



Master of Arts in Christian Thought and Practice

Programme specification

Submitted to the University of Manchester

August 2012

Amended July 2015, February 2017, October
2017

Summary

Awarding body/institution

The University of Manchester

Teaching institution

Spurgeon's College, London

Name of the final award

Master of Arts in Christian Thought and Practice
Postgraduate Diploma in Christian Thought and Practice
Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Thought and Practice

Exit awards

Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Thought and Practice
Postgraduate Diploma in Christian Thought and Practice

Programme title

Christian Thought and Practice

UCAS code

n/a

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

Level 7

Role of the programme specification

This document tells prospective and current students about the aims and structure of the programme, and how its units contribute to the overall aims and Intended Learning Outcomes. It also sets out what knowledge, understanding and skills they can expect to have acquired when they graduate.

Date written

July 2012 / last revised July 2015, February 2017, October 2017

Further links

- College website: www.spurgeons.ac.uk
- Spurgeon's College Moodle page (including student handbook):
<http://spurgeons.moodle.webanywhere.co.uk/>
- University of Manchester website: www.manchester.ac.uk/

2. Aims and intended learning outcomes

Programme aims

The programme aims to build on the students' previous academic and practical experience by developing their understanding of theology and by bridging the gap between the demands of undergraduate study and postgraduate research.

Intended learning outcomes

On completion of the Postgraduate Certificate, candidates will begin to be able to

- engage critically and maturely with primary and secondary sources of theology;
- give evidence of independent judgment in analysing evidence, producing critical reviews and constructing sustainable hypotheses;
- reflect theologically at postgraduate level;
- exercise their personal capacities to contribute to the flourishing of Church and society.

At the end of Part One of this programme (the Postgraduate Diploma) it is expected that candidates will be able to

- engage critically and maturely with the main primary and secondary sources of theology;
- demonstrate familiarity with major issues in theology and to evaluate them critically and constructively;
- give evidence of independent judgment in analysing evidence, producing critical reviews and constructing sustainable hypotheses;
- reflect theologically at postgraduate level;
- exercise their personal capacities to contribute to the flourishing of Church and society.

In addition, on completion of Part Two (the dissertation) students will be able to apply the basic principles and methods of research (as shown in the production of a coherent, cogently argued dissertation).

3. Teaching, learning and assessment methods

Teaching and learning

The programme is a 'conversion MA' for graduates in other disciplines than Theology who want to study Theology at master's level. A high degree of independence is expected of students in pursuing their studies, although they are supported by lectures, seminars and tutorials as appropriate to specific programme units. Students are encouraged to consider the application of their studies to their practice and to reflect together on the theological issues raised. During their period of taught study they are also expected to attend the weekly Research Seminar at which papers are presented by College staff, research students and visiting speakers. Teaching for some units may be provided in a blended mode entailing both face-to-face tutorials and online study.

Articles deemed to be essential reading during the course are made available via Moodle. Bibliographies are provided and further bibliographical support is available on demand. The unit tutors give ample feedback after the production of written work. Sessions on study skills for Master's students are offered throughout the year.

Assessment methods

As is customary in a master's programme in theology, the assessment mainly takes the form of essays. Only if a student opts to learn Greek or Hebrew will they sit a written examination. At the beginning of the programme the specific expectations of an essay on a theological subject will be explained. Details of the assessments can be found in the unit descriptors.

Feedback on assessment

For all formative assessments and assessed coursework, feedback will normally be provided within 15 working days after the submission deadline. For dissertations, feedback will normally be given within 30 working days after submission. Students may request to see their exam scripts, without charge, but they are not permitted to take the scripts away with them.

Entry requirements

Entry to the Masters programme requires a good first degree plus a score of 7 or over on the IELTS test for those who are not native English speakers; there is no specific help with the English language. It is also a requirement that candidates have a good working knowledge of the Christian church and the Bible.

Entry to the Postgraduate Certificate is possible for candidates who provide evidence of ample prior learning, either formal or informal. Such candidates can apply for acceptance of Accredited Prior (Experiential) Learning and their cases will be discussed by the College's Admissions Committee in accordance with the College's policy on Applications for Accreditation of Prior Learning.

On successful completion of the Postgraduate Certificate, students can register for the Postgraduate Diploma. On successful completion of the Postgraduate Diploma, students can register for Part Two of the programme (the dissertation).

Student support

1. Every year updated handbooks are made available via Moodle.
2. The unit descriptors are likewise available to students via Moodle before the start of the academic year.
3. The Academic Director, the Principal as well as all other tutors are available to see students, if necessary without appointment.
4. A chaplain is available to all students. Any contacts between the chaplain and a student are confidential.
5. The programme begins with the Orientation Week in September which contains all the elements necessary to get students off to a good start including sessions on use of the library, study skills and avoiding plagiarism in coursework.
6. A pastoral tutor is available for any further help on an individual basis.
7. The librarian provides training on issues such as accessing electronic material and is accessible to all students.
8. The College has a Learning Support Department which offers help to those with particular learning needs.
9. The College has a disability policy and disability officer.
10. Shared worship in the chapel on Mondays to Thursdays offers spiritual support for any students who wish to attend.

