

Programme Specification

Award and title: Master of Research in Humanities

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Humanities
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods in Humanities
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full time (1 year) Part time (2 years)
<i>Language of study:</i>	English

Introduction and special features

The School of Humanities comprises of a range of subjects including English Literature, Creative Writing, History, Geography, Film Studies, Media, Politics, American Studies, Publishing, International Relations and Theology. The MRes in Humanities allows you to propose a thesis which sits within a distinct subject or which is interdisciplinary in focus. The study of the Humanities offers innovative, inclusive, energising research and learning environments where the emphasis on intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and responsibilities to our communities drives your study. You will have the opportunity to develop your idea during the first semester of your study before focussing on your thesis.

Our programme is designed to offer high quality training in the practice and methods of research in the Humanities and has been developed in line with the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency Master's Degree guidance. The programme supports progression into doctoral degrees, as well as providing you with a foundation for a career in research in the workplace, the public sector or in academic life.

The MA in Humanities will allow you to undertake research into a subject and topic of your choice whilst gaining a broad understanding of the methodologies used by a broad range of humanities subjects. You will engage in debates about the form and function of the humanities in the 21st century, how the humanities informs and interfaces with other subject areas, and how your project fits into this. You will have the opportunity to engage in an extended thesis working with a supervisor. You will apply knowledge established in the two taught modules to undertake your thesis.

You will work with staff who are internationally regarded researchers and practitioners. The School of Humanities has a thriving research culture and MRes students are central to this. The School of Humanities

hosts PGR activities, such as the RAW (Research Action Workshop) research series and an annual research day and research celebration. Many events also include taught MA and MFA students which ensures that all postgraduates can work collaboratively with their peers.

The School of Humanities collaborates with a range of partners. We are the lead sponsor and partner with the York Literature Festival, the York International Shakespeare Festival, and the Aesthetica Short Film Festival, all of which include events on campus as well as in the city. We have undertaken project work with a range of local, regional and national partners such as the Bar Convent, the Yorkshire Air Museum, the Yorkshire Film Archive, York Explore, the Yorkshire Wolds Heritage Trust, the National Railway Museum, the Castle Museum, and the Church of England, to name just a few.

A key feature of this programme will be the opportunity for Humanities PhD students to contribute to the two taught modules, alongside their supervisors. This will allow for MRes students to discuss live projects at the cutting edge of their research with their peers.

Core elements for MRes Humanities:

- a core teaching team of humanities experts.
- The specificity of a thesis proposed by you and the breadth of the programme of study.
- the study of a variety of research methodologies.
- the study of how your research project connects with world outside the academy.
- skills in collaborative working practice through workshop activity.
- skills in independent research through analytically focused modules.
- the opportunity to focus on independent research through the thesis.
- engagement with a research community of your peers
- the opportunity to engage with external organisations

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate study](#). In addition, you must have:

A 2:2 in Humanities or a closely-related discipline. Applicants whose first degree is not in Humanities will be accepted on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they have covered sufficient levels of Humanities and research methods during their first degree.

Applicants whose first language is not English should have IELTS at grade 6.5 or above (including a minimum of 6.5 in the writing component) or another acceptable English Language qualification.

Candidates are required to submit an outline research proposal in line with a research theme that they are interested in pursuing as part of the course (maximum length 1500 words).

Candidates are required to pass an invited interview with a panel of academic/s from the discipline.

Programme aim(s)

1. The MRes Humanities aims to equip you with an understanding of the research skills and methodologies that will enable you to research in higher education.
2. The programme will aim to provide you with an understanding of the form and function of the humanities in the 21st century and how your work connects more broadly with humanities disciplines, with other academic disciplines and how your work connects beyond the university.
3. The programme aims to prepare you in undertaking an extended research project, which would be applicable to those who wish to undertake a PhD in a Humanities related field or to apply these skills in a workplace context.

