can use this as an opportunity to raise any problems or difficulties that they have encountered. These forms are then collected and analysed by the Director of Research. Any problems identified by students or supervisors either by the bi-annual forms or made known directly to the Director of Research are dealt with on an individual basis.

The upgrading process is announced each year early in the Spring Term via email and letter. The timetable of events and recommended contents for submission are made clear to the candidates. The candidate is informed of the upgrading committee's decision by letter and the supervisory panel are encouraged to discuss the committee's comments with the candidate. (See also **1.9c** above)

The Director of Research also announces the beginning of the AHRC application process early in the Spring Term and provides advice to both candidates and supervisors on completion and submission of the application. In addition, the Director of Research announces any internal funding competitions to students and acts as conduit for all information from both internal and external sources, for example passing on announcements from the Institute of Historical Research.

1.13 Departmental Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Research students are represented on the School, Graduate Studies, Learning and Teaching and Staff/Student Consultative Committees, and the Faculty Board. The Director of Research acts on student comment made through these committees and via the report system (see **1.12** above).

1.14 Departmental Resource Implications

The Head of School in conjunction with the Director of Research and the School's Senior Management Committee monitor the on-going implications for resource allocation.

1.15 Professional Accreditation

N/A