

University of Cambridge: Programme Specifications

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ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE AND CELTIC TRIPOS

1	Awarding body	University of Cambridge
2	Teaching institution	Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic
3	Accreditation details	None
4	Name of final award	Bachelor of Arts (Honours)
5	Programme title	Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Tripos
6	UCAS code	QQ59 BA/ASNC
7	JACS code(s)	Q500, Q900
8	Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	English, History, Languages and Related Studies
9	Qualifications framework level	6 (Honours)
10	Date specification produced/ last revised	June 2009
11	Date specification last reviewed	February 2010

Educational aims and outcomes of the programme

The course aims:

- i) to provide an integrated structure of teaching and learning to undergraduate students in the histories, languages, and literatures of the different peoples of the Britain, Ireland and Scandinavia, in the early Middle Ages;
- ii) to attract high calibre students and to provide them with an excellent education in these areas which is informed by developments in scholarship;
- iii) to foster an educational environment which is intellectually distinctive, in which students may pursue their respective interests under professional and expert guidance, which will enable them to realise their intellectual potential, and which will stimulate original thinking and critical habits of mind;
- iv) to help students develop a wide range of intellectual abilities and skills, which will enable them to make significant contributions in their chosen careers.

Part I

Part I introduces the four main historical options in the Department's teaching programme (Anglo-Saxon history, Scandinavian history of the Viking Age, and the histories of the Gaelic- and Brittonic-speaking peoples), the five main language and literature options (Insular Latin, Old English, Old Norse, Medieval Welsh, and Medieval Irish), and the paper on palaeography and codicology. There are some other options, in papers 'borrowed' from other Triposes. Students take six papers, or five papers plus a dissertation.

On completion of Part I students should have:

- i) made the transition in learning style and pace from school (or other educational background) to university, and become acquainted with the distinctively interdisciplinary approach of the Department;
- ii) been introduced (in the case of the history papers) to the study of primary source material and to its use as evidence in relation to a variety of historical issues;
- iii) laid a firm foundation (in the case of the language and literature papers) for their understanding of a medieval language and for their appreciation of its literature;
- iv) attained (in the case of the paper on palaeography and codicology) an understanding of manuscript culture in early medieval Britain, Ireland, and Scandinavia and some proficiency in identifying, localising, and dating the various script-types employed;
- v) been trained in a variety of intellectual abilities and skills, including the comprehension and analysis of diverse material, the integration of evidence derived from a variety of different disciplines, the organisation of thought in response to particular questions, written and oral exposition of complex issues, and basic research methods;
- vi) acquired sufficient knowledge of the range of disciplines to make informed choices of subsequent more specialised study.

Part II

Part II provides students with an opportunity to extend the knowledge and to develop further the intellectual abilities and skills which they have acquired in Part I. Aspects of the core subjects are pursued in greater depth, into different areas, and in ways which enable the students to practise their interdisciplinary skills to their best advantage. There are some other options, in papers 'borrowed' from other Triposes. Students take four papers and write a dissertation.

On completion of Part II students should have:

- i) acquired specialist knowledge and advanced understanding of subjects falling within the scope of the Tripos, or more widely across the field;
- ii) undertaken (in respect of the dissertation) the production of a substantial piece of written work, on a subject falling within the Department's field of interest, involving independent (often original) research, presented in accordance with the best scholarly standards;
- iii) gained valuable experience of working autonomously, and in a disciplined manner, towards a particular goal;
- iv) equipped themselves for the future, whether in further training for their chosen career or in academic research.

Teaching

Teaching is delivered by lectures, seminars and classes in the Department which relate to the papers offered in the Tripos, and by supervisions in the Colleges which provide individual teaching through written work and feedback thereon. Students are encouraged at all times to undertake independent reading and study, in order to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Assessment

Formative assessment is provided (for students taking literary and linguistic options) in the regular language classes, and (for all students) through the supervision system, where feedback is given in oral and written form. Summative assessment, which takes place at the end of each year, is by three-hour examinations, and by submission of a dissertation (optional in Part I, compulsory in Part II). At the end of the first year, Preliminary assessment tests are taken in two papers at the end of Lent term, in addition to Preliminary Examinations in the remaining four papers.

Skills

On completion of the course, students will have acquired a wide range of skills.

- i) Knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.
- ii) Intellectual skills, of the kind fostered by many courses in a University education: the ability to understand complex concepts and arguments, to identify the points at issue in a conflicting set of views, to make a synthesis of them, and to develop a view of one's own; the ability to integrate information derived from different forms of evidence, each of which has first to be understood on its own terms; and, more generally, the qualities which in combination lead to intellectual distinction, such as breadth of vision, power of analysis, originality of thought, steadiness of judgement, and clarity of exposition.
- iii) Practical skills, including the skills necessary for effective use of the printed and electronic resources of the modern academic library, and more generally for the effective use of the wide range of resources available on the Internet. Work for dissertations will necessitate familiarity with the use of word-processing software, and the application of high standards in the presentation of written work in accordance with a specified stylesheet. The study of ancient languages encourages the development of skills, such as an understanding of grammar, which enable students to extend their knowledge of modern languages other than their own.
- iv) Transferable skills, of various kinds: communication skills, fostered in seminars, classes and supervisions, whereby students gain experience of participation in academic discourse and above all in the oral or written presentation of their own views; organisational skills, which proceed from the self-discipline which is so necessary in a university environment, including attendance at lectures, conscientious preparation for classwork and supervisions, and effective management of time; other organisational skills, developed both in private study and in work for dissertations, especially the exercise of judgement needed to plan an extended piece of written work and the sustained concentration necessary to bring it successfully to completion; interpersonal skills, developed in the same working environment, as students learn to work with each other and to deal in a responsible manner with whatever tasks may be entrusted to them.

Career Destinations

As in the cases of so many courses in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, including English, History, Classics, and Modern and Medieval Languages, graduates in Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic obtain jobs in a wide variety of professions, including heritage, law, journalism, publishing, business, management, the civil service, administration, the media, banking, personnel work, and education. Some graduates progress into post-graduate research, and pursue academic careers.

Quality Management

The Department is responsible for all teaching of the core subjects, under the direction of the Faculty Board of English and the Education Section of the General Board. Teaching of papers 'borrowed' from other Triposes is the responsibility of the Faculties or Departments concerned. The quality of the course is maintained by:

- i) scrutiny of the reports of External Examiners by the Department and by the Education Section of the General Board; suggestions by them for improvement are acted on where necessary.
- ii) student feedback on each course of lectures, on Part I as a whole, on Part II as a whole, and on the ASNC Tripos as a whole, collected by means of anonymous questionnaires;
- iii) student participation in the termly meetings of the Joint Academic Committee, in the twice-yearly Teaching and Learning Workshops, and the termly Departmental meetings;
- iv) mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of the lecturing staff, and their participation in staff development programmes;
- v) the QAA and the General Board's programme for reviewing Faculties and Departments every six years (the last review was in 2006).