Programme learning outcomes –

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

- 7.1 Critically explore and evaluate published and emergent literature in relation to your own research area and the value of this to your chosen field and specific research.
- 7.2 Identify, explore, and interpret research methodologies as they apply generally to the Humanities and specifically to your project.
- 7.3 Critically examine how your research contributes to knowledge in your identified subject within higher education and how the skills and knowledge generated by your independent research can be applied outside the academy.
- 7.4 Synthesise knowledge of research methodologies and critical engagement with discipline specific knowledge and demonstrate this via the production of an extended written thesis which demonstrates independent and novel research.
- 7.5 Demonstrate the academic skills appropriate to level 7, including the development of standards of presentation to sustain arguments, and the presentation of original questions to peers in professional and academic domains, as part of a community of reflective practitioners.

Programme structure

Full-Time

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
HUR7001M	7	1	Researching in the Humanities	30	C	NC
HUR7002M	7	1	Humanities Now	30	C	NC
HUR7003R	7	2 & 3	Thesis in Humanities	120	C	NC

Part-time: Year 1

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
HUR7001M	7	1	Researching in the Humanities	30	C	NC
HUR7002M	7	1 or 2	Humanities Now	30	C	NC

Part-time: Year 2

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
HUR7003R	7	2 & 3	Thesis in Humanities	120	C	NC

Please note that both 30-credit modules must be passed at the relevant level in order to progress to the Thesis module.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The learning, teaching and assessment approaches used in the MRes Humanities are based on the principles of learner-driven pedagogy to enable you to develop as a reflective practitioner within your specific discipline area, and with an understanding of humanities research methods and pedagogic approaches. The programme is focused on developing an array of essential graduate attributes, through inclusive teaching, learning and assessment practices. The programme design is informed by the following principles:

- The use of active learning approaches, which are practical, authentic, and experiential in nature.
- To develop levels of responsibility, accountability, and autonomy in relation to research.
- A focus on a broad understanding of research methods associated with a range of humanities disciplines and subjects and their application to your research project.
- To participate in current debates about the humanities

- Encouraging reflection as an aid to learning
- Developing skills in and the application of knowledge to an extended research project.

The programme has been designed to recognise that you will bring significant experience and knowledge, that can be shared, and subsequently shape the learning environment. Therefore, the programme's pedagogy is diverse, rooted in research-based and inquiry-led learning. As is commensurate with Masters level research seminar/workshops will be introduced and facilitated by academic staff but will be participatory from the outset. You will arrive on the MRes with an outline project identified (as part of your application) and this will form the basis of the first two taught modules. During these modules you will apply different methodologies to your project proposal.

The first taught module is 'Researching in the Humanities'. This module will introduce you to a range of research methodologies (including research ethics) to enable you to develop your skills broadly, to evaluate the approaches essential to your research projects, and to identify why particular methods do not suit your research. This module culminates in a 5000 word portfolio which could include a revised research statement, an outline of the research methodology proposed for the project and an annotated bibliography to include essential reading and methodological literature to support the project.

The second taught module, 'Humanities Now', engages in discussion of the humanities more broadly. It will examine the development of the disciplines that contribute to the humanities, and the relationship between the humanities, the arts and sciences. The module will look at the place of the humanities within and outside the humanities and, via a case study approach, look at the contribution of the humanities to society. This module will be assessed by a formative presentation/seminar paper of work in progress and a summative critical essay of 5000 words which uses the developed research proposal as a basis for a discussion of the themes central to the module. (NB: Part-time students will be given the option to return to this module during their second year of study to feed their experiences and research back into the module and to continue to engage in dialogue about humanities research).

These two modules are intended to complement each other, with the first focussing on the development of the project, the second looking at the application and impact of the research. They are taught concurrently as a precursor to the Humanities Thesis module. The thesis module is taught predominantly using a one-to-one supervisory model. The module will have periodic group workshops where you will bring your diverse projects together to share the experience of research with your peers. Workshops will include formative presentations of work in progress.

All modules are designed and delivered utilising a range of teaching, learning and assessment techniques, and may include (in person, online and/or video lectures, workshops, seminars, debates, discussion forums and tutorials. By utilising a range of assessment practices, the programme will ensure an inclusive and individualised experience, through mechanisms such as portfolios, presentations, and project-based research.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [regulations](#) for taught postgraduate and research degree awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: July 2024

Programme originally approved: 25/07/2024