

Programme Specification 2025 - 2026
Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences
 (Comprising: Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice &
 Advanced Diploma in Research in the Arts/Sciences)

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education
Accreditation details	None
Name of final award	Advanced Diploma (120 credits) Advanced Diploma (60 credits)
Programme title	Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences Research Theory and Practice Research in the Arts/Sciences
UCAS code	N/A
HECoS code(s)	
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Education Studies and Librarianship, Information, Knowledge, Records and Archives Management.
Qualifications framework level	Level 6 (UG Adv Dip)
Date specification produced	December 2024

* Cognate Faculty endorsement provided by: Faculty of Education

The mission of the Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) is to support the University of Cambridge's promise to prioritise and enable learning throughout life and to promote the widest possible access for learners to the University. ICE uses the expertise of its staff, the collegiate University, and its wider networks to deliver a broad portfolio of research-informed world-leading qualifications. ICE delivers supportive and inclusive education and welcomes learners seeking to engage with higher education for the first time, returning after an extended break, seeking opportunities to learn later in life and looking to advance their careers.

The Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences is part of the Institute of Continuing Education's award-bearing programme at level 6, offered to part-time adult students. At present, students can specialise in one of the following subject areas:

- i. Archaeology
- ii. Coaching
- iii. Creativity Theory
- iv. Education Studies
- v. English Literature
- vi. Film
- vii. Global Studies (International Development/International Relations)
- viii. Historic Environment
- ix. History of Art
- x. Medieval History
- xi. Natural Sciences (predominantly life sciences)
- xii. Philosophy and Ethics
- xiii. Psychology
- xiv. Religious Studies and Theology Social Sciences (predominantly Sociology and Politics)

Educational aims

Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences worth 120 credits at level 6 is made up of 4 Units.

Units 1-3; *Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice (60 credits)*

The programme of study aims to:

1. To provide students with the knowledge and understanding of how to access and assess the available literature in their chosen discipline; and
2. to give students the opportunity to acquire or develop skills and expertise relevant to their research interests; and
3. to develop the student's ability to analyse and evaluate different methods for conducting independent and collaborative research.

Unit 4; *Advanced Diploma in Research in the Arts/Sciences (60 credits)*

The programme of study aims to:

1. To enable students with relevant experience at first-degree level the opportunity to carry out focussed research in their discipline under close supervision; and
2. to provide opportunities for potential progression to further study (e.g. a Master's degree) in their chosen discipline*

* Note that successful completion of an Undergraduate Advanced Diploma falls below typical M-level entry requirements for the majority of University of Cambridge Faculties and Departments. Applicants wishing to progress to Cambridge M-level study may wish to seek advice from the Faculties and Departments in question.

Learning outcomes

As a result of studying this programme students should meet the following learning outcomes.

By the end of Units 1-3 (*Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice*) students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- Have a good understanding of relevant research techniques and their application, and a thorough knowledge of the literature, applicable to their own research;

Skills and other attributes

- Recognise originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in their field;
- Able to critically evaluate current research and research techniques and methods.

By the end of Unit 4 (*Advanced Diploma in Research in the Arts/Sciences*) students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- Can demonstrate a range of research methods applicable to the cognate discipline and research topic;

Skills and other attributes

- Able to plan, design and execute an independent research project of 10,000-12,000 words, making effective and discriminating use of resources;
- Demonstrate some self-direction and originality in solving problems, and demonstrate an ability to act autonomously in the planning and implementation of research.

Programme structure

The programme is a part-time Undergraduate Advanced Diploma comprising two 60 credit awards that can be combined into 120 credits at level 6. It is undertaken over two years. In the first year, students will be taught a range of general and subject-specific research skills and techniques. In the second year, students will employ these skills in developing an independent research project with the support and guidance of a subject specific supervisor.

Programme Overview

The *Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences* is made up of two 60 credit awards: a taught *Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice* and an *Advanced Diploma in Research in the Arts/Sciences*. Each award is offered over one academic year, and successful students can combine both awards to obtain the Advanced Diploma in Research Theory and Practice in the Arts/Sciences equivalent to 120 credits at level 6.

The first, 60 credit taught award is designed so that students can start to form an identity as a researcher and begin considering how research communities form and function. The initial year of study will also ensure that students develop the research skills necessary to complete the second, 60 credit award. Students will receive a broad research skills training which encompasses their chosen research specialism and prepares them for future, M-level study.