4. Programme structure

4.1 Parts One and Two

The programme consists of two parts, the first of which comprises taught units and the second a dissertation of no more than 15,000 words. Students must complete the first part of the programme before proceeding to the dissertation. Those who satisfactorily complete only the first part of the programme (120 credits) will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Christian Thought and Practice. Those who satisfactorily complete 60 credits will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Thought and Practice. Those who satisfactorily complete both parts (180 credits) will be awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Christian Thought and Practice.

4.2 Units in Part One

Characteristic for this programme is the fact that most units are core units and that only one unit can be freely chosen. The core units need to be taken at the beginning of the study, with the exception of 403 which prepares students for writing the dissertation. Two of the core units have 15 credits each. The optional units carry 30 credits each and one can be taken towards the end of Part One. Not all optional units are offered in any one year; students' preferences are taken into consideration in respect of the units offered. Exceptionally and subject to the approval of the Academic Director, and availability, a student may elect to study an optional 30-credit unit from the course units offered on the MTh.

Core units

Number and name	Credits
403 Theological Research	15
409 Reading and Using the Bible	30
430 Studying Christian Theology	30
462 Spirituality	15
490 Dissertation	60

Optional units

Number and name	Credits
404 The Mission of Justice and the Theology of Law	30
405 Theological Aesthetics	30
411 Old Testament Theology	30
414 Hebrew from Scratch	30
416 Jeremiah	30
424 Greek from Scratch	30
426 The Book of Revelation	30
435 The Doctrine of Creation	30
436 Contemporary Issues in Theology	30
449 The History of Evangelicalism	30
456 Worship, Preaching and Pastoral Care	30
474 Church Planting and Pioneer Ministry	30
475 Chaplaincy	30
482 Islam	30
476 Theology in the Public Sphere	30
477 Multicultural Churches	30

4.3 Progression

Students will be considered for progression against The University of Manchester Degree Regulations.

Students will not be permitted to commence work on their dissertation until their research proposal has been formally approved by the programme leader.

The dissertation may be in any area of theology covered by the student's units, provided that in other ways it meets the criteria of the programme. The dissertation will be the result of the student's own research and is expected to provide evidence of analytical, evaluative and creative abilities. Dissertation titles will be drafted as part of unit 403 and approved by the programme leader who will make sure that the contents of the dissertation will not overlap with any work previously produced by the candidate. A supervisor will be allocated to each student.

Students who have started a unit but submitted no work for over a year, or completed a unit and not started another for over a year, may be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme, unless there are extenuating circumstances. Where there are unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances which are preventing or hindering progress, students should discuss the situation with the unit tutor or the programme leader at the earliest opportunity.

Students exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) may be permitted to rescind this award and 'upgrade' to a Masters (or Postgraduate Diploma) by successfully completing the appropriate further component of the programme providing the following conditions are met:

- The rescinding occurs within five years of the student's initial award, subject to the programme still being available.
- An overall pass, at the appropriate standard to assure admission to the MA, was obtained for the Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) including any capped or compensated grades.

4.4 Programme duration

Full-time

The full-time mode of the programme lasts for two calendar years. Work for Part One of the programme, the taught units, will normally be completed by the end of May in the first year. Once a student has qualified for Part Two by passing Part One, they may complete the dissertation either over the summer or over the subsequent year.

The full-time Postgraduate Certificate programme lasts for a semester; the full-time Postgraduate Diploma programme lasts for two semesters.

Part-time

The part-time mode of the programme lasts for four calendar years.

Within this maximum limit, it is important that those who are studying part-time progress at a consistent rate throughout the course. For example, if the required 120 credits of taught units are completed over the course of two years, it is normally expected that the dissertation worth 60 credits will be completed in one further year.

Students registered part-time for the Postgraduate Certificate have a year to complete their course; students registered part-time for the Postgraduate Diploma have two years to complete.

4.5 Exit awards

Students registered for the MA who satisfactorily complete only Part One of the programme (120 credits) are awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Christian Thought and Practice. Those who satisfactorily complete 60 credits are awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Christian Thought and Practice.

4.6 Suspension of studies

A candidature may be suspended, or have a time-limit extended, on compassionate grounds or in case of illness, serious domestic difficulty or because of exceptional professional commitments which can be demonstrated to have affected the candidate adversely. A full and reasoned case, supported by appropriate, satisfactory, medical or other independent evidence must be submitted for consideration at the College's Special Cases Committee. A student should not assume that a suspension will be granted and should continue their studies under their registration until they are informed in writing of the outcome of the application for suspension.

5. Programme evaluation, monitoring and revision

At the end of each unit, students are asked to evaluate the teaching and other aspects of it. The completed evaluation forms are sent to the unit tutors who add their comments; they are subsequently scrutinised by the programme leader and the Quality Assurance Committee which reports to the Academic Board. The students are represented on both committees and any significant outcomes are shared with the Student - Staff Liaison Committee.

At the end of each year, students are asked to comment on their experiences on the programme as a whole and the support they received.

The programme monitoring procedures form a continual process of review by the teaching staff team, with a rolling action plan in response to data about the quality of teaching, learning and achievement and the student experience.

The programme leader provides an annual report to the Academic Board and the University.

The programme is part of the College's internal scheme of periodic reviews. Every five years the University carries out a review of the entirety of the validated programmes.

Programme revision can be initiated by the College's teaching staff or the Academic Board as well as by the University. Students can address their representatives on the Academic Board.