

Programme Specification 2025-26

ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY, RELIGION, AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Awarding body	University of Cambridge
Teaching institution	Faculty of Divinity
Accreditation details	None
Name of final award	Advanced Diploma
Programme title	Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion
UCAS code	V600 BA/TRS
HECoS code(s)	100794 (theology and religious studies)
Relevant QAA benchmark statement(s)	Theology and Religious Studies
Qualifications framework level	FHEQ Level 6
Date specification produced	August 2022

Educational Aims of the Programme

The Advanced Diploma Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion is taught over 9 months and is especially designed for those who already have a degree, but in a subject other than Theology and Religious Studies. Taking this course may be a first step to doing an M.Phil. or Ph.D. in Theology and/or Religious Studies in this or another university but does not count towards such a degree.

The course aims:

- i) to provide teaching and learning to postgraduate students in the theologies, scriptures, histories and philosophies, doctrines and practices of Christianity; and, as far as resources permit, of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, principally within their own traditions but also by means of comparative approaches;
- ii) to provide high calibre students with an excellent education in these traditions which is informed by current developments in scholarship and research;
- iii) to provide a stimulating environment in which students can reach their intellectual potential;
- iv) to provide an integrated structure of learning and teaching;
- v) to help students develop a wide range of intellectual abilities and skills which will enable them to make a significant contribution in their chosen careers and walks of life, including training in academic research.

The Advanced Diploma programme requires students to take three courses from those available in Part II of the Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion Tripos, the Faculty's undergraduate degree, and to write a dissertation. Students may offer a fourth paper.

On completion of the Advanced Diploma students should have:

- i) made the transition from another discipline, usually in the humanities, and acquired a grounding in the key concepts and methods in the subject;
- ii) acquired advanced understanding in up to four sub-disciplines of the subject;
- iii) acquired detailed knowledge of a specific topic, either in a chosen sub-discipline, or of an interdisciplinary character, and of the basic principles of scholarly research, through the writing of a dissertation;
- iv) had the opportunity to acquire a basic or advanced proficiency in a scriptural language of a major religious tradition and in the interpretation of scriptural texts.

Skills

On completion of the course, the University wants students to have acquired the following skills:

- i) **Knowledge and understanding** of the subject matter.
- ii) **Intellectual skills:** The written work which students undertake enables them to learn how to study steadily, assimilate issues and large amounts of literature swiftly, evaluate theological positions and evidence critically, to produce succinct arguments to tight deadlines and to engage with those with whom they disagree. Particular methodologies used include: textual critical, exegetical, hermeneutical, historical, philosophical, doctrinal and ethical. Students will have acquired the skill to engage with the thought of major religious thinkers and their traditions, and to understand the historical, social and cultural context in which a text was produced, or an author worked. Students will have had the opportunity to learn to read texts in the original language critically and be able to evaluate them in their own context. Those studying theology will become sensitive to the problems of religious language. The dissertation develops the skill of articulating an argument at length and working independently under the direction of a supervisor. Students will learn to present an argument and attain analytical skills. By the end of the course students should have completed a degree which could be a basis for further postgraduate study in Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion.
- iii) **Practical Skills:** use of the library, using a bibliography, taking notes effectively, learning languages.
- iv) **Transferable skills:** the ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing; to work to deadlines and under pressure; to manage time; to set priorities; to formulate an argument; to work independently and with initiative; basic IT skills (email, computer and internet use); critical analysis; to present papers in a seminar context; linguistic skills; skills of analysis and interpretation; self-discipline, self-direction; and respect for other views.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Teaching is delivered by lectures and classes in the Faculty which relate to the papers offered in the undergraduate Tripos; by language classes; and by supervisions in the Colleges which provide teaching on an individual or small-group basis through written work and feedback thereon. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to undertake independent reading and study in order to consolidate what is being taught.

Assessment Methods

Formative assessment is provided through the supervision system where feedback is given in oral and written form. Summative assessment, which takes place at the end of the year, is by two or three hour examination, submission of essays and a dissertation.

Students must complete two written examinations and choose to either complete a third written examination or to submit an essay on the relevant topic.

Entry Requirements

Admission is based on a first or 2.1 honours degree with marks of at least 67% or a GPA of at least 3.7 in the US system.

Learning Support

The core teaching staff consists of 23 University Teaching Officers. In addition, a wide variety of teaching and research staff from other university departments and the Colleges, and the institutions of the Cambridge Theological Federation teach in supervisions and assist with the programme of seminars and with examining. Some doctoral students at an advanced stage of their research also undertake supervisions for or contribute lectures to courses offered.

The Faculty of Divinity has a fully equipped building on the Sidgwick Site on West Road in Cambridge which has lecture and seminar rooms, a well-stocked library with about 60,000 books, and computer facilities (including Lapwing wireless access). Students are expected to make use of the nearby University Library. Further library and computing facilities are available in the Colleges.

Management of Education Quality and Standards

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

1. Scrutiny of the External Examiners Reports for all teaching programmes
2. 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
3. Participation in the biennial Education Monitoring and Review Process to explore provision, share good practice and suggest constructive courses of action
4. Mentoring, appraisal, and peer review of staff, and encouraging staff participation in personal development programmes

Graduate Employability and Career Destinations

Advanced Diploma graduates go into a wide range of careers, including academic research and teaching, full-time religious ministry, the civil service, the public sector, personnel work, media, business and management; a large proportion continue to study at PhD level.

The Careers Service maintains links with relevant employers and takes into account employer needs and opinions in the services which it provides for students. The Careers Service also allocates a Careers Adviser to each College, Faculty and Department to act as a point of contact.

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/>