Programme details

The student determines the subject and title of the assignments and independent research project in discussion with their supervisor. Titles must be approved by the Course Director.

Teaching methods

The programme is delivered remotely using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous approaches. Synchronous sessions will be delivered using a platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Asynchronous material will be provided through the course virtual learning environment and will allow students to engage with teaching material at a suitably convenient time. Examples of the type of teaching methods used include, but are not limited to, live and pre-recorded lectures, seminars, group discussions, online readings, quizzes, data handling exercises, group activities and discussion forums. Peer-to-peer learning forms an important element of course teaching.

In the first year of study, teaching will be delivered via Day Schools. Day Schools provide both subject specific and generic research skills tuition. Students are formatively and summatively assessed on the basis of how well they apply these research skills in the development of: i) a Systematic Literature/Methodological review; ii) a mini project; and iii) a written report (see also Assessment Methods, below).

In the second year, teaching and learning on the course is delivered through one-to-one supervisions supplemented by communication through the Institute's virtual learning environment. Students are formatively assessed via the submission of a draft of their independent research project. Summative assessment for this part of the course are based

entirely on the submission of the independent research project (see also Assessment Methods, below).

Students are expected to attend all supervisions.

Assessment methods

The programme will contain items of formative (not counting towards the final mark) and summative (counting towards the final mark) assessment. Formative assessment will receive tutor and/or peer feedback and is designed to facilitate completion of the summative assessments. Summative assessments will consist of tasks appropriate to the discipline of study and may include, but not be limited to, essays, reports, presentations, posters, critical reviews, data handling and analysis, and group activities. The volume of work required to complete the award shall be 16,000 – 20,000 words or the equivalent.

Students are awarded a course mark on the basis of:

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1. Successful completion of the following summative assignments:
 - a. A systematic Literature/Methodological review totalling between 1,500-2,000 words;
 - b. A mini project totalling between 3,000-4,000 words;
 - c. A written presentation report totalling between 1,500-2,000 words;

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- d. independent research project totalling 10,000-12,000 words;

Students who encounter difficulties affecting their performance in one or more of the above points may submit a claim for mitigating circumstances to be considered at the end of the course.

Entry and/or progression requirements

There are no formal academic entry requirements for the programme but, as it is taught at third year university level, applicants should be able to evidence experience of second year undergraduate study or equivalent academic or professional experience. Applicants need to be able to read, write and speak English fluently. The minimum requirement for IELTS is an overall band score of 7.0 with not less than 7.0 in speaking, listening and writing, and 6.5 in reading.

Credit awarded by the Institute can be transferred into the degree programmes of some other higher education providers. The amount of credit which can be transferred into degree programmes varies from institution to institution and is always at the discretion of the receiving institution.

The awards may also serve as a progression route to postgraduate study in the cognate discipline.

Student support

ICE provides all students with access to learning and welfare support via the Institute's virtual learning environment. This includes generic and subject specific learning resources and wider support services, including those focused on wellbeing.

Management of teaching quality and standards

The University ensures high standards of teaching and learning in the following ways:

- Participation in the biennial Education Monitoring and Review Process to explore provision, share good practice and suggest constructive courses of action
- Scrutiny of the reports of External Examiners for all teaching programmes
- Encouraging student engagement at both the local level, through involvement in Faculty and Departmental Committees, and at a central level by participation in nationally-benchmarked surveys
- Mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of staff, and encouraging staff participation in personal development programmes

Graduate employability and career destinations

Preparation for employment in general is provided in the opportunities for the acquisition of relevant transferable skills outlined in this programme specification. Where programmes with a significant vocational or professional element are accredited by Professional, Regulatory or Statutory Bodies details are given above.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this programme specification. At the time of publication, the programme specification has been approved by the relevant Faculty Board (or equivalent). Programme specifications are reviewed annually, however, during the course of the academical year, any approved changes to the programme will be communicated to enrolled students through email notification or publication in the *Reporter*. The relevant faculty or department will endeavour to update the programme specification accordingly, and prior to the start of the next academical year.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for all awards of the University is available online at: <https://www.camdata.admin.cam.ac.uk